

# INSPECTION REPORT

**SAINTS JOHN FISHER AND THOMAS MORE ROMAN  
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

Colne

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119785

Headteacher: Brendan Conboy

Lead inspector: Carmen Markham

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> December 2003

Inspection number: 262086

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	762
School address:	Gibfield Road Colne Lancashire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Thomas
Date of previous inspection:	5 <sup>th</sup> October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This mixed 11 to 16 Catholic Voluntary Aided comprehensive school on the outskirts of Burnley in Lancashire is smaller than average. The school serves the small towns of Nelson, Colne, Brierfield, Barnoldswick and Earby and the outlying villages of Pendle. Most of these towns lie within areas of high socio-economic deprivation but the number of pupils who take free school meals is only a little below the national average. Pupils enter the school with standards on or a little below the national average. The school enjoys a very good reputation locally and is always oversubscribed. It is slowly increasing in size. It admits pupils predominantly from Roman Catholic and other Christian denominations and is increasingly admitting more pupils with physical disabilities, due to the school's reputation as a caring school. Therefore, it has an above-average number of pupils with statements of special educational needs; overall, the number of pupils with special education needs is average. There are very few pupils in the school from minority ethnic groups and there are no pupils who have English as a second language.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19599	Carmen Markham	<i>Lead inspector</i>	
9160	Keith Baker	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
18950	Carmen Rodney	<i>Team inspector</i>	English.
8756	Patricia Hanage	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics.
4720	Graham Carter	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science.
21806	Patricia Swinnerton	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and technology.
4755	Trevor Hulbert	<i>Team inspector</i>	History; Geography; Leisure and tourism.
27803	Joe Clark	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information technology; Applied information and communication technology.
24887	Yvonne Salmons	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern foreign languages.
20533	David Rogers	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art and design; Applied art and design.
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18755	Roger Whittaker	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical education; Citizenship.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Saints John Fisher and Thomas More is **an effective school with some very good features. It provides pupils with a good quality of education overall** although there are some areas that require improvement. The good leadership of the headteacher and the governors provide the school with a clear sense of purpose and direction. **All members of the school community are valued** and the school works hard to ensure that all pupils are cared for and can achieve success in examinations. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and physical disabilities have good access to the curriculum. They play a full part in the life of the school. The overall standard of attainment is very good and pupils achieve well in most subjects. Standards rise as pupils proceed through the school, and GCSE results are well above national expectations. Teaching and leadership are good. Management is satisfactory. **The school provides good value for money.**

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- All pupils, including those with SEN, achieve well and standards are above average for both boys and girls.
- It is an inclusive community where all are valued and play a full role in school life, regardless of their ability. The school has been very successful in implementing its policy on including pupils with a range of physical disabilities, but provision for gifted and talented pupils is not yet fully developed.
- The ethos of the school is very good and expectations of behaviour and learning are high.
- Management support for subject departments is not as effective as it should be, so that provision in science, history, geography and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and information and communications technology (ICT) across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- Accommodation in the school is poor and the school is under resourced, particularly in relation to the number of computers available.
- The good relationships with parents and the community are a strength of the school.

#### Change in effectiveness since the previous inspection

The school has made **satisfactory progress since the previous inspection** standards have continued to rise overall for pupils aged 16 and have remained steady for pupils aged 14. However, standards in science have deteriorated as a result of staffing changes. The reorganisation of class group-sizes has contributed to the overall rise in standards, as pupils are now in smaller groups that recognise their ability and need for support. Also, time is used more effectively in lessons, as strategies to ensure that pupils arrive punctually to lessons are now in place. The school has worked hard to improve the data on pupils' performance and it has started to use it to inform the setting of targets, but this is not consistent feature across the school. The library has been developed and good progress had been made in improving design and technology, and ICT as a discrete subject. However, recent staffing and resource issues have created new problems in these subjects, and the use of ICT in most subjects is still unsatisfactory. Provision for geography and history also remains unsatisfactory.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The standards in **English and mathematics are above the national average for pupils age 14 and they are average in science. Standards for pupils age 16 are above average in these three core subjects and above average overall.** Standards are good when they are compared to those of similar schools. The achievement of all pupils including those with SEN is good. There is little difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

In Year 7 pupils enter the school with levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science that match the national expectation of Level 4. In English and mathematics they achieve well so that by Year 9 they attain above average standards in relation to Level 5. However, in science they make less progress and their attainment is in line with national expectation. This demonstrates underachievement. Therefore, compared to similar schools, standards in English and mathematics in 2003 were graded A; science was graded C.

In Years 10 and 11 the overall standards attained by the school continue to improve so that, in relation to all schools nationally, GCSE results are graded A, well above average, with 62.5 per cent of pupils achieving five A\* to C grades, a 10 per cent increase since the previous inspection. Almost all pupils leave school with a GCSE qualification. The school is graded B, above average, in relation to schools where pupils achieved similar results at the end of Year 9.

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

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

The above-average standards achieved by the school and the achievement of the majority of pupils are a reflection of very good teaching in English and good teaching in the majority of other subjects, including mathematics. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, as in science for pupils in Years 7 to 9, and geography and history throughout the school, achievement is unsatisfactory.

The school has a **very positive ethos that values equally all the school community and promotes a climate for learning.** Therefore, pupils attend school and achieve good standards in their attitudes, values and personal qualities. Pupils behave well and have a clear sense of responsibility to the school community. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.** Standards are above average and **teaching is good** throughout the school. Pupils therefore make good progress in their learning and all pupils including those with SEN achieve well. The school offers a good range of courses and out of school activities to enable pupils to develop a range of skills and interests.

Relationships in the school are good and teachers know their pupils well. Teachers provide good support and guidance and pupils feel secure. The school has good partnerships with parents, other schools and the wider community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership is good overall. Management is satisfactory.** The headteacher, with the full support of the school governors, provides strong and effective leadership for the school. They share a vision of the school community they aspire to and they are very successful in developing a community that reflects the Roman Catholic tradition of the school and strives for high standards, which it achieves. The school's new leadership team is now beginning to develop more efficient management systems to ensure that teaching and learning are of a consistent standard throughout the school.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

**Parents believe that this is a very good school** that has a good reputation for the way in which it cares for its pupils, and this explains why the school attracts a significant number of physically disabled pupils. Parents identify the quality of leadership as a strength of the school and value the good standards and teaching that the school provides. They identify accommodation as a weakness of the school.

Pupils say that the school is a good school to attend. They believe that they are well taught, that they are trusted and that they are expected to work hard.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- To improve provision, standards and achievement in science, geography, history, and PSHCE.
- To develop the use of information technology in all subjects to support effective learning.
- To continue to develop the monitoring of all subject departments to ensure that all provision is consistently good.
- To extend and develop provision for gifted and talented pupils within the school.
- To improve the accommodation and resources available to the school.

**and, to meet statutory requirements:**

- To ensure that the school has sufficient computers, so that the statutory requirements for ICT across the curriculum can be met by the governors and by the school.
- To improve the design and technology curriculum so that it meets statutory requirements.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

The standards in **English and mathematics are above the national average for pupils age 14. They are average in science. Standards for pupils age 16 are above average in these three core subjects and above average overall.** The achievement of all pupils, including those with SEN, is good. There is little difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils make good progress. Their achievement is good in relation to the average standards with which they enter school in Year 7.
- Standards for pupils age 14 and 16 are above the national average. Pupils also achieve standards that are good in relation to those of schools in a similar context.
- Standards are higher for pupils age 16 than for pupils age 14.
- Boys and girls both achieve well. Both outperform the national figures for their gender at age 16. At age 14 boys achieve better than girls in science and mathematics although girls are a little ahead in English.
- Standards in literacy and mathematics are good.
- Almost all pupils leave school with at least one GCSE pass grade. This is a strength of the school.

#### Commentary

##### Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9)

1. Pupils in Year 7 arrive in school with average levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science. Initially, they make average progress as they adjust to the new learning environment and the high expectations of the school. After this initial stage, they make more rapid progress. Pupils have average skills in literacy and mathematics when they enter the school and these develop well, so that pupils attain good standards and are able to access the school curriculum and make good progress. Pupils enter the school with below-average standards in ICT but from Year 7 they make good progress. Their ICT skills are therefore in line with national expectation. Boys achieve better than girls in mathematics and science although girls are stronger in English. The ethos of the school in relation to valuing all forms of success has given boys the confidence to be proud of their achievements.

2. By the end of Year 9, pupils are attaining standards above the national average in most subjects. Tests in English and mathematics demonstrate this trend and pupils reach the targets set by the school. Compared to similar schools, standards in English and mathematics are well above average in relation to the number of pupils achieving the expected Level 5, and above average in relation to the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 6. Science is average in respect of the proportion of Level 5s and average in respect of the proportion of Level 6s attained; achievement is satisfactory. Standards in geography and history are unsatisfactory.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.1 (33.8)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	36.1 (34.7)	35.4 (34.7)
science	33.5 (32.7)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 147 (149) pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

## Key Stage 4 (Years 10 to 11)

3. In Years 10 and 11 standards remain consistently ahead of the national trend. In 2003 the proportion of pupils who gained five or more GCSE grades A\* to C was 62.5 per cent. This is well above the national average and compares well to the attainment of pupils in other schools which achieved similar results at the end of Year 6. It also represents a 10 per cent increase in the percentage of GCSE A\* to C grades reported at the time of the previous inspection. The school is also very successful in enabling the vast majority of pupils to attain five GCSE passes, and almost all pupils leave school with at least one GCSE pass. These significant achievements are the result of good teaching, high expectations and pupils' motivation.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	62.5 (57.5)	50.3 (49.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	97.3 (94.1)	88.6 (90.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98.6 (96.7)	94.7 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	38.8 (36.8)	33.8 (34.7)

*There were 146 (153) pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. The above-average standards achieved by the school and the achievement of the majority of pupils are also a reflection of very good teaching in English and good teaching in the majority of other subjects. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, as in science for pupils in Years 7 to 9, geography and history, achievement is unsatisfactory. Boys achieve as well as girls, as the curriculum is designed to meet their needs, and this has been an important factor in improving standards. The grouping of pupils according to prior attainment and the reduction in class sizes have enabled teachers to meet the needs of more pupils and have contributed to the higher levels of achievement. For example, the creation of a group of able mathematicians in Year 11 has enabled the teacher to increase the level of challenge and led to improved results. However, although the school has identified gifted and talented pupils, their achievement in many subjects is not as good as it should be, as teachers do not plan lessons to meet their needs.

5. The achievement of pupils with SEN, including those with statements of SEN, is good overall. In some departments, such as physical education and religious education (inspected under Section 23) the progress of these pupils is very good. The good overall progress results from the effective contribution of learning-support assistants, particularly for pupils with physical disabilities.

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

6. Pupils' personal development is **good**; their attitudes, behaviour and punctuality are **good** and their attendance is **satisfactory**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

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

- The majority of pupils, including those with SEN, enjoy coming to school and find it a secure and orderly place in which to learn.
- They respond well to good teaching and to the praise and encouragement they receive.
- Relationships are positive. There is a strong ethos of mutual respect. Pupils are very considerate and value one another's ideas and opinions.
- Pupils willingly co-operate with their teachers but some are too dependent on them.
- Although most pupils behave very well, a small but significant minority has a casual attitude to work and can behave poorly.
- Pupils' social and moral development is good. They learn a lot about themselves and the needs of others, and grow in confidence.

## Commentary

7. The school works hard to promote good attendance and punctuality and most pupils attend regularly and are on time. Very good monitoring of attendance takes place and pupils who are missing school for no good reason are quickly identified. Closer involvement of the Education Welfare Service would improve the school's effectiveness in following up the more difficult cases of poor attendance.

### Attendance

#### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2001/2002 (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.6	School data	0.9
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.*

8. Pupils arrive at the school knowing that it sets high expectations. Most respond by working hard and by taking pride in their achievements. Both boys and girls want to please their teachers who, in turn, give them very good support, encouragement and praise for success. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility in and outside the school and over 70 pupils were awarded certificates for personal challenge at the school's last award ceremony. The school promotes a strong ethos of mutual help and support, which means that relationships are very good. Pupils of different ages and backgrounds mix freely together and learn to respect views different from their own. Pupils with SEN work hard and conscientiously and they are thoughtfully supported by other pupils. The very few pupils of non-white backgrounds are totally assimilated within the school community. Discussions with staff and pupils confirmed that racial intolerance is regarded as unacceptable and dealt with as such on the rare occasion that it is encountered.

9. Positive attitudes to work, and the help given pupils to develop their self-esteem, mean that they grow in confidence and mature while at school. Their response to their questionnaire showed that they appreciated the high degree of trust placed in them. Many welcome taking on responsibilities such as acting as prefects, tutors for the younger pupils or representatives of year groups on the school council. Sometimes, however, pupils are too passive and become too reliant on their teachers and thus fail to seek their own solutions to problems. Instances of this were seen, for example, in science and citizenship lessons.

10. Behaviour is good overall and has a positive effect on learning. A clear behaviour policy leaves pupils in no doubt of the highest standards of conduct expected of them. The need for self-discipline is central to the school's policy. Nevertheless, not all children behave well and a few, mostly boys, clearly have a poor attitude and can quickly become inattentive in class, especially when the teaching is less effective and stimulating. Permanent exclusion is very rarely resorted to but the number of temporary exclusions is relatively high because breaches of conduct such as violence or abusive behaviour are simply not tolerated. Pupils and their parents accept that the policy is rigorous but acknowledge that it is implemented fairly and effectively.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	723	110	1
White – Irish	8	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	18	6	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	4	0	0

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

11. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is based firmly within the distinctive Christian character of the school. Pupils are helped to appreciate the special qualities of individuals and the worth and dignity of all people. This means that spiritual qualities such as tolerance, co-operation, and respect and care for others, are transmitted well through the general ethos of the school. However, the spiritual aspects of subjects are not highlighted sufficiently in departmental papers and schemes of work, and teachers are not always alive to chances in lessons to promote spiritual awareness. As a result, opportunities are missed. The school prides itself on being a family community and good moral and social behaviour is promoted actively by both the teaching and non-teaching staff. Pupils' widespread work on behalf of numerous charities such as Amnesty International, CAFOD, Fair Trade, and the children's charity St Joseph's Penny, bear out their awareness of others less fortunate than themselves, and their sense of fairness and justice. Religious Education and the citizenship programme are used well to build up an appreciation of different faiths and cultures, and the Building Bridges initiative, which involves Catholics and Muslims working jointly with the Year 7 pupils, has been successful. However, the curriculum overall does not use enough of the available opportunities to contribute to multi-cultural development. For example, English does not include literary texts from other heritages in Years 7 to 9. There is little evidence of the local culture of east Lancashire being celebrated. Cultural development is satisfactory and remains at a similar level to that reported at the previous inspection.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

### Teaching and learning

**Teaching is good overall so all pupils learn effectively.** There is no significant difference in the learning of boys and girls. **Assessment is satisfactory.**

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good management of pupils, linked to high expectations of behaviour, ensures that they stay on task, learn and make progress.
- Teachers are very effective in preparing all pupils for examinations and enabling them to achieve good results.
- Some departments make very good use of a variety of teaching styles to support learning, but this is not a consistent feature of all subjects.
- The deployment of learning-support assistants is effective in providing for the needs of pupils with SEN. However, pupils' individual education plans are not used consistently by teachers, when no additional support is available.
- Pupils' work is assessed regularly but the quality and use of marking and assessment is inconsistent across the school.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 107 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (1%)	20 (19%)	50 (47%)	29 (27%)	7 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

12. The table above indicates that 67 per cent of lessons were good or better compared to 65 per cent in the previous inspection. Therefore the quality of teaching has remained stable. This is confirmed by the small rising trend in the standards since 1998 and the good quality of learning seen during the inspection. Boys learn as well as girls, contrary to the national trend. This is because teachers ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of boys and they work hard to establish an ethos where boys want to learn. There is no significant difference between the quality of teaching and learning in any year group. However, there is a significant difference between the quality of teaching and learning in different subjects. Teaching and learning are particularly effective in English and French where a variety of teaching methods is used very effectively to engage pupils fully in all stages of their learning. These are also the subjects where assessment is used well to inform planning and to identify suitable targets to help pupils to make progress.

13. In most subjects, pupils achieve higher standards than expected. This is because teachers make good use of the time available, as pupils are usually punctual in arriving at lessons, and teaching groups are now small enough to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Assessment is used effectively to ensure that pupils are placed in groups that will help them to learn. These elements all represent progress since the previous inspection. Pupils' good behaviour and effective lesson planning also contribute to a good learning environment where pupils and teachers respect each other. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and this helps them to prepare pupils very effectively for examinations.

14. However, although the majority of teaching in the school is at least satisfactory and often good, most pupils are not independent learners, able to direct their own learning and recognise their own achievements. Pupils are not sufficiently aware of their current standards as teachers do not always ensure that pupils understand the standards required for each level and what they need to do to improve. Many teachers have not developed their teaching skills to take account of pupils with a range of abilities and learning styles in their classroom. Where this has occurred, the quality of teaching and learning has improved and pupils are achieving at higher levels in all aspects of their work. However, some subjects, such as science, have not adjusted to this approach with the result that teaching in science is only satisfactory overall and results are gradually declining.

15. Learning support assistants are effective in ensuring that pupils with physical disabilities and other pupils with SEN are fully involved in lessons. They ensure that planning helps pupils to achieve the targets in their individual education plans. These pupils make good progress in their learning. A very good example of this was seen in physical education. However, teachers do not always ensure that their planning meets the needs of all the pupils in the class and this leaves some pupils bored while others struggle with work that is too difficult. Although the school's approach to setting helps all pupils to learn, there is still a wide range of ability in most classes and very able pupils are often insufficiently challenged.

16. The school is currently developing its assessment procedures. It has compiled a good data base to track the progress of individual pupils, and teachers review each pupil's progress five times a year. Targets are agreed with pupils to help them to make progress. There is also a marking policy to support regular assessment. However, some of the assessment, particularly for pupils aged 11 to 14 is not always accurate, as is the case in geography and history, and the targets based on this inaccurate assessment are, therefore, not as useful as they might be. Where the school's marking and assessment policies are applied consistently, as in English, learning is effective, but this is not always the case.

## The curriculum

The school provides a broad and **satisfactory curriculum** that caters for all pupils. A wide range of vocational courses and enrichment activities increasingly enhances it and overall, **pupils are prepared well for life.**

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Although the curriculum provides a good range of courses and subjects to meet the needs of all pupils, the provision for PSHCE, history, geography and some aspects of design and technology is unsatisfactory.
- The curriculum is enriched by good opportunities for extra-curricular activity.
- Accommodation and resources overall are poor, with deficiencies in many areas.
- Provision for ICT is satisfactory but its use as a learning tool across subjects is limited, as there are not enough computers in school.
- The business enterprise partnerships offer opportunities for the school to develop links with local businesses and industry, and pupils are also prepared for later stages of education and employment.

### Commentary

17. The breadth of curricular opportunities has improved since the last inspection. All pupils have equal access to the full curriculum, irrespective of their learning needs, disability, gender or ethnicity.

18. The curriculum is well structured to provide a balanced education. In Years 7 to 9, the National Curriculum is fully implemented. However, although ICT is offered as a discrete subject in all year groups, the development of pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum is limited. Although the school has invested much time and training on the Key Stage 3 Strategy (a national strategy designed to improve teaching and learning for pupils in Years 7 to 9), departments are at different stages of fully incorporating the different strands into their curriculum planning and teaching. However, the strategy is leading to pupils achieving much-better-than-expected standards in English and mathematics, where there is good use of the three-part lessons. The design and technology curriculum is unsatisfactory, as it does not cover systems and control in Years 7 to 9. An excellent feature of the curriculum is that all pupils study two modern foreign languages, reflecting the emphasis placed on equal opportunities and inclusion.

19. A wider range of courses is now offered in Years 10 and 11. The school has begun to broaden further its curriculum by introducing a range of vocational courses in leisure and tourism and applied GCSE double-award courses in ICT and art and design. The introduction of more vocational courses forms an important part of the planned changes to provision in Years 10 and 11, which are a key priority in the school improvement plan. With the recent changes of academic and vocational courses, the curriculum is now closely matched to pupils' needs. At the end of Year 9 pupils are presented with wider option choices.

20. The curriculum for PSHCE is unsatisfactory, as there is no scheme of work and co-ordination of the different aspects of the subject is very poor. For example, whilst drugs and sex awareness are taught within science and religious education, there is no discussion between the departments about what will be taught and when.

21. Pupils are prepared for later stages in education and employment by the good careers education scheme, and very good links with Education Business Partnership (EBP). Year 11 pupils speak positively about the careers advice. The links with EBP provide pupils with opportunities to gain work experience and quality support from learning mentors; those appointed as prefects are given training. These initiatives with EBP are complemented by the links which the school has forged with Post 16 institutions and colleges of further education. Collaborative work with the

partnership institutions and local business is enabling the school to broaden its curriculum and strengthen links with the local business community. The school has also developed some links with primary schools, but curricular links to ease the transition into Year 7 are not fully exploited or even established.

22. Arrangements for reviewing the curriculum are being developed through the formation of the recently formed teaching and learning group; however, it is too early to assess its impact. Pupils benefit from the extensive enrichment activities. In addition to the range of after-school clubs for the different subjects, there are other activities in drama, music, and an array of activities in sport. Furthermore, the school's plan to move towards performing arts status is being fostered through an experimental cross-curricular initiative for Year 8 pupils in art, drama, physical education and music, with arrangements for including dance. There are also visits abroad.

23. The school's accommodation is poor, with deficiencies in a number of curriculum areas. In physical education, there are inadequate facilities during inclement weather, and when the sports halls are used for examination purposes. The science department has few laboratories, which is having an impact on standards, as pupils cannot be timetabled to use them as required. The location of the geography rooms is affecting standards because of frequent disruptions. Rooms are generally too small for the classes using them and overall corridors are very narrow. The layout of the building is restricting, with a narrow bridge as the main access. Despite the problems linked with the site and the absence of a systematic approach for recording maintenance difficulties, the supervisor and his staff work very hard to support the school.

24. Across the school, resources are unsatisfactory. There are insufficient computers for the needs of all subjects, and in modern foreign languages there are not enough textbooks for home study. The school is well staffed in most subjects, but curriculum areas such as English, physical education, design and technology and science have had long- and short-term non-specialist teachers for some time. This is affecting standards, particularly in science. Administrative and support staff provide an effective service to the school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good overall**. **Good** support, advice and guidance are provided for pupils, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The school's strategies to involve pupils in its work and development are **satisfactory**.

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

- Effective policies, procedures and arrangements are in place for caring and supporting pupils and they are well implemented.
- Teachers know the pupils well. Pupils' personal and educational progress is thoroughly monitored and supported.
- The school works closely with external specialist agencies to ensure the health, safety and well-being of pupils.
- Induction arrangements for new pupils are very good.
- Some pupils have concerns about the school, which they feel are not acted upon.
- The accommodation satisfies the health and safety requirements but staff have to work hard to maintain a safe environment.

## Commentary

25. Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Teaching and non-teaching staff place a high priority on the care, guidance and welfare of all pupils, whatever their age or circumstances. Incidents of oppressive behaviour such as bullying are rare but are dealt with firmly. Policies for child protection and health and safety work effectively. Four out of five pupils feel that there is an adult in the school they could talk to if they have a problem. Valuable support comes through the strong links that the school maintains with the external agencies such as the Lancashire Education Inclusion Service, Psychological Service and Speech and Language.

26. Teachers are able to monitor and promote pupils' attainment and personal development because they know their pupils well and have effective procedures for tracking and assessing their progress. Pupils, in turn, know what is expected of them and what their targets are but they are less certain about what they need to do to improve. Arrangements for the transition from the primary to the secondary stage work very smoothly; the confidence with which pupils in Year 7 have settled into life in their new school is very impressive.

27. All pupils with SEN have well written individual education plans which form the basis of support in lessons by learning support assistants. Support is regularly provided across the curriculum and learning support assistants review the progress of pupils on a weekly basis with the co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO). The welfare and safety of these pupils is carefully considered at these meetings, with the result that the overall care for pupils with SEN is good. Pupils are fully involved in the review of their learning targets.

28. Pupils are encouraged to take a part in the running of the school and are from time to time consulted about their views, notably through the school council. The majority of pupils agree that the teachers do listen to their ideas. However, their response to the pupils' questionnaire revealed some concerns about the school that the formal consultative processes do not seem to have identified but which pupils feel strongly should be addressed. For example, many would like a Year 11 common room; others complain about the state of the toilets and the smoking in them, and some believe that teachers could be fairer and listen to them more.

29. The maintenance and upkeep of the accommodation remain an on-going problem for the school. The health and safety committee and caretakers work hard to ensure that the school continues to meet the health and safety regulations, especially for those pupils with disabilities. However, the narrow but busy access to the school, the poor state of some of the buildings, small classrooms, narrow corridors and the poor outside facilities, continue to make safety a matter of concern.

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

The school's partnership with parents is **good**. The partnership with the community is **good**. Links with other schools and colleges are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The information for parents about the school and their children's progress is good.
- The school encourages parents to contribute to their children's learning at school and home.
- The links with the community contribute much to the ethos and work of the school.
- There are not enough links with other faith groups and the world of work.
- The school works actively with its partner schools and colleges to ensure effective transfer arrangements.



## Commentary

30. Parents have very positive views of the school. They agree that it expects their children to work hard and to do their best. They find teachers approachable and they approve of the information given to them about the school and its work. Parents have a good idea of how their children are getting on through the reviews carried out by the school five times a year. In addition, the annual progress reports on pupils are informative and well written, although in some subjects the targets for improvement could be clearer.

31. Formal mechanisms are in place for encouraging parents to make a contribution to their children's education, such as the pupil planner, and these work satisfactorily. However, the close relationship between most parents and the school means that there are ample informal opportunities for teachers to indicate ways in which parents can help. The response of most parents is good and their attendance at school events is high.

32. The school has established generally good links with the local community. It has a high reputation and is over-subscribed. The traditional links with the local parishes have been much enhanced by the work of the recently-appointed school chaplain. Many pupils make a special effort to engage in some activity in the local community and nearly 20 were awarded certificates for their community involvement at the last awards ceremony. Good use is made of the St Vincent de Paul scheme, enabling pupils to work with children in other schools; the link with the neighbouring special school is a very good example. Useful links arise out of the extensive charity work carried out by all year groups for local, national and international organisations. The school has made a very useful start through its Building Bridges project to develop its work on an interfaith partnership but recognises that more needs to be done. Similarly, the well-organised work-experience and Young Enterprise programmes have resulted in some useful contacts with local business and agencies; even so, more needs to be done to develop wider links with the world of work.

33. The links with the primary schools work very effectively. There is a programme of joint initiatives such as community involvement, and the transition arrangements for the new Year 7 pupils are well thought out and implemented. The Pendle Specialist School Initiative is helping to build further on the warm relationship the school already has with other local high schools. Similarly, the school has taken some promising steps to improve its links with local schools and colleges providing Post 16 education.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. The leadership of other key staff including the head of departments and heads of year is **good**. The overall management the school is **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The leadership of the headteacher who has been in post for four terms is very effective. He provides the school with a strong sense of purpose and direction.
- He is well supported by hard working and loyal governors who recognise their role in maintaining the standards and ethos of the school.
- The quality of leadership of other key staff in the school is good overall but there are examples of leaders who are unsatisfactory.
- Management systems in school are not rigorous enough to ensure that monitoring is effective and that weak departments and those with new leaders are identified and supported.
- The financial management of the school is very good.
- Performance management and staff development are well planned and effective.
- The leadership of the school has a strong commitment to the needs of all individuals in the school community.

## Commentary

34. The headteacher, in partnership with the governors and with the full support of the school community, provides strong and effective leadership for the school. There is a clear focus on ensuring that the school is an orderly community where all pupils, regardless of ability and disability, can achieve good standards and leave school with GCSE passes. This creates a climate of high expectation in relation to behaviour and achievement. The priority for the last year has been for the new school leadership to establish itself and preserve the existing standards and ethos of the school. This has been achieved. Senior leaders work as an effective team under the leadership of the headteacher; they have clearly delegated roles and they are effective in them.

35. The governance of the school is good because the focus of their governance is the Curriculum Committee that drives all the other committees including the Finance and Staffing Committees. The governors therefore have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school, and financial decisions are taken in relation to the perceived priorities. The strengthened financial position of the school in the last financial year reflects very careful consideration of priorities in recent years. The principles of best value are followed rigorously.

### Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,103,067.00
Total expenditure	2,055,252.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,700.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	386.00
Balance carried forward to the next	48,142.00

36. Since the previous inspection the school has managed gradually to eradicate its budget deficit. This has meant that the school has faced financial constraints and has not been in the position to buy the computers necessary to ensure that the statutory requirements for design and technology and ICT across the curriculum are met. However, the table above suggests that the governors can now address this issue. The management of the school and the governors have worked hard to make the school environment attractive and suitable for the pupils who attend the school. They use finance wisely to achieve this. However, the site and the building are too small for the number of pupils in the school and this is beyond the powers of the governors to rectify, as funding is not available for major building improvements.

37. The governors monitor behaviour in school through their discipline committee. However, they are less involved in monitoring the management and leadership of curriculum areas through meeting with heads of department and visiting the school during the day. If this monitoring had taken place, the governors would have been more aware of the weakness in some departments and the lack of progress in others. Several of these curriculum issues were concerns at the time of the previous inspection and they remain unresolved.

38. The management systems in the school, although satisfactory overall, have not been evaluated and refined but there are plans for this in the school development plan. Management strengths relate to good school and departmental strategic planning and the effective use of performance management to support staff development in relation to the school priorities. However, monitoring is a weakness. Although some monitoring takes place as part of performance management, systematic monitoring has not been established. Consequently, the extent of some of the weaknesses in curriculum areas was not fully realised or understood, therefore adequate support has not been available. Although all departments are line-managed by a member of the senior management, the quality of this management is inconsistent. However, the school has twice evaluated the issues that face the school and progress has been made since the appointment of the new headteacher. Overall these evaluations are an accurate reflection of the school's achievement and areas for development.

39. The leadership of heads of department and heads of year is good, overall, as they provide a clear sense of purpose and direction for colleagues and they reinforce the school aims and ethos. Their management is satisfactory overall. There are examples of good and very good practice as well as examples of unsatisfactory practice. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory in science and personal and social education, where resources are underused and planning, co-ordination, monitoring and review are unsatisfactory. Very good practice is found in a number of areas including English and SEN. In SEN, good leadership has engendered very good teamwork and a good sense of shared aims within the department. This is particularly facilitated by the weekly monitoring meetings, in which the SENCO reviews the progress and achievement of all those pupils on the register with the support teachers and learning-support assistants. Very good management has produced effective co-ordination of human and learning resources and provides continuing good access for all pupils. The head of department provides a good role model.

40. The leadership and management team of the school with governors and staff are committed to raising standards and to caring for pupils. It has started to work with a 'leading-edge' school with a view to improving management. The school has the internal capacity to improve.

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

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4.**

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

##### **English**

The provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Pupils achieve very well because of the very good quality of the teaching and learning.
- The quality of leadership and management of English is very effective in sustaining standards because of the high expectations of work and behaviour.
- Effective use of the Key Stage 3 Strategy has led to improved planning and learning, as pupils are challenged to read critically and write accurately.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress by the end of Year 11 because setting arrangements and work are carefully matched to their needs.
- The department nurtures a strong work ethic in pupils, which is leading to very good learning.

##### **Commentary**

41. Standards are well above average in the National Curriculum tests and the high test and GCSE examination results have been sustained since the last inspection. The 2003 results were well above average and were an improvement on the previous year's results, which were also high. The school does very well by its boys and the gap between boys' and girls' performance is very narrow. These results were above average for similar schools. Whereas the GCSE English results were slightly above average, the English literature results were well above the national average and high for similar schools. Over 20 per cent of all pupils obtained the highest grades, A\*/A in both subjects. More girls than boys achieve the higher grades; nevertheless, boys' results are well above the national average for boys. Traditionally, all pupils are entered for the GCSE examinations with most achieving much better results than their predicted grades.

42. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils achieve very well in English because of the very good teaching and learning and use of the Key Stage 3 Strategy to develop analytical reading and writing skills. Pupils reach above average standards in speaking and listening. They speak with confidence and clarity when taking part in feedback, group work, or whole class discussion. Their attentive listening skills enable them to respond spontaneously to questions; boys and girls take equal part in oral work.

43. Attainment in critical reading is well above average for most pupils, with lower-attaining pupils achieving well by the end of Year 9 and 11. In response to both narrative and non-factual writing, pupils use a range of reading strategies when analysing, evaluating or speculating. They apply the taught reading skills well, often making perceptive comments on the use of language. Although lower-attaining pupils, including those with SEN read with good engagement and understanding, their written response is not as analytical as their oral work. Standards in writing are above average for most pupils. Writing is often well structured because pupils use a range of techniques to organise their ideas into paragraphs. They are secure in sequencing ideas within paragraphs to ensure coherence. Lower-attaining pupils use writing frames well and most pupils use the process of drafting, re-drafting and editing to improve their writing. Work is neatly presented, although pupils with weak literacy skills experience difficulties with handwriting.

44. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers are very committed to helping pupils achieve well in all areas of the English curriculum. Pupils learn well because expectations of work and behaviour are clearly established and the Key Stage 3 Strategy is used very well to structure lessons and match work to pupils' needs. Gifted and talented pupils are given opportunities to ask questions and to express their views. Teachers use a range of approaches and activities that involve pupils taking responsibility for their learning. Teachers also use good questioning techniques to assess pupils' progress. The setting arrangements ensure that pupils with SEN follow the same curriculum with work that is carefully matched to their needs. These pupils are also challenged to achieve well and respond positively to the advice and support from the learning assistants who work alongside them.

45. The use of day to day assessment is good overall but requires some improvement in Years 7 to 9. Pupils receive good quality and immediate feedback but diagnostic marking is more rigorous in Years 10 and 11, where pupils use the GCSE marking criteria to monitor their own progress. In contrast, whilst Year 7 to 9 pupils take part in self-assessment, target-setting lacks precision and marking does not always indicate how they can improve their work. Homework is set frequently and regularly.

46. The head of department provides strong leadership. She has a commitment to maintaining high standards and to ensuring that the curriculum is matched to the needs of pupils. The systematic use of assessment data ensures that the department is continuously challenged to maintain high standards, and ongoing curriculum review ensures that pupils' needs are met. The department is very well managed through a clear system of line management. The departmental review plan reflects the school improvement plan and has a sharp focus on improving literacy. Forward planning is used to ensure that pupils achieve their best; hence, the department is now planning to widen the curriculum to include media studies as an option. The head of department has a detailed knowledge of work in the department through systematic monitoring of pupils' work, departmental review, observation of teaching and learning and the standardisation of marking.

47. Since the previous inspection, progress within the English department has been good. Standards have been sustained and are now well above average in the tests and GCSE literature, despite the recent changes in staffing. Although there is still insufficient access to ICT, the department ensures that pupils use it for research and presentation.

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

48. There is good provision overall, across the curriculum for the development of literacy skills. Since the last inspection, the library facilities have improved significantly, though the number of books is still below the recommended level. The library now has a suite of computers which pupils use extensively for personal study. The librarian actively promotes reading and makes a significant contribution to improving literacy by working with an assistant to give intensive support to pupils with weak literacy skills.

49. Pupils have good opportunities in most subjects to express their ideas and speak at length. In subjects such as French and Spanish, they use the language in question and are expected to answer in full sentences. However, the emphasis on improving speaking and listening skills is unsatisfactory in geography and history. Technical vocabulary and opportunities for research are developed in most curriculum areas. In English, text-highlighting and annotation are routinely taught but there is little wider reading and few opportunities to retrieve information in history and geography. Pupils structure their work well but there is not a consistent approach to teaching a range of writing skills across the curriculum. In history, higher-attaining pupils manage discursive writing well but lower-attaining pupils are not being equipped to write at length for different purposes. Expectations of pupils writing accurately are high in English, religious education and modern foreign languages. In science and in ICT, little use is made of writing frames, most pupils do not know how to correct mistakes. Work is neatly presented but a small number of pupils with learning difficulties struggle to write legibly. Overall standards in literacy are good.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths and weaknesses:

- In Years 10 and 11, pupils achieve well in French and very well in Spanish, because of good teaching and learning.
- The ablest pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not achieve their best because their learning needs are not fully catered for.
- Boys speak confidently in French and Spanish lessons.
- The schemes of work for Years 7 - 9 are not good enough to ensure that all pupils achieve well.
- The teachers use their very good language knowledge and skills effectively in lessons, enabling pupils to make good progress in listening.
- The shortage of textbooks limits pupils' opportunities for home study.

### Commentary

#### French and Spanish

50. In 2002 and 2003, the performance in Year 9 teacher assessments in French was above national expectations. In 2002, GCSE results in modern languages were above average. In 2003, they were above average in French and below average in Spanish. In recent years, few pupils have gained A\*/A grades. Boys have generally performed better in Spanish than the girls. Staffing difficulties, which are now resolved, have adversely affected continuity of learning in Spanish.

51. All pupils in the school learn both French in Year 7 and French and Spanish in Years 8 and 9. In Spanish, standards are below average, but achievement is good, considering the limited time pupils have for this subject. In French, standards are above average and achievement is good. In both languages, many able pupils do not reach the higher standards of which they are capable because they are insufficiently challenged in some lessons. Additionally, the schemes of work do not match pupils' differing capabilities in each of the ability bands. In Year 11, standards are above average in each language, with more pupils now working towards A\*/A GCSE grades. Pupils achieve well in French and very well in Spanish, mainly because, in Years 10 and 11, teaching and lesson planning are very clearly linked to examination requirements. In all years, opportunities for pupils to study at home are limited by shortages of text books.

52. Pupils make good progress in listening, due to most teachers' consistent use in lessons of their very good foreign language knowledge. In speaking, pupils of all abilities make good progress, and boys especially respond confidently to teachers' questions. In reading, pupils make good progress in both languages. In writing, in Years 8 and 9, most pupils are heavily dependent on prompt sheets, but by Year 11, all pupils express themselves very well, with able pupils using a range of tenses and vocabulary, and average and lower-attaining pupils writing more simply. Many pupils use ICT effectively to present coursework. Pupils with SEN make good progress, but gifted and talented pupils make unsatisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9, because their specific learning needs are not fully addressed. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.

53. Teaching and learning are good overall. Two thirds of the teaching seen was good or better. Teachers use their own high-quality resources effectively and motivate pupils well with lively teaching methods. Boys' achievement is particularly good as they respond positively to this well structured and innovative teaching. In Years 7 to 9, teachers' lesson planning is good overall, but it does not always take account of the average and lower-attaining pupils' concentration difficulties towards the end of the long lessons. Teachers make good use of homework and prepare pupils very well for examinations. Teachers' marking is helpful but assessment is not sufficiently related to National Curriculum criteria and many pupils are not aware of the levels they are working at; they do not have challenging individual targets.

54. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The departmental head gives good direction to the enthusiastic and talented team, and the department is a very good provider of initial teacher training. However, the schemes of work and assessment procedures for Years 7 to 9 are not good enough and they are not used consistently. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory overall. In Years 10 and 11, standards in Spanish have improved substantially.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and 10 to 11.
- Leadership and management are good.
- A well planned curriculum and good teaching are key factors in improving standards.
- There is inconsistency in the quality of marking of written work.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory; rooms are too small for the number of pupils in many classes.

### **Commentary**

55. Pupils' standards in mathematics on entry to the school are average. Results in national tests in Year 9 were above average in 2003 and better than those for 2002. Most students did better than expected from their prior attainment. Standards at GCSE were above average in 2003 and better than those for 2002. Most students achieved well compared to their prior attainment. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are above average. Pupils maintain these above-average standards in Year 11. Achievement is good throughout the school.

56. Good teaching and learning, and a well-structured curriculum have a cumulative positive impact on improving standards of work as pupils go from Year 7 to 11. These factors and the grouping of pupils by prior attainment, all help pupils to achieve well. By Year 11, higher-attaining pupils have strong algebraic skills and can use these confidently in a wide range of complex problems. The additional teaching group in for the most able pupils Year 11 is a key factor in their good achievement. Lower-attaining pupils have a secure foundation in mathematical skills as is shown by the 2003 GCSE results. All pupils in the year group were entered, and virtually all passed; there were also very few low grades.

57. There is no significant difference between the attainment and achievement of boys and girls as seen during the inspection. Examination and test results vary slightly by gender from year to year depending on the ability profile of each year group.

58. Pupils with SEN achieve well due to good support from teachers and learning support assistants, as well as a curriculum and teaching and learning methods that are closely matched to their needs.

59. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers explain mathematical ideas clearly and simply, anticipating which parts pupils are likely to find difficult. They make good use of practical activities, such as number cards, large diagrams and practical demonstrations, to help pupils overcome these. These help pupils to learn well and to enjoy their work. Good relationships between pupils and teachers encourage pupils to discuss ideas, ask questions and work well with their peers, for example in using spreadsheets to develop algebraic skills. When teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, too much time is taken up keeping some difficult pupils on task and making sure they are not distracting others; this slows the pace of learning. Pupils with behavioural difficulties often do not have in-class support, making the teacher's task harder. Pupils with physical difficulties are well supported in class.

60. Teachers give clear feedback, often oral, to pupils about their work in lessons. The quality of marking of written work is inconsistent. Some is of a high quality so pupils learn how to improve their work; other marking is less detailed. In most lessons, teachers give very clear guidance as to how pupils' written work should be presented. However, at times, they do not make their requirements explicit enough to make sure that all pupils present their work well.

61. The head of department gives strong mathematical leadership, with a clear focus on providing opportunities for pupils to enjoy their work and achieve well. Management is good. In particular, the department is skilled at analysing a wide range of performance data to group pupils for learning, to highlight those parts of mathematics that pupils are finding difficult, and to track their progress.

62. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Teaching has improved, as have resources. However accommodation is still unsatisfactory. The rooms are small and this restricts the way in which pupils can be organised for learning, especially when class sizes are large.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

63. Pupils acquire a good standard of mathematical skills in their mathematics lessons. This helps them to make progress in other areas. For example, in science, pupils can use formulae and carry out necessary calculations. Pupils in design and technology can measure accurately and calculate the amount of metal needed for specific designs.

64. There is a whole school numeracy policy and an audit was carried out to find how mathematical skills were used in other subjects. However, few subjects are providing planned opportunities to do so. For example, opportunities to use these skills are much less frequent in geography than is usually found.

## **SCIENCE**

The overall quality of provision is **unsatisfactory**.

- By Year 11 pupils achieve well and attain standards above those expected nationally.
- The leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- The achievement of pupils at Year 9 is unsatisfactory because of unsatisfactory teaching.
- The provision for pupils with SEN is good but provision for gifted and talented pupils is, overall, unsatisfactory.
- The laboratory space is inadequate.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support learning in science.

### **Commentary**

65. The results in the 2003 national assessments at the end of Year 9 were broadly in line with the national average when compared to all schools but below the expected level when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment was well below average in comparison with similar schools. Over the last four years, standards in the Year 9 tests have gradually fallen in comparison with the national trend and girls have performed less well than boys, although the differences in actual performance have not been significant. The proportion of pupils attaining A\*-C grades in the 2003 GCSE examinations was well above the national average in comparison with all schools nationally and with similar schools. However, during the last four years GCSE results have declined. Results in the dual award examination have been better than those for the single award, which were below the national average. The performance of boys has been better than that of girls in comparison with national differences over the same period. By the



end of Year 11 achievement is good but achievement by the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory. At the time of the last inspection achievement was consistently good. These differences are attributable to more effective teaching in Years 10 and 11, particularly in the additional support given to pupils in Year 11, through additional lessons and specific advice on examination skills.

66. Standards seen during the inspection reflect those in national examinations and tests. By the end of Year 11 pupils reach standards above those expected nationally and achieve well. Year 11 pupils have a good understanding of the effects of population and habitat changes on the environment, know how to draw and interpret graphs arising from investigative work and show a good grasp of how to classify metals using the Periodic Table. By Year 9, attainment is broadly average, but achievement is unsatisfactory because of unsatisfactory teaching and learning. In a lesson about changes of state, pupils had a sound knowledge of how food chains work but lacked investigational skills when taking readings (such as temperature over time). In the best lessons, pupils' attitudes are often good, but when teaching is unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour deteriorate noticeably. Invariably in these lessons, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to develop independence as learners; they become bored, and occasionally disruptive.

67. Teaching is satisfactory overall, though the quality has declined since last inspection. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is too often mediocre and in the worst lessons unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, better teaching leads to higher standards and in one excellent lesson about periodic classification of elements, pupils' high levels of participation, interest and endeavour led to very good learning and high achievement. In unsatisfactory lessons, teachers use a limited variety of methods, take insufficient account of prior attainment in planning for individuals and groups and, in some cases, are not very good at handling pupils. Until recently, assessment through Years 7 to 9 has been unsatisfactory and new arrangements introduced during the last term have not yet had sufficient impact on teachers' planning or standards. Regular modular assessment in Years 10 and 11 has resulted in more focused feedback to pupils and very effective support linked to areas of weakness. Learning support assistants are well deployed by the department to help pupils with SEN and as a result they achieve as well as other pupils. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is inconsistent and, overall, unsatisfactory because the work is not challenging enough, particularly in Years 7 to 9.

68. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The recently appointed acting head of department has put in place a new scheme of work for Years 7 to 9, which provides better opportunities for regular assessment. However, this has not yet had any significant impact on teaching and learning. The departmental development plan identifies some important issues for development, some of which have been achieved, but others, like the effective use ICT, have not. This was an issue identified at the time of the previous inspection. Monitoring of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory and this has had a negative impact on the quality of provision, particularly in Years 7 to 9. The number of laboratories is inadequate and leads to too many lessons taught in rooms without adequate services for science investigational work. This limits the choice of activities and challenge that can be provided. Overall, improvement since the time of the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

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

- GCSE results are consistently above the national average and pupils' achievement is good.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects, and provision in this respect is unsatisfactory.
- Resources are unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is good and pupils learn well.
- Pupils have positive attitudes that support their learning.
- Access to computers outside lesson times is good.

## **Commentary**

69. On entry to the school in Year 7, pupils' standards in ICT are below national expectations; by the end of Year 9 standards are in line. Most pupils can create good quality presentations for particular audiences, showing above-average skills in the use of word processing and desktop publishing software. They have below average knowledge and understanding of data handling through the use of databases, but their skills in the use of spreadsheets are above average. Pupils have a very limited understanding of the use of ICT to solve problems by building models, constructing procedures and then measuring or controlling the results. Very few pupils have developed the independent learning skills expected of pupils of this age and still rely too much on their teachers for support but, given their attainment on entry to the school, achievement is good.

70. By Year 11, standards are still average overall. Pupils following the GCSE course have good design skills and can apply these in a number of different real-world situations. The 2003 GCSE results were above average, and a significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection. There were few A\* or A grades but every pupil entered achieved a pass. However, pupils following the basic skills course have below average design skills and are not yet confident users of ICT. Pupils with SEN make good progress because teachers are well informed about their needs and teaching assistants provide effective support. Overall achievement is good.

71. Teaching and learning are good overall. Good subject knowledge is a common feature of the teaching and an important factor in motivating and encouraging pupils to learn. Management of pupils, who, in all years, bring positive and responsible attitudes to their work, is good, and little time is wasted establishing and maintaining control. Relationships with pupils are good and pupils are not afraid to ask questions or to risk making mistakes when asked to do challenging work. Homework is used well to support pupils' learning. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their independent learning skills; they have few self-help resources and rely too much on their teacher directing them onto the next task.

72. The leadership and management of the subject by the ICT co-ordinator are good. Development planning overall is good. Monitoring procedures are effective and there is a clear focus on pupils' achieving well. The number of computers available for pupils to use is below average for a school of this size; this limits the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects.

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

73. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. This is principally because the school has fewer computers than average for this size of school. Only in English, mathematics, art and humanities are computers used frequently to help pupils learn, mainly through the use of the Internet for research, and word processing and desk-top publishing software for presentation. Science and design and technology subjects are failing to meet the statutory requirement to use ICT to support pupils' learning. Although music and modern foreign languages make some use of computers, this feature of their work remains a weakness and an area for further development.

## HUMANITIES

### Leadership and management of the humanities

Leadership and management of the humanities are now **satisfactory**.

74. A long-term failure by the school to address weakness identified in earlier reports has contributed to the poor standards in recent years. The recently appointed head of faculty has worked very hard to secure improvements. Improvements to the schemes of work in geography and history have been introduced. These provide opportunities for more interesting teaching, and learning and standards in Years 7 and 8 are beginning to improve.

#### Development priorities have been to:

- Review and modernise schemes of work in Years 7 to 9.
- Revise faculty policies, particularly on teaching and learning styles.
- Purchase modern resources.
- Improve opportunities for the use of computers.
- Develop the range of visits and trips in both subjects (geography, history).

Opportunities for the head of faculty to monitor the impact of these changes are limited and the quality of teaching is still too variable. Recent changes have not yet had time to improve the standards achieved, especially in geography, by Year 9 or Year 11.

### Geography

Provision in geography is **unsatisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school has been ineffective in addressing the issues raised in the previous inspection, particularly relating to raising attainment, increasing the range of writing tasks and improving the breadth of teaching styles.
- The amount of time allocated to geography in Year 9 is limited and pupils' progress is slower as a result.
- Marking is undertaken regularly but does not help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work in geography.
- Very recent changes to the scheme of work are increasing the range of teaching styles that result in active learning, but these have not yet improved standards achieved by the end of Years 9 and 11.

### Commentary

75. Pupils come into Year 7 with limited geographical skills. Although they make satisfactory progress, standards seen in Year 9 are still just below average. Pupils have a reasonable grasp of factual knowledge but many fail to go beyond descriptions or offer plausible explanations. The limited time available for teaching humanities in Year 9 restricts the progress made in this important pre-GCSE year. Changes to the schemes of work, linked with more interesting teaching, are improving standards lower down the school.

76. Standards in Year 11 are unsatisfactory. Whilst all pupils entered for GCSE in 2002 obtained A\*-G pass grades, the proportion of A\*-C grades was well below the national average, and declined further in 2003. Work by the present Year 11 is well below average. Immature behaviour by a significant minority of pupils reduces the impact of teaching. Answers are often superficial, contain inaccurate facts and do not earn higher marks. By contrast, Year 10 pupils work harder and produce thoughtful answers that make links, for instance, between concern for the future of the global environment and the development of renewable energy sources. Overall, teaching is

unsatisfactory because pupils do not learn enough or make satisfactory progress. Although all lessons seen were satisfactory or better in themselves, work in books continues to reflect the limited range of activities and writing opportunities that was criticised in previous reports. The effective teaching observed involves:-

- \* sharing clear learning objectives with pupils;
- \* using different types of learning activity within lessons;
- \* checking that pupils understand the links between facts and local/world issues;
- \* making lessons interesting by providing all pupils, including the more able, with sufficiently challenging tasks;
- \* using the closing part of lessons to monitor the quality of learning that had taken place.

77. Lessons have some of these features but too few have most of them. Teachers structure the 70 minute lessons into sections, but pupils say many lessons involve too much talking by the teacher and can be boring. Their books support this view and contain evidence of a limited range of activities and challenges. The attention of a significant minority begins to wander in the second half of some lessons as interest evaporates. Better teaching introduces challenging 'real' issues and invites focused discussions. Some older pupils are not used to this approach and produce superficial answers. In contrast, pupils in Years 7 and 8 are developing an ability to describe complex relationships between people, places and geographical processes. Teachers support this by encouraging the use of specialist subject vocabulary. Pupils and parents value the opportunities to go on visits. Teachers try to involve all pupils in lessons. The progress made by those with statements of SEN is satisfactory and is good where they receive one-to-one support from teaching assistants.

78. Marking is regular but pupils are not told clearly what is good about their work, or given individual progress targets. Whilst many can name the levels or grades they are working towards, they do not know what they need to do to achieve them. The use of computers is still limited. Planned new topics will require pupils to use computers to record and use geographical data. Improvements since the last inspection have been too long in coming but pupils and parents feel encouraged by the recent improvements in teaching.

## History

Provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main Strengths and Weaknesses:

- The school has been ineffective in addressing issues raised in the previous report.
- GCSE results improved considerably in 2003 although the proportion of A\*-C grades remained well below the national average.
- Pupils enjoy the well-planned visits but little use is made of artefacts and pupils have too few opportunities to identify with life and work in other times.
- Although improving, the quality of teaching is not consistent and teachers' assessments of work in Years 7 to 9 do not extend to providing written advice on how to improve National Curriculum Levels.
- The time available for history in Year 9 is too short, pupils' progress is slower and attainment is lower as a result.

## Commentary

Standards overall are below average.

79. Standards seen in Year 9 are close to the national average. Pupils have good recall of events but their skills of analysis and explanation are weaker. The significant variation in the standards achieved in Years 7 and 8 is linked to the different styles used by their teachers.

80. GCSE results improved significantly in 2003 but remained well below the national average. The school believes in allowing well-motivated pupils to take the course, whatever their levels of skill at the start of Year 10. The higher-attaining pupils are able to select evidence to support or challenge points of view, as in a Year 11 lesson dealing with the isolationist debate in the USA in the 1920's.

81. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory because it is based on schemes of work that need to be revised and there is not enough time available to deliver the history curriculum. In addition, teachers do not regularly use a variety of teaching styles or set a variety of tasks which interest and motivate pupils. Pupils' concentration is therefore poor. This was an issue at the time of the previous inspection. There is some evidence of more interesting approaches as in the use of 'living portraits' to investigate why soldiers seem so cheerful in World War 1 photographs. However, such approaches are not sufficiently evident in work seen and pupils remember such lessons as exceptions rather than the rule. This is holding back the development of pupils as independent learners. Many pupils rely too much on remembering key facts rather than developing skills of analysis and interpretation. It is this that later prevents them from obtaining marks in the A\* to C range at GCSE. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory, as good specialist knowledge is used to plan tightly structured lessons based on a good scheme of work. There is more emphasis on the development of skills.

82. Work is marked regularly in Years 7 to 10 but the system of letter and number grading for quality and effort does not help pupils to understand why some work is successful or where they could improve. However, teachers mark Year 11 work effectively and they make good use of the examination mark scheme. Their comments provide clear information about the quality of the work and what needs to be done to improve, but GCSE pupils are poor at analysing their own answers.

83. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Teachers are careful to try to include all pupils in their lessons and those with statements of SEN are well supported by classroom assistants. Extension activities are planned for higher-attaining pupils but as these are often additional tasks, pupils who work more thoughtfully do not always benefit from them.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

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

- The recently-appointed head of department is instigating improvement.
- Good teaching in Years 7 to 9 enables pupils to achieve well.
- GCSE examination results have improved and are now in line with those of similar schools.
- The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements in Years 7 to 9.
- Provision for ICT is inadequate and has a negative impact on standards.

#### **Commentary**

84. Pupils enter school with standards that are below average in this subject. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are average for all pupils regardless of gender or ability. This represents good achievement. By the end of Year 9 pupils have an understanding of the design process. They can work effectively with a range of tools and materials, paying attention to health and safety. Pupils can carry out useful research for their work, using several sources. Pupils generate possible ideas for their products but their drawing skills, when communicating initial design ideas, are weak. Pupils make products which, on the whole, are fit for purpose and look attractive. A few pupils display weak spelling in their written work. Pupils use ICT in their work to only a limited extent.

85. Examination results for Year 11 pupils in 2003 are in line with the national average, an improvement on the previous year when they were below average. This represents satisfactory achievement. Some variation exists in standards between the material areas; they are lower in food and textiles than in other material areas. Standards in textiles have been adversely affected by long-term staff absence. Results in product design and resistant materials are above average, whilst those in food technology are below.

86. Pupils in Year 10 learn to use the design process and are able to apply this knowledge to solve design problems in all the material areas. Pupils in Year 11 are at an early stage in learning to plan their work by producing sequence drawings using flow charts. Pupils can talk confidently about their ideas for solving a design problem when completing coursework. Pupils have literacy and mathematical skills that are sufficient for the demands of the subject but they do not have easy access to computers and this affects standards. Currently, the systems and control element of the National Curriculum cannot be taught, due to a lack of computers and the related technology. There is only limited provision for computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacture (CAM). Although these deficiencies make the design and technology curriculum unsatisfactory, the department is judged to have sufficient strengths to make the overall provision satisfactory.

87. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. This is because some teachers allow pupils to focus too much on the manufacturing element of coursework and fail to ensure that the design process is appropriately integrated. As a result, some pupils, particularly those of lower ability, do not fully understand the purpose of their work. The development of designing skills becomes marginalised in this situation. Lessons are well planned and contain a variety of activities so that pupils find them interesting. Difficult concepts are taught well in Years 7 to 9, so that pupils make appropriate progress in gaining knowledge and understanding. Pupils of all abilities, including those who have SEN, are attentive to their teachers and the views of other pupils, and respond well to what is offered. Pupils enjoy the subject and are taught to work co-operatively in pairs, groups and in teams. Assessment is an area for development. Teachers do not make sufficient use of data about pupils' prior learning to aid planning and to monitor progress.

88. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The very recently appointed head of department has correctly identified what needs to be done and is giving clear direction to the department to enable it to move forward. However, there are some issues relating to staffing, large classes, time table anomalies, resources for teaching drawing skills and ICT provision that have not been addressed. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

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

- Standards at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE are above the national average.
- Teaching is good and expectations are high so pupils behave well.
- The department is well led and managed.
- There is insufficient provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) facilities are inadequate.

## Commentary

89. Achievement is good overall. There is no data to establish levels on entry, but by the end of Year 9, standards exceed national expectations and, as the result of good teaching and high expectations, pupils are achieving well. Standards in Year 11 exceeded national results for GCSE in 2003, as they have done in recent years. This represents a very good improvement in standards since the previous inspection.

90. Good features of the pupils' work in Year 9 are their development of good drawing and colouring skills, supported by a vigorous, challenging homework programme. Opportunities for three-dimensional work are underdeveloped. Good features in Years 10 and 11 include some high standards of observational drawing in pencil and oil pastel, as well as some highly imaginative and well constructed three-dimensional work in a wide variety of media. Work is frequently supported by wide-ranging and well-presented research and experimentation. Pupils with SEN achieve well in all years because teachers provide good demonstrations and make good use of learning support assistants. Pupils who are gifted in art make good progress but they do not have enough opportunities to develop their talent, as there are too few enrichment activities.

91. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and most are interested and enthusiastic about their work. The high expectation of homework, particularly in Years 10 and 11, has contributed to improved standards. However, the pace of some lessons is not sufficiently demanding. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 do not know the National Curriculum Levels they achieve and therefore they do not understand how to improve their work. Provision for ICT meets statutory requirements but facilities are inadequate and not used effectively to support learning. Through research on the work of famous artists and the evaluation of their methods, pupils have suitable opportunities to develop their literacy skills, but end-of-lesson reviews are not sufficiently rigorous in assisting pupils to develop their speaking skills or to evaluate the progress made during the lesson. Pupils' appreciation of the spiritual value of art is underdeveloped.

92. Leadership is good. High standards are set and maintained by an experienced and enthusiastic specialist. Management is good and has enabled standards to rise in Years 10 and 11 in recent years. As a result, there has been a very significant improvement in the department's position in relation to other departments. The good displays of pupils' work in the department and public areas make a significant contribution to the school ethos. However, insufficient use is made of assessment information and the specialist accommodation available.

## Drama

Overall, the quality of provision in drama is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well because they enjoy the subject and respond positively to the good quality teaching.
- Good leadership and high expectations have established a clear vision and high expectations for the department.
- The strong work ethic is leading to pupils gaining in confidence and having high aspirations for future learning.

## Commentary

93. Pupils begin the GCSE drama course with some experience based on a system whereby each year group in Years 7 to 9 receives short six-week units of work twice each academic year. Inspection evidence indicates that in recent years, although most of the cohort begins the course with well below average skills, they achieve much better standards than expected. In 2003, GCSE

results were slightly below the national average and were similar to the previous year's results. These results represent a fair reflection of pupils' achievement. Major factors in pupils achieving so well are strong leadership, very good relationship between the teacher and pupils and consistently good teaching and well-motivated pupils who enjoy the subject.

94. The GCSE portfolios show good progress throughout the course. Pupils have a strong affiliation to the subject. They believe that it is making a significant contribution to their personal development and many aspire to extend their learning beyond the age of sixteen. The emphasis on portfolio work for the GCSE examination contributes to the development of pupils' literacy and oracy skills. Such is pupils' enjoyment of the subject and confidence in succeeding, that reluctant writers do not find the work daunting. Most write at length to meet the requirements of the examination.

95. Pupils with SEN, in particular, those with a physical or medical disability, behavioural or learning difficulties, perform on equal terms with their peers. The subject continues to make a strong and very effective contribution to equality of opportunity for all pupils.

96. Pupils work with enthusiasm, drive and energy when devising role-play. The younger pupils in Years 7 and 9 find that drama is fun. Towards the end of Year 9, most work confidently, with higher-attaining pupils adopting a directorial stance when developing group work. They listen to instructions and co-operate well in a range of activities. Pupils use good critical skills and evaluate each other's performance, by emphasising strengths and areas for improvement. This approach increases their understanding of the use of space, voice, gestures and movement, as well as their awareness of the audience when they perform.

97. The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons are well planned, with a sharp focus on developing pupils' critical skills through intensive questioning that requires them to think about developing their performance. Teachers use warm-up exercises well to increase concentration. They use a range of activities to motivate pupils to create their own dramatic interpretation from a basic idea. Humour is used effectively to reinforce teaching points and give pupils opportunities to discuss their work. In turn, pupils learn well because they are actively engaged in the work and willingly accept advice and support from their teachers and each other. Good use is made of the plenary session at the end of the lesson to enable the pupils to evaluate their progress and achievement. Assessment is effective, as good use is made of data, and pupils have targets to meet.

98. The head of department ensures that drama is well led and managed in the school. She provides a strong sense of direction for the subject based on the belief that drama gives pupils confidence and enables them to succeed regardless of gender, ability or disability. She has developed good links with other departments and with actors outside the school. She regularly monitors teaching and the quality of pupils' work.

## **MUSIC**

Provision in music is **good**.

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

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Realistic challenges and involvement of pupils in lessons ensure their commitment.
- There is a caring, secure atmosphere in lessons, where every pupil feels valued.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are very well behaved.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
- Accommodation and ICT provision are less than satisfactory.



## Commentary

99. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with below average standards in music but by the end of Year 9 achievement is good and standards match those nationally. At the end of Year 9 the boys' achievement is higher than that of the girls. In Years 10 and 11, the musical ability of those who choose to study music to GCSE is below average, therefore, overall results are below average; but given the low standard that some of these pupils have on entry to Year 10, they achieve well.

100. By Year 9 pupils use music vocabulary successfully, compose happily in both minor and major keys and perform well both in groups and individually. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 perform effectively in vocal and instrumental ensembles; they can analyse recorded music accurately and compose with confidence.

101. Teaching is good, and some very good teaching was observed. Learning is good and pupils are committed to their work because lessons are well planned, conducted at a brisk pace and underpinned by realistic challenges for all. The teacher's clear explanation, use of gentle humour and practical demonstrations on the keyboard inspires the pupils and enables them to translate theory into practice most successfully. Through the teacher's skilful illustration of dynamics, rhythm and duration of notes, Year 9 pupils were able to add texture to their own playing on the keyboards.

102. The department is in the capable hands of an experienced music teacher who has a strong command of the subject. Assessment is used conscientiously and clear targets are set for pupils of all abilities. In lessons, the evaluation of pupils' work is undertaken sensitively, producing a caring, secure atmosphere in which every pupil feels valued. Schemes of work are detailed and contain elements of well-planned work for pupils with SEN, and extension work for gifted and talented pupils.

103. The accommodation and resources for music are less than satisfactory. The music room is rather small for some of the larger classes and its shared use means that keyboards have to be stored outside the room. This means that they have to be, inconveniently, brought in and set up at the beginning of certain lessons and removed at the end. The two practice rooms are also very cramped. The department has only one computer which hinders the development of complex composition work in Years 10 and 11. However, the extra-curricular provision is good and since the last inspection there are now more full-sized keyboards in the department.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good leadership and management are focused on raising standards.
- Teaching and learning are good, resulting in good achievement for most pupils.
- Assessment data is not used to inform curriculum development.
- The provision and take up of the extra-curricular programme is very good.

## Commentary

104. Standards are above national averages by the end of Year 9. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were well above national averages. In the core physical education course, standards are above national averages. The difference in attainment between the GCSE course and the core physical education course for pupils in Years 10 and 11 reflects a core curriculum which fails to engage all pupils in learning. In all years, girls and boys work at the same levels.

105. Pupils' standards on entry to the school are average; by the end of Year 9 they are above average, representing good achievement. Pupils in gymnastic lessons are now able to perform correct movements in small groups and so demonstrate their understanding of keywords for example cannon and mirror images. In basketball, they can correctly perform techniques of dribbling and then transfer these to game situations. Teachers' strategies to ensure that pupils with SEN achieve well are very good. By the end of Year 11, standards of work in the GCSE course represent good achievement. In swimming lessons, pupils are able to perform the full range of life-saving techniques. They can then assess different situations and choose the appropriate methods before performing the rescue. Some pupils have difficulties in communicating this knowledge and understanding in writing. By the end of Year 11, standards of work in core physical education lessons represent satisfactory achievement. This is because of unsatisfactory accommodation, which restricts opportunities to plan a curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. Where pupils are motivated by the activities, they demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding of fitness and can relate this to their chosen sport.

106. Teaching and learning are good. In Years 7 to 9, teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject, ensure that pupils work in a safe environment and intervene with pupils so that they know what they have to do to improve. Strategies to develop pupil's literacy skills are now being used. Where learning is not as good, teachers do not make pupils aware of what they are expected to achieve working at their own level and, in some cases, move them on before they are ready to do so. In Year 10 and 11 lessons, the variety of interesting and challenging activities motivates pupils and keeps them on task. Teachers do not consistently inform pupils of which level they are working at and so cannot easily set targets for improvement. A large number of pupils enhance their performance in sport through a very good extra-curricular programme.

107. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has a clear vision for the development of the subject. This vision is shared by a team of committed teachers. Assessment systems and procedures are now in place but the data is not yet well enough analysed to guide curriculum development and so raise standards more quickly.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

108. In September 2003 the school introduced three double award vocational GCSE courses for pupils currently in Year 10. The courses introduced are in **applied art and design, applied ICT, and leisure and tourism**. The courses are led and managed by the art and design department, the ICT department and the humanities department respectively.

109. As the courses are new, and there is little evidence of their impact on learning and achievement at present, it is not appropriate to make judgements about the main strengths and weaknesses. However, Initial provision in **applied art and design, applied ICT and leisure and tourism is satisfactory**.

### **Applied Art and Design**

110. The art department has made a good start in developing this GCSE vocational course. Although it is very early in the course, standards in the lessons observed were good and pupils were judged to be achieving well. Good progress is the result of good teaching that provides challenging tasks and has high expectations. Teachers use demonstration effectively so that pupils develop good skills and techniques, particularly in relation to textiles. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well integrated into these lessons. Lessons are well planned and pupils have the opportunity to evaluate their progress at the end of the lesson.

## **Applied information and communications technology**

111. Standards overall are currently in line with national expectation but standards are above average in design work. Pupils have good evaluation skills and know the importance of the link between design and technology. They can define, implement and refine ICT systems for practical application. Teaching is good, homework is well planned and work is marked thoroughly, although teachers do not always explain why a piece of work has been given a particular grade. Therefore, pupils do not always know how to improve their work. Nevertheless, they have a positive attitude to learning and enjoy the course. Arrangements for the introduction of the course have been very effective.

## **Leisure and Tourism**

112. There is a single teaching group and parts of two lessons and coursework files were sampled. Standards in the lessons seen are in line with national expectations but it is too early in the course to make overall judgements. Written work includes much that has been copied from textbooks without comment or explanation. Pupils are able to talk about features of retail parks, the importance of transport facilities and can explain how to use computers to find information needed by holidaymakers. Pupils' attitudes are generally good but their levels of confidence in discussion are variable. Although they have sound knowledge, their spoken and written answers are limited in detail and they need considerable prompting to provide adequate explanations.

113. Detailed preparation for the introduction of the course by the head of faculty has been good and effective links have been established with businesses. Teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory. Pupils have rapidly settled in to their studies and have already undertaken external visits, for instance to the Camelot Centre. Pupils use computers to design brochures and locate tourist information. In spite of these elements, many pupils express disappointment that the course involves more writing and note making than they expected. In classroom sessions, pupils do not always see the practical relevance of the work they are undertaking.

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

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

Provision in personal, social and health education is **unsatisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and Weaknesses:**

- There are no schemes of work for the subject, therefore the topics taught are not planned as part of an entitlement based on what pupils need to know and do.
- There is no effective co-ordination for the subject.
- The personal and social development of all pupils is a very important part of the school ethos, and all relationships between adults and pupils are effective in helping pupils to mature and to be responsible members of the school community and the wider world.

### **Commentary**

114. Although the personal and social development of pupils within the school is good because of the strong Roman Catholic tradition and ethos in the school, pupils are not provided with the curriculum that will give them the knowledge and understanding of personal and health related issues that will serve them well throughout life. Some aspects are taught in religious education, physical education, science and drama but there is no planned co-ordination. Although religious education has overall responsibility for this area of the curriculum, it is not managing it as it should. As there are no schemes of work, it is not possible for the school to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision. The school has not conducted an audit to establish what is taught and where it is taught.

However, the school does address sex and drugs education effectively but the provision would be improved if there were coordination between the departments teaching it. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection; it is not possible, therefore, to make a judgement on teaching. However, the lesson observed was good as it was well planned, with a variety of activities that engaged all pupils fully in the lesson.

## **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.
- Good materials are available to cover all areas of study.
- Some good teaching in Years 7 to 9 results in good achievement by pupils.
- The quality teaching and learning is uneven throughout the school.
- No monitoring systems are in place to check the implementation and quality of citizenship in other curriculum areas.

## **Commentary**

115. The school has planned the development of citizenship through Years 7 to 11. However, citizenship in Years 7 to 9 is delivered across the curriculum and co-ordination is the responsibility of the head of the religious education department. In Years 10 and 11 the subject has one period a week and this is managed by a citizenship co-ordinator. This arrangement is unsatisfactory because the two co-ordinators do not plan together to ensure continuity and progression and there is no whole school approach that ensures that citizenship is valued by staff and pupils.

116. By the end of Year 9 standards are in line with national expectations. In Years 7 to 9 pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of social divisions. They develop their skills of working co-operatively with other pupils and make decisions which take account of others' feelings and values through the citizenship programme and through work in some subjects and extra-curricular activities.

117. By the end of Year 11 standards are below expectation. Good planning is in place to cover pupils understanding of social and moral responsibility, involvement in the community and political literacy. However, in Years 10 and 11, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory because many are not motivated to work during the discrete citizenship lessons. Pupils do not have the opportunity to present their views on subjects related to children and the law. They show poor listening skills and are not able to develop skills of using the views of others to inform their own. Pupils do not show respect for other pupils or the teacher, and a significant minority disrupt lessons. Opportunities to develop pupils' understanding and skills in citizenship-related topics in other curriculum areas are not consistently used.

118. Teaching and learning in the discrete citizenship lessons are unsatisfactory, overall. Teaching is good in some lessons in Years 7 to 9. Where teaching is good, teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and use a variety of teaching and learning styles, which motivate pupils to remain on task. In Year 8 pupils have developed a good understanding of freedom, rights and responsibilities because the teaching challenges pupils to think about the needs of others and they have the opportunity to discuss and explore their views in groups. However, in many lessons across all years pupils are not engaged in the learning process because of a lack of challenging activities and unsatisfactory strategies to deal with minor disruption by many pupils.

119. The co-ordinators do not have a clear vision of the future development of the subject or of how to raise standards. They have not been able to convince teachers and pupils of the importance of a citizenship course to pupils' personal development. Although they have provided good materials, they have not monitored their use. They have not monitored teaching and learning nor have they recently audited the provision for citizenship in other areas of the curriculum to ensure that there is neither repetition nor gaps in the coverage.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' achievement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	6
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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).*