

INSPECTION REPORT

WEST CRAVEN HIGH TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

Barnoldswick

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119725

Headteacher: Mr A Kuchartschuk

Lead inspector: Ms J Jones

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th May 2004

Inspection number: 262101

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	863
School address:	Kelbrook Road Barnoldswick Lancashire
Postcode:	BB18 5TB
Telephone number:	01282 812292
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jane Wild
Date of previous inspection:	7 th December 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

West Craven High Technology College is an 11 to 16 mixed school serving the towns of Barnoldswick and Earby and the surrounding villages. It is a popular school and numbers are rising, though it is smaller than most other secondary schools. It achieved technology college status in 2000. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average overall. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and very few for whom English is not the main language spoken at home. Many of the higher attaining pupils in Year 6 of the local primary schools go on to selective schools in the area. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and the proportion with Statements of Special Educational Need are close to average. The school has recently had difficulty recruiting sufficient specialist teachers.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12460	J Jones	Lead inspector	
12775	J Goodchild	Lay inspector	
27050	V Blackburn	Team inspector	Science
13734	H Davies	Team inspector	Geography Religious education
19026	B Downes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
21971	J Glennon	Team inspector	English
8756	P Hanage	Team inspector	Mathematics
19915	P Hooton	Team inspector	History
3943	D Innes	Team inspector	Citizenship Provision for pupils with special educational needs Provision for pupils with English as an additional language
22524	S Innes	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology
27665	O Lees	Team inspector	Music
31680	P Redican	Team inspector	Art and design
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	19
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	35

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's effectiveness is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and lead to satisfactory achievement. Leadership by the headteacher is good and management overall is satisfactory. The cost per pupil is below average and the school provides satisfactory value for money

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- The headteacher has vision and under his good leadership the school's standing in the community has risen so that it is now oversubscribed.
- Teaching and learning in English, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education are good and enable students to achieve well in examinations.
- Literacy is below average and holding back standards, particularly those of boys, in a number of subjects.
- There is inadequate provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 and citizenship in all years, so that statutory requirements are not fully met.
- Monitoring the systems by which the school is run is too informal and lacks rigour.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and lower attaining pupils generally do well.
- In some lessons there is insufficient challenge, particularly for the highest attainers.

Changes since the previous inspection

Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The school has achieved Technology College status and GCSE results have risen. Attainment has risen since the previous inspection. Although attendance is still below average, the downward trend has been reversed and overall attendance is just below average. The quality of teaching and learning have been maintained in spite of some serious staffing difficulties. There are still problems with the organisation of the curriculum though provision for ICT is now good and opportunities for work related study are now good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
GCSE examinations	D	D	D	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

For GCSE examinations, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

Achievement overall is **satisfactory**. Pupils' attainment when they start in Year 7 is below average overall; the school loses many highest attainers to local selective schools. By the end of Year 9 achievement is satisfactory. Test results are below average. Test results have risen in line with the national trend over the last four years. Standards in work seen in English and science are average and in mathematics are below average. By the end of Year 11 achievement is satisfactory. Standards are still below average, but not as far below, and results are rising at a faster rate than the national trend. Girls' attainment is close to average and standards in English language are average for both boys and girls. Overall boys do less well because they enter school with lower standards in English than girls and do not catch up. In spite of their good achievement in English language, boys

do not transfer these skills to other subjects and weak writing holds them back in a number of subjects, including English literature, geography, history and modern foreign languages.

Personal development is **satisfactory**. Spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory, and moral and social development are good. Pupils respond well to opportunities to shoulder responsibility but these there are not enough of these. Although there are good informal relationships among pupils and with teachers, the school does not seek pupils' views and act upon them sufficiently. Pupils' attitudes to their work and school are good. Behaviour overall is satisfactory. Although pupils behave well around the school and in most lessons, there is a relatively high number of exclusions. Attendance is unsatisfactory

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. Assessment is satisfactory. Most pupils know how well they are doing but not always how to improve. The curriculum has some good features but there are also the omissions to religious education and citizenship, and the timetable does not ensure that all subjects have a fair allowance of time. There is no daily act of worship for all pupils. Care and guidance are satisfactory. Partnerships with parents are good, and with the community are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. Governors make a substantial contribution to the school's development. They know the school well and are in the main good critical friends. They have not, however, met their statutory duty to see that the curriculum meets requirements fully and governance, therefore, is to be judged unsatisfactory. Leadership by the headteacher is good. That of middle and senior managers is satisfactory. Management is satisfactory because, although the school runs smoothly from day to day, systems are not monitored rigorously enough to pick up inconsistencies in such aspects as the quality of teaching or marking.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents view the school favourably: they are supportive of the school and feel its reputation is improving. They would like to see higher attaining pupils challenged more to reach higher standards. Some feel the quantity and quality of homework is inconsistent - though inspectors generally found this to be satisfactory.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In order to raise standards, the school should:

- Review and improve the organisation of the curriculum and the way staff are deployed to ensure that all subjects are given sufficient time and teachers are used efficiently.
- Give more importance to raising standards in literacy.
- Introduce rigorous systems for monitoring the work of all staff.
- Increase the amount of challenge in lessons, especially for higher attaining pupils.
- Improve systems for raising attendance rates.
- Give pupils more opportunities to play a part in the running of the school.

and, fully to meet statutory requirements:

- Teach citizenship and religious education to all pupils, and hold a daily act of collective worship, as required.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are below average overall, but achievement is satisfactory in view of pupils' below average standards on entry.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lower attaining pupils achieve well; very few pupils leave school without any qualifications.
- Fewer than average pupils achieve the highest grades of A* and A
- Girls do significantly better than boys in most subjects.

Commentary

Standards in tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003

	In comparison with all schools nationally	In comparison with similar schools
English	C	B
Mathematics	D	C
Science	D	D
Overall	D	C

1. From the table it can be seen that although results are below average overall they are average in comparison with similar schools. English results are better than those of mathematics and science. The trend over the last five years has been upwards, in line with the national trend. In all three subjects, girls do better than boys.

Standards in examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003

In comparison with all schools nationally.

	2000	2001	2002	2003
5 or more grades A*-C	D	D	C	D
5 or more grades A*-G	C	C	C	B
1 or more grades A*-G	D	D	C	A
Average GCSE point per pupil	D	D	D	D

In comparison with schools with similar test results at the end of Year 9

	2000	2001	2002	2003
5 or more grades A*-C	D	E	B	B
5 or more grades A*-G	C	C	A	A
1 or more grades A*-G	D	D	C	A
Average GCSE point per pupil	D	E	C	B

- As in tests at the end of Year 9, girls do better than boys in most subjects, and the difference is particularly marked in French and English literature. The school does very well for its lower attaining pupils. Very few pupils leave with no qualifications, and in a number of subjects all pupils gain a grade. The lack of the highest grades is in some part due to the school being in an area with selective schools. Girls continue to do better than boys.
- Figure 1 shows how the overall trend is upwards, and above the national trend. Girls' results are improving more rapidly than those of boys.

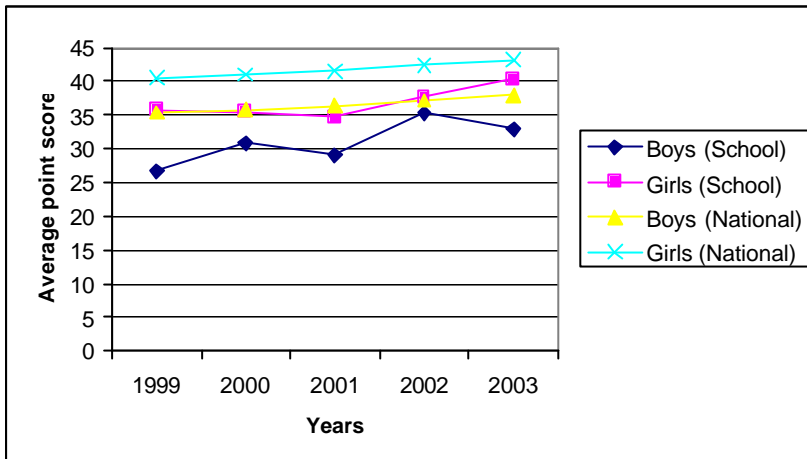


Figure 1

Standards and achievement in work seen during the inspection

- On the whole, the quality of work seen is below average and matches pupils' results . Achievement is satisfactory overall and good in all years in English, ICT and physical education. In recent years the school has met most of the targets set for technology related subjects, but just missed them in 2003. However, pupils did at least as well as expected in relation to their standards on entry. In spite of the good achievement in English, standards of literacy remain below average and there is not a sufficiently concerted effort to raise the standards of boys' speaking and writing from the time they enter the school. The inability of many boys to express themselves clearly, and their lack of enthusiasm for writing, persists throughout their school lives and prevents them reaching higher standards in classwork and coursework.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils are gaining better results at GCSE than at the time of the previous inspection. Most teachers have better understanding of how they can help pupils to achieve targets in their individual education plans. This is improved because targets are now defined more clearly. The achievement of pupils who are gifted or talented is satisfactory.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.8 (31.3)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	33.9 (33.7)	35.4 (34.7)
science	31.5 (31.4)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 164 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	41 (43)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	94 (92)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	31.6 (31.3)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 124 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes of pupils are **good**. Their behaviour is **satisfactory**. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is **satisfactory**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory**. Punctuality to school and lessons is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attitudes of the majority of pupils towards their learning are good overall and sometimes very good.
- Relationships within the school are good.
- The moral and social development of pupils is good.
- Attendance levels of a significant number of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are a cause for concern.
- The procedures to monitor the attendance of pupils are unsatisfactory.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility and use their initiative.

Commentary

6. Most pupils take a keen interest in their studies and sustain their concentration well, particularly when teaching is good and they are challenged to learn. The working relationships between staff and pupils are good and this contributes towards pupils' positive attitudes to school. Where teaching is less engaging there are occasional incidents of disruptive behaviour that affect the learning of the whole class.
7. The standard of behaviour of pupils, including the incidence of exclusions, is satisfactory. The majority of pupils are well behaved and courteous towards others and the school is a harmonious community. There is little litter, graffiti or bad language. There has been a strong commitment to improving standards of behaviour and the school has been successful in this. However, a minority of teaching staff still raise their voices when dealing with pupils and this reduces the effectiveness of the school's aim of respect for one another.
8. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Their moral and social development is good. They are well aware of right and wrong actions and have a very clear understanding of what is expected of them. Opportunities to debate moral issues are provided in some subjects. In religious education lessons, for example, pupils look at the consequences of abortion and the rights of the unborn child. In other lessons racism and prejudice are discussed fully when the opportunity arises. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and has improved since the previous inspection. Cultural development is satisfactory. It is fostered well in religious education, music and art and design. However, understanding of life in a multicultural society is not well developed. Opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility and use their initiative are growing. For example, Year 11 pupils have recently started leading the 'thought for the day'

sessions in Years 8 and 9. Social development is fostered informally in the good relationships throughout the school and the atmosphere of consideration for others. However there is scope giving pupils more responsibility, for example in the selection of prefects, or in running the school council.

Attendance

9. Attendance is below average for all schools although there has been an improvement over the last three years. Procedures to monitor attendance lack rigour and are unsatisfactory. Attendance falls significantly in Years 10 and 11. This reduces success in external examinations and contributes towards the underachievement of boys in particular. Procedures are not in place to ensure that pupils whose attendance falls below 90 per cent are systematically followed up. A number of parents condone their child's absence and do not work in partnership with the school to ensure high attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	8.6
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.4
National data	1.1

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

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	839	157	1
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	16	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0

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

10. The number of pupils excluded for a fixed term last year was high compared with all schools nationally. The majority of these exclusions were for one day and there were few repeat incidents. Reasons for exclusion are appropriate. Of those pupils who were excluded on more than one occasion several had been transferred into the school because they were 'at risk' of exclusion from other secondary schools.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory overall. No excellent teaching was seen. On the other hand, there is very little unsatisfactory or poor teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in English, ICT and physical education is good.
- Lesson planning is generally good.
- There is some effective use of ICT in a number of subjects.
- Lessons sometimes lack pace and do not challenge pupils, particularly higher attainers, enough.

Commentary

11. In recent years the school has suffered from difficulties in recruiting staff and problems associated with staff illness, in almost all departments. In spite of this the quality of teaching is sound and enables pupils to learn and make satisfactory progress. The school has embraced the Key Stage 3 Strategy¹ wholeheartedly and this has led to good lesson planning throughout the school. Most lessons now begin with a short starter activity and end with a constructive review of the lesson. Occasionally the starter takes too long. In spite of the good planning, lessons quite often proceed too slowly, and to some extent this is the fault of the lesson length. Most lessons last 65 or 70 minutes and often pupils find it hard to concentrate for the last ten or fifteen minutes. Generally English and ICT lessons deal with this well by providing a good range of different activities that keep pupils on their toes right to the end of the lesson so that achievement in both subjects is good. In 35-minute lessons teachers usually work hard to ensure that pupils learn usefully, and the pace is brisk. However, there is still some frustration when fruitful discussion has to be curtailed.
12. In around half of all lessons learning, like teaching, is good. In satisfactory lessons, teachers sometimes miss the opportunity to challenge pupils, and particularly the higher attainers, to think for themselves and explore ideas in greater depth. This happens in science, history, geography, and some aspects of design and technology. However, there is a high degree of challenge for pupils, particularly those in higher sets, in English, mathematics and ICT.
13. In almost all lessons teachers manage pupils well so that all can learn, and relationships are constructive. Pupils feel that teachers are working with them to help them get good grades; they appreciate the extra time teachers put in to help with coursework or revision.
14. Pupils' work is marked, but there are inconsistencies, both in departments and across the school. In most subjects pupils know how they are doing – usually in relation to a GCSE level or a National Curriculum level. However, they do not always know what to do to improve. There are few opportunities to take responsibility for their progress, though this is done well in history in Years 7 to 9 and some departments, drama for example, encourage pupils to evaluate each other's work.
15. Assessment generally is satisfactory. It is very good in ICT and good in English and physical education. Teachers evaluate the work of pupils, through marking and testing, and information is used well in Years 10 and 11 to identify pupils whose work is causing concern. These pupils are then given additional mentoring. Information is not yet used systematically by form tutors to monitor the progress of pupils in their group.
16. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Since the previous inspection the school has increased the number and effectiveness of classroom assistants. Teachers have better understanding of how they can help pupils achieve targets in their individual education plans. Targets are now defined more clearly.

¹ A government initiative to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 107 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	17 (16%)	46 (42%)	40 (36%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The breadth of the curriculum is **unsatisfactory** in all years. There are **satisfactory** opportunities for enrichment beyond the curriculum. Accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory. The match of teachers to the curriculum is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for citizenship in all years and for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
- There is a very good programme of vocational education for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- In some subjects there is not the right combination of teachers to teach the curriculum satisfactorily.
- Pupils are given good opportunity outside the curriculum to develop their sporting interests and skills.

Commentary

17. The curriculum is unsatisfactory because it fails to provide sufficiently for citizenship. There is no scheme of work for the subject and the development of pupils' understanding relies too much on the contributions from other subjects. In Years 10 and 11 not enough time is allocated to religious education within the personal, social and religious education course. Consequently the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are not met. Other weaknesses reported in the previous report have been improved. Requirements for ICT are now met. In particular, there is now a very good programme of vocational studies for pupils in Years 10 and 11 run in conjunction with local colleges of further education. The system of options in Years 10 and 11 now gives pupils a wide selection of courses and fits the aptitudes and ambitions of all pupils well.
18. The effectiveness of the curriculum is diminished by the way the school day is organised into nine periods. The double-periods are too long in some subjects such as science, causing the pace of lessons to be too slow. In others, pupils' concentration flags towards the end of the lesson. On the other hand, when lessons are for only 35 minutes, there is often not enough time for learning to be fully developed. This happens in English and science.
19. There are also weaknesses in timetabling that have a negative effect on learning. Lack of sufficient time in history in Years 7 to 9 means that pupils do not have deep enough understanding, with consequential effects on learning in Years 10 and 11. In English there are classes in Years 7 and 8 that are shared between two teachers, so that teaching, and therefore learning, is less effective. The carousel arrangement for introducing Italian and Spanish in Years 9, 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory and leads to low standards. The various components of design and technology are distributed unsatisfactorily in Years 7 to 9 with a consequent adverse effect on attainment.

20. A satisfactory programme of activities offers pupils an opportunity to be involved in the life and work of the school beyond the timetabled day. There is a good range of sporting activities on offer which includes all the major team and individual games. There are musical activities including a choir and orchestra in addition to instrumental lessons. Other activities add up to a menu of enrichment activities on a scale to be found in most schools.
21. In a number of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and modern languages there are staffing difficulties that affect standards of learning, and sometimes the quality of the curriculum on offer. The range of subjects offered in design and technology to Years 10 and 11 is good but attainment is limited because of difficulties in staffing and the course needs to be rationalised. Some of the difficulties are long standing.
22. Accommodation and resources to support learning are satisfactory. In general, areas related to technology college status are good, but the remainder of the school is crowded and some areas are in need of redecoration. Physical education facilities are very good, although the condition of the fields is not. There are good, newly refurbished rooms in science and ICT. However in some other subjects such as religious education and history, many lessons are taught in other rooms, or in rooms that are not grouped together in subject areas. This makes it difficult to create a consistent subject based learning environment and also makes access to shared resources difficult. ICT provision is good. There is a good range of software in two new computer suites.
23. Although library resources have improved since the previous inspection, the school's library is still unsatisfactory. There is not enough space and the book stock is insufficient. However, the school has recognised the importance of these issues and a new library is to be built next year.
24. The school has identified its most able pupils and makes satisfactory provision for them. These pupils usually achieve the targets set for them. They benefit from opportunities for acceleration such as early entry for English at GCSE and enrichment in mathematics, which enables them to be additionally entered for statistics at GCSE and other provisions made by most departments.
25. There are fewer provisions at whole school level in the form of visits and visitors to kindle aspirations as well as to inform. However, there are opportunities to perform in various drama and musical productions and to participate in a range of sports.
26. Assemblies are broadly Christian in content but the school does not provide a daily act of worship for all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is **satisfactory**. The support, advice and guidance, based on monitoring, pupils receive is **satisfactory**. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction arrangements for pupils coming into the school are good.
- The careers guidance pupils receive is good and prepares them well for the next stage of education.
- The involvement of pupils through seeking their views is unsatisfactory.
- Child protection is unsatisfactory, because some of the necessary procedures are not in place.

Commentary

27. The arrangements for the induction of pupils from primary school are good. The head of Year 7, and the special needs co-ordinator visit the primary schools Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use the school premises for sports, such as football and karate, music teachers from the school visit primary schools, and there are introductory visits for Year 6 pupils. There is a programme of visits to the school to familiarise pupils before they transfer. Year 7 pupils felt that they had been well looked after and were happy in school. Year 11 mentors are attached to tutor groups for the first few weeks of the autumn term.
28. There are inconsistencies across tutor groups and the quality of tutorial sessions is variable. Apart from the 'thought for the day', which is dealt with well by some teachers, and badly by others, there are no planned activities for tutorial time, and usually pupils chat while the teacher reminds the group about general administration points such as absence notes. Pastoral staff receive termly interim reports for pupils but are not provided with detailed information about how pupils are doing, so they are not able to keep an eye on pupils who might be underachieving in one or more subjects. Individual subjects have devised their own systems and pupils are clear about their level of achievement and how they are progressing towards their predicted grades. Informal ways of co-ordinating support offered to pupils is good, through weekly pastoral meetings. However the process is too informal and not backed up by rigorous systems.
29. Careers guidance is good. There is a well planned and co-ordinated programme that is effectively supported by the school based Connexions personal advisor that prepares pupils well for the next phase of education or the world of work.
30. Procedures to ensure the health and safety and welfare of pupils are satisfactory but provision for child protection is unsatisfactory. There are two nominated child protection officers but there are no guidelines in the staff handbook or staff training sessions to raise the awareness of all staff of this important issue.
31. The school makes effective use of links with primary schools to ensure that the needs of individual pupils are known well before they enter. It is quick to note potential problems detected through national and standardised tests and to respond to the concerns of teachers and parents. Reviews are held at appropriate times and involve pupils, parents and specialist agencies as recommended by the revised Code of Practice².
32. Teachers have helpful and up to date information about the needs of all pupils on the special educational needs register including details of targets set for them and advice on how to help them. They use this effectively, especially for those with difficulties such as visual or hearing impairment.
33. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is unsatisfactory. The lack of an active school council impedes their ability to become involved in the day-to-day life of the school -and there is no forum for them to express their views. Staff choose prefects, and the head boy and girl. There are insufficient formal systems in place to involve pupils in reviewing their work and setting targets for improvement.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The effectiveness of the school's links with its parents is **good**. The quality of the school's links with the community is **satisfactory**. The effectiveness of extended services through the technology college status is **satisfactory**. The school's links with other schools and colleges are **good**.

² The national guidelines for the care and education of pupils with special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with other schools are good.
- Good links with local industry have supported the school in its technology college application.
- Parent governors use their professional skills to support the work of the classroom.
- The School Association works hard to raise funds for the school.
- Curriculum bridging links are not in place to ease the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school.

Commentary

34. The school's partnership with its parents is good. It is well regarded by parents and this was borne out during the inspection. Parents feel the school is improving. There is a commitment by the school to continue to improve its links with parents. The School Association is active and supports the school well through its various fund-raising activities. Parents are happy with the annual consultation meetings. Annual reports to parents vary in quality between subjects. Some are clear and give them a clear understanding of what their child has studied and how they are achieving but others confine themselves to comments of a pastoral rather than an academic nature. Not all set targets to help pupils improve their work. If problems occur, parents attend meetings with school staff to look at ways forward and to work in partnership with the school to resolve them. Parent governors use their professional expertise to support subjects such as technology.
35. The quality of the school's links with the community is satisfactory. The school benefits from effective links with local business and industry. These provide a source of sponsorship and for placements that give pupils' experience of the world of work. Members of the community support the school well in its personal, social and health education course by providing specialist speakers on a range of topics. There is increasing use of the school's facilities by the local community and there are plans to develop this area further.
36. There is a good partnership with other schools and colleges. There are good working relationships with primary schools. Under its specialist college brief training is offered to both primary and secondary teachers in the use of electronic whiteboards. Primary schools use the school's facilities to support their curriculum. The mechanisms for the transfer of pupils into school are good but there are few curriculum bridging units in place that support the continuity and progression in their learning. Through funds generated by the school, partnerships with other secondary schools have developed that will benefit pupils. Effective partnerships exist with the local further education colleges and the majority of pupils transfer there for post 16 education. One of the local colleges provides tutors for successful vocational subjects in Years 10 and 11.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. Leadership by the headteacher is good and management is satisfactory. Governors are very effective in most respects but because they do not ensure that the curriculum meets requirements fully, governance is judged to be unsatisfactory. Staffing difficulties are a continual barrier to raising attainment, though the school works hard and with some success to overcome these.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The clear vision and focus of the headteacher ensures his success in inspiring and motivating others.
- The governing body is very well led and has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but has not ensured that the curriculum fully meets requirements.

- There are insufficient systematic procedures whereby the total impact of the school's policies can be internally tracked and evaluated.

Commentary

37. The headteacher is a good leader. He is a very visible presence around the school and is very approachable to pupils, parents and staff. He fosters an open style of management and communication, which has created a high level of morale amongst teaching and non-teaching staff alike. Since the previous inspection significant changes and improvements have taken place that have enhanced the quality of education pupils are receiving, and have helped to raise standards. The school is now oversubscribed.
38. The major vehicle for this improvement has been the gaining of technology college status in January 2000, and the implementation of a much improved technology based curriculum. Other major issues that have been successfully addressed are the raising of staff morale, the changed perception of the college by parents, establishing a productive and positive climate for learning, and promoting inclusion in all aspects of the school's life.
39. The headteacher is supported by a dedicated and hard working senior management team. Their roles and responsibilities have recently been changed and this has resulted in the overall organisation and the day-to-day running of the school being improved.
40. Leadership and management by other staff are satisfactory overall. Most subject departments are led and managed at least satisfactorily, and many, including mathematics, geography, history, modern foreign languages and physical education are well led with a clear focus on raising standards and pupils' aspirations. English is very well led. There is a good pattern of meetings and consultation which is well integrated and which promotes a high level of commitment from staff at all levels. In some subjects, particularly history and geography, management, while satisfactory, is not as good as leadership, because there is insufficient monitoring of teaching to ensure consistency in the way the subject is taught. Overall curriculum leadership is unsatisfactory in respect of citizenship and religious education, because the time allowed for the subjects is insufficient although the subject leaders themselves do a good job within the constraints of the curriculum.
41. Leadership and management of the special educational needs department are good. The school has responded well to the requirements of the revised Code of Practice so that pupils benefit from the more clearly defined expectations of all who teach them. Teachers have up-to-date and helpful information available to them about individual needs. The team of learning support assistants is well managed.
42. Performance management is on target, records are thorough and policies for managing weak teaching and complaints are clear. This helps to enable the school's aspirations to be translated into practice. A comprehensive programme of in-service training for staff successfully dovetails the needs of the school with those of individual teachers. Support for new and temporary teachers is good and is one of the reasons why the school has been able to recruit and retain reliable temporary teachers to help cope with its staffing difficulties.
43. However, performance management is the major vehicle for monitoring teaching and is not fully effective in this. While there is some monitoring of teaching and learning in some departments, this is not happening overall and there is a need for more systematic monitoring by all subject leaders.
44. The school has clear, explicit and relevant aims and policies, but there are instances where policies that have not been successfully implemented have not been identified at an early stage. Good relationships throughout the staff mean that informal arrangements often work well and people feel guided and supported. However, the school is growing and the curriculum increasing in its range, and there are not sufficient rigorous and clear systems whereby the

total impact of these policies on an increasingly complex organisation can be coherently tracked and evaluated in detail.

45. The school is fortunate in having a capable and committed governing body that is very well led. Many governors have specialist knowledge that they are very prepared to use to the benefit of the school. Many have a close interest in the school either as parents of pupils in the school or through their committees. They are strongly committed and their work is well informed, providing a strategy and policy framework for the operation of the school. There is an open and honest partnership between governors and the headteacher, firmly rested on a commitment to providing high quality education for all pupils. However, the governing body has not ensured that the National Curriculum requirements for religious education and citizenship are fully met.
46. The school is efficiently managed and financial planning is effective. The cost per pupil is relatively low, and the school manages this sum well. The money available for development is less than usual because the staffing costs are high at 78 per cent of the budget. Governors and senior managers ensure that the budget is well used and funds are managed to enable improvements to the premises to be made. Priorities for spending are appropriate. Day-to-day handling of finances is good.
47. The headteacher has overseen significant change and improvements in many aspects of the school's life since the previous inspection. With the gaining of technology college status the school is now poised to improve further the quality of the education of its pupils based on an enhanced technology curriculum.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,551,233	Balance from previous year	(35,092)
Total expenditure	2,422,989	Balance carried forward to the next	163,336
Expenditure per pupil	2,789		

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good so pupils learn well and raise their standards between Years 7 and 11.
- Boys' standards are lower than girls' by a greater margin than in most schools.
- Very good leadership and good management are responsible for very good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Staffing difficulties are having an adverse effect on standards.

Commentary

48. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were average but were better than the average for schools with pupils of similar attainment on entry. Girls perform better than boys by a greater margin than in most schools, reflecting the fact that boys' attainment in English on entering the school is significantly weaker than that of girls.
49. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are average and match the test scores. As standards are below average on entry this represents good achievement. By Year 9 the best written work shows vigour and enjoyment in the use of words although there are very few pupils who work at the very highest standard. Similarly there are few pupils whose work is of a very low standard although the lowest attainers are unsure when constructing sentences and make basic spelling and punctuation errors. Reading standards are generally sound, with the highest attaining pupils showing sophisticated understanding of "Macbeth". Pupils speak confidently but most do not develop their ideas at any length.
50. Results in the GCSE examination in English in 2003 were broadly average. The GCSE English literature results were well below the national average with boys' performance being particularly weak. These results should be seen in the light of severe staffing difficulties, which caused the department sensibly to concentrate its resources on the English language papers. In addition virtually all pupils enter for both subjects, which has the effect of deflating the results compared to those of most schools.
51. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 10 and 11 and standards are average in Year 11, although standards of these pupils were below average at the end of Year 9. The highest attainers achieve very well, as is seen from the very good results they obtained for GCSE English in November 2003. Their writing shows flair and they are technically very competent. They have a deep understanding of literature and they develop their ideas persuasively when speaking. Middle attainers successfully identify the attitudes, beliefs and feelings in modern poems. Their writing is generally competent but sentence construction is at times uncertain and there is some basic mis-spelling. The lowest attainers understand plot and simple characterisation in straightforward texts.
52. Pupils learn well because teaching is good. Lessons are planned very well. Most have clear objectives that the pupils understand and a variety of tasks that keep pupils interested. Lessons usually end with a review of what has been learned although this is not always given sufficient emphasis. A key feature of the good learning is that pupils are seriously challenged, especially in Years 10 and 11. Pupils have targets for improvement but teachers' comments on their

books, though helpful, are not linked sufficiently to these targets, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Thirty-five minute periods (the lunchtime lessons) are too short to allow teachers to expand ideas as much as they would like while the concentration of some pupils flags before the end of the double lessons.

53. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection, due to very good leadership. It is instrumental in raising standards by identifying appropriate priorities and planning accordingly. The problems caused by staff shortage have been countered as much as possible. Temporary teachers are given every support. The department is well managed. There are good schemes of work and a good check is kept on the work of teachers and pupils. Day-to-day organisation is very good but there is scope for more sophisticated use of data to identify at an early stage those pupils who need additional help. Some classes are shared between teachers and this makes extra work for those teachers who have to (and do) plan very carefully to make sure there is continuity in their teaching.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are below average. There has been suitable training for teachers and there is a very good handbook which combines a theoretical framework with many practical resources. In the classroom, however, emphasis generally does not go beyond insistence on the use of technical language, often supported by the use of key words and sometimes help for writing in the form of writing frames. There is insufficient opportunity for extended writing. An exception is in ICT where pupils have to write in a range of styles and teachers insist on accuracy. Although a strategy group meets regularly, it is left to each department to monitor its own contribution to literacy. This is not successful. A more focused approach across the whole school is required to raise standards.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average.
- Curriculum provision is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is satisfactory
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- The subject makes a good contribution to literacy development.
- Standards are affected by poor attendance.

Commentary

55. In 2003 GCSE results at A* to C were below average in French and well below average in German. Results at A* to G were average. Boys do less well than girls in examinations.
56. In both languages, standards are below average at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11. There are no wide differences in attainment across the various aspects of the subject, such as listening, speaking and writing. Boys achieve less well than girls and the gap is wider than that found nationally. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils. Standards and achievement are adversely affected by the poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils. Standards have been affected by long-term staff absence. Standards in German have been affected more by staff absence than those in French. Overall those pupils who attend regularly achieve satisfactorily.

57. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers' planning for lessons is thorough and no time is lost because of poor preparation. Teachers make good use of the language being taught and little unnecessary English is spoken in most lessons. Teachers have good class control and behaviour in lessons is generally good as a result. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to work. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' numeracy development and a good contribution to literacy development. The use of computers to enhance and enrich the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Pupils' work is marked and corrected. The use of marking to give pupils advice on how they can improve their work is inconsistent. There are good procedures for assessment. The data provided is not used well enough for setting targets. In lessons that are satisfactory rather than good or very good, teachers do not always cater well for the range of ability found in most classes.
58. The curriculum is unsatisfactory. Setting arrangements are not based on ability in languages and this means that pupils may be in inappropriate ability sets. Arrangements for adding Spanish and Italian in Year 10 are unsatisfactory. There are times when pupils are time-tabled for two languages lessons in succession. This is too much and makes learning considerably less effective. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The head of department's leadership is good. The department has held together well through some difficulties and teachers show a high level of commitment. The management of the subject is satisfactory. Systems are in place that will help to raise standards. These are not yet well enough developed to have a significant impact. The subject has made satisfactory progress since the previous report.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of ICT in teaching has had a positive impact on pupils' learning
- Good leadership and management are shown through a clear focus on improvement and well-planned strategies to deal with staffing issues.
- The assessment of pupils' work is inconsistent.

Commentary

59. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average. In 2003, results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 are below national averages. GCSE results for Year 11 in 2003 are in line with national averages. Results in 2003 were in line with those of similar schools and show an upward trend. There is no significant difference in the attainment or achievement of boys and girls in work seen, or in test and examination results
60. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Year 9 and Year 11 are below average, although at the top end of that category. This work shows satisfactory achievement for most pupils except higher attainers in Years 10 and 11, whose achievement is good. These pupils achieve more highly than others due to their good independent study skills and tasks well matched to their needs. The proportion of pupils gaining higher level passes at GCSE has improved over the past three years. Smaller classes, and satisfactory use of learning assistants, help pupils with special educational needs to achieve satisfactorily. Most pupils enjoy mathematics and work hard.
61. The achievement of a small number of pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11, is not satisfactory due to frequent or prolonged absence from school.
62. A well-planned curriculum helps all pupils to develop their knowledge and skills across all aspects of mathematics. Higher attainers have better algebraic skills than others but these are

weaker than their skills in handling data. Lower and average attainers sometimes need help with unfamiliar wording and interpretation of questions; they are hampered by their weaker literacy skills. Many pupils, especially average and lower attaining pupils, have difficulty in explaining their methods, even when they have got the correct answers.

63. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. About half the teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good, with a small proportion very good. ICT is used very well to develop mathematical ideas, for example during a Year 10 lesson about the proof of the sine rule. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to get pupils' interested in learning mathematics, for example through a magic square starter activity in Year 7, which quickly consolidated previous number work. Teaching is well planned and suitable resources are used to help pupils understand new ideas. When teaching is very good, questioning is used skilfully to prompt pupils to think and to explain their reasoning. This helps them to cope with much more difficult work than they thought they could. Oral feedback to pupils is generally good but the marking of written work varies considerably. There is some good practice, but some marking is infrequent with few comments about how pupils can improve.
64. The head of department has been in post less than two years. His good leadership and management are shown by the way the mathematics team has dealt with staffing problems and minimised the negative impact on pupils' learning. He has used a wide range of information, including work samples, to monitor and improve the work of department. However due to time constraints there is not as yet a systematic programme of lesson observations.
65. The improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Results have improved, especially at GCSE, and now nearly all staff are mathematics specialists. Pupils' skills in applying their mathematical skills to unfamiliar situations and in explaining their work are still comparatively weak.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Pupils' numeracy skills, although below average, are satisfactory for their use of mathematics in other subjects. Pupils can draw and interpret graphs in science and have the necessary skills to use statistics such as census data in history. In ICT good links are made with mathematics in systems and control.
67. The numeracy co-ordinator has produced posters to show the standard methods used for common calculations. These are displayed in most classrooms. However, more still needs to be done at a whole school level to make sure opportunities to reinforce mathematical skills are thoroughly embedded in most subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national tests and examinations are improving, particularly at the end of Year 9.
- The tracking of pupils' progress and the setting of targets is better than at the last inspection.
- The department is managed well in present difficult circumstances.
- Staffing arrangements are currently unsatisfactory.
- There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and its effect on pupils' learning.
- Teaching methods and grouping arrangements do not always meet the needs of all pupils.

Commentary

68. In 2003 test results at the end of Year 9 were below average but just above the target set by the school. In relation to pupils' prior attainment, results were -average overall, but fewer pupils reached higher levels, compared to similar schools. Over the last four years, although following the national trend, results remained below average with boys attaining less well than girls. Standards seen up to the end of Year 9 are slightly better than the test results in many groups and are average overall. Most pupils can use the correct scientific vocabulary within the context of a lesson, but many do not have the confidence to apply their knowledge to new situations. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily from their starting points in Year 7, particularly when helped by support assistants or using specific resources matched to their needs.
69. GCSE results in 2003 were below average overall. Results for the double science award in 2003 were well below national figures at the higher grades with boys' results almost 15 per cent below those of girls. Both boys and girls did less well in science than in other subjects but almost all who entered attained a pass grade. Over the last three years the pupils taking three separate sciences have almost all consistently attained higher grades in all three subjects. However, in both triple and double science, very few have attained the highest grades A* and A. Standards of work seen reflect the examination results and are overall below average. However, the majority of pupils achieve satisfactorily during their GCSE course. Pupils taking three separate sciences are working at and attaining average or above levels and can evaluate their experimental results in detail making suggestions for improvement.
70. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school with a quarter of lessons good or very good. The best teaching is conducted at a brisk pace and gives pupils plenty of different activities to keep them involved and learning over the long double period. Detailed planning caters for all so that, particularly in the mixed ability groups, individual pupils are given tasks at the correct level allowing them to learn. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and teachers expect and receive good standards of behaviour.
71. Where learning is less effective, lessons lack pace and often include a long teacher introduction. Teachers' expectations are not high enough in terms of what pupils will complete and to what standard. Often pupils are given very few opportunities to think for themselves as the teacher controls the lesson tightly. Whilst there are occasions when there is a focus on developing pupils' literacy with key words, writing frames and reading out loud, there are few occasions where pupils can talk to one another about what they are learning and so gain confidence in their understanding of science.
72. Regular assessment of pupils' progress is now an integral part of the work of the department. Targets are set on individuals' prior attainment and progress is tracked through test and examination results and has improved since the last inspection. However, day-to-day marking lacks consistency in its detail and frequency and still rarely gives indication how pupils can improve. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.
73. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the subject is managed well in the present difficult circumstances. The head of department has a clear vision of the way forward but has insufficient time to monitor work, particularly teaching and learning. She leads a team containing many experienced teachers most of whom have significant responsibilities in other areas of the school. The rest of the teaching is done by part-time or temporary staff, or staff from other departments in the school. This means that at present staffing is unsatisfactory. However, the science technician provides extremely effective support throughout. The department has six modern laboratories, improved information technology facilities but is still short of text books for each pupil; this was mentioned at the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of good leadership and very good management
- Standards are above average in GCSE courses
- The quality of teaching and learning is good
- Assessment of pupils' work and setting targets for improvement are good

Commentary

74. Standards - are average by Year 9. Pupils are competent users of computers. Their understanding of basic applications such as desktop publishing, databases and spreadsheets is secure because pupils are effectively taught using methods that help them to remember what they have learned. Higher attaining pupils reach above average standards when they use computers to control lights and motors using sensors.
75. In 2003, GCSE results were below average. In work seen, standards are average overall by Year 11. Pupils following currently following GCSE courses are achieving above average standards. The significant rise in standards is because of improved teaching methods and very good management of the subject. Coursework folders are very well organised and well written showing good understanding of the needs of clients and above average knowledge of the way computers can be used to improve business practice. Pupils test and evaluate work as it develops to ensure that specifications for clients are met. Pupils opting for basic skills courses and the small proportion of pupils not opting for accredited courses, reach satisfactory standards.
76. Achievement is good overall and very good for pupils following GCSE courses. Pupils are reaching higher standards than expected in relation to their prior attainment and ability. Pupils make particularly good progress in ICT lessons and benefit from opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge further by using computers in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with writing skills and very good progress towards meeting behavioural targets because they are very well managed and supported by teachers.
77. The quality of teaching is good and is helping to raise standards. Lessons are well structured and teachers have very good subject knowledge. They have high expectations of pupils and pupils respond very positively to the interesting and challenging work provided for them. Teachers are particularly well informed about the requirements of the examination courses they teach. They keep them under constant review to ensure they continue to match the needs of pupils. The pace of learning is usually brisk and clear teaching objectives are met. Occasionally, work is covered too quickly and this does not give pupils enough time to discuss what they are uncertain about. Pupils work together co-operatively and concentrate during lessons.
78. Leadership is good and management is very good. Effective strategic planning has led to improvement in provision. Day to day management is very well organised and teachers work together with a shared enthusiasm to raise standards. There has been improvement to standards since the previous inspection and all pupils now follow an ICT course in Years 10 and 11, so that improvement since the previous inspection is judged as good. There is now a network manager and a technician to support the work of the department. New accommodation and improved resources are contributing to rising standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. Cross-curricular provision for ICT is satisfactory and is developing rapidly. This reflects the enthusiasm of most teachers and the school's commitment to using ICT to raise standards in other subjects. Pupils' learning in separate ICT lessons is secure so that they are able to use what they have learned competently and confidently for their wider use. Pupils' skills and knowledge are average overall and they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Cross-curricular work is monitored by the ICT co-ordinator who is working with departments to help develop ICT in their subjects. The co-ordinator is supported by senior managers who are keen to develop the use of new technology in school. Part of this is the increasing provision and use of interactive whiteboards to improve teaching and learning. The co-ordinator has good awareness of the areas most in need of development and is systematically working with them.
80. The school is well equipped with computers generally and interactive whiteboards are effectively used in most subjects. In music, however, there are not enough resources for younger pupils although in Years 10 and 11, the provision and use of keyboards has brought about marked improvement in learning. Pupils present information confidently and to a good standard in history. Standards are being raised in food technology coursework by using computers to organise and present work. Use of ICT is a strength in art and design to create and manipulate images on screen and in design technology pupils use computers effectively for their design work. Not all teachers are confident or have sufficient access to ICT resources so that, for example, in modern languages, use of ICT is uneven. Pupils with special needs use word processing and desktop publishing to present their work effectively and to improve literacy skills. The use of interactive whiteboards is a strength in the teaching of mathematics for example to demonstrate geometry using special software. Pupils have good access to computers outside lessons.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 9.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning lacks sufficient rigour.
- Assessment procedures are good and National Curriculum levels are used effectively to help pupils raise the standard of their work.
- In some lessons there is insufficient pace and challenge for the more able pupils.

Commentary

81. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average but a significant proportion achieved a grade.
82. Currently standards by the end of Year 9 are average. Achievement across Years 7 to 9 is good as students join the school with below average geographical knowledge and skills. This is a result of competent teaching and pupils' positive attitudes to work. Standards in the current Year 11 are well below average, but most students are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their ability. There is no significant variation in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similarly to their peers.
83. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 develop satisfactory mapping skills and show sound understanding of geographical ideas. In the GCSE group most pupils work hard although a small proportion are underachieving. From evidence in lessons and books pupils in Year 9 are developing satisfactory enquiry skills. They make satisfactory use of computers for research to present

their findings. Work in more able pupils' books is well presented but many pupils have weak literacy skills that reduce the quality of the work. Coursework in Year 11 is carried out with interest and pupils effectively collect data and test ideas. They are weaker at evaluating and making conclusions.

84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good practice. There is a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Most lessons have clear objectives, are well planned and pupils are quickly engaged with a starter activity. This however is not always sufficiently crisp. In the main part of most lessons appropriate tasks are used to develop pupils' learning. In the good lessons pupils are challenged appropriately and expectations are high and as a result learning is good. Teachers have a secure command of their subject but they do not always use this knowledge to challenge higher attainers. In a very small percentage of lessons teaching was unsatisfactory as a result of inappropriate methodology and less than satisfactory management of behaviour. Work is marked regularly and helpful constructive comments are provided to show pupils how to improve. Most pupils work hard and respond positively.
85. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Assessment procedures are good and computers are being used effectively to help pupils learn better and to develop enquiry skills. There is insufficient formal monitoring of teaching to enable teachers to share ideas and good practice. The subject is making an effective contribution to the growth of pupils' literacy and numerical skills. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not improving quickly enough because there is too little time allocated to history.
- ICT supports teaching and learning very well and contributes to boys' attainment.
- There are too few opportunities for extended writing, especially by higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

86. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are below average. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is accurate because they know how to extrapolate relevant information from sources and use it as evidence to judge the actions of rulers and rebels, the impact of cultures and movements, the effects of war and enterprise. They place events in time and explain causes and consequences to understand developments of human rights from Magna Carta to the evolution of parliament and in the treatment of slaves and manual workers in the 19th century. Using computers they plan PowerPoint presentations, newspaper front pages and do research. As a class they judge each other's presentations according to a set of criteria. Boys respond well to the independence and variety of such projects. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their learning to questions and as a result even higher attainers do not draw conclusions from information without help.
87. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they use forms of writing suited to their literacy capabilities. The lack of time allocated to history holds achievement at satisfactory, because of the lack of long, structured pieces of writing, demanding the synthesis of a range of skills and a personal response. Higher attaining pupils suffer particularly and there is no strong base for coursework essays in Years 10 and 11.
88. In 2003, GCSE results were well below average, slightly improved over three years although most pupils achieved their predicted grade. Attendance problems continue to be a factor. Standards of work seen, though below average, are better, because of thorough revision booklets and CD-ROM that increase pupils' responsibility for their own learning.

89. At this stage well-consolidated source analysis skills serve them well and pupils are confident at making comparisons and judging reliability and bias. Testing hypotheses through field study accounts is well organised and brings out the best especially in lower attaining pupils. Challenging coursework on conflict in Northern Ireland reflects the lack of literacy conventions, connectives and variety of language except among highest attaining pupils.
90. Achievement is satisfactory, despite effective teaching, because pupils do not monitor their progress, focusing on their target grade, although they have individual interviews with the teacher.
91. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 where, in some lessons, the pace of lessons and tasks for applying rather than simply recording knowledge lack challenge. Good teaching is characterised by wide involvement of pupils and use of ICT for “starters”, sharing and working on the results of paired tasks, building up GCSE model answers, pupils’ presentations and as a reference point for instructions; a major improvement contributing to satisfactory development since the previous inspection.
92. Leadership is good, illustrated by visionary and exemplary use of ICT, in the way history is tightly structured to make the very best use of time and to support homework and revision. Management is satisfactory because there is no regular sharing and evaluating of teaching methods nor monitoring of quality through lesson observations.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not receiving their legal entitlement to the subject.
- Standards achieved in Years 10 and 11 are well below average as a result of the time allocated to the subject and the curriculum structure provided.
- There are good links with faith communities in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

93. No GCSE courses have run over the last three years and religious education is taught within a personal and social education context in Years 10 and 11.
94. Overall standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils’ achievement is satisfactory. Standards in the current Year 11 are well below the expectations of the agreed syllabus. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
95. By the end of Year 9 pupils gain a satisfactory knowledge of the beliefs and rituals of Christianity and other world faiths. They are developing an understanding of the nature of symbolism in different faiths. When well taught they are also learning how faith influences the lives of followers. Often however their knowledge is limited to learning about beliefs and approaches to worship in a very factual manner. In Years 10 and 11 pupils’ knowledge and understanding about the responses of Christianity and other faiths to ultimate questions and are unsatisfactory.
96. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall though the lessons observed varied from unsatisfactory to very good. In Years 7 to 9 teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In the good and very good lessons teachers are clear about what students are to learn and begin lessons with exercises that quickly interest and engage them. Teaching methods are varied and appropriate. At the close of these lessons the quality of

learning is effectively tested. Expectations are high and students are challenged to think and work independently and co-operatively. Year 8 pupils, for example, gained a very good insight into the symbolism and importance of the Passover and the Seder meal to modern day Jews. In Year 9, the development of understanding of the origin and importance of the Eucharist to Christians was effective. In these lessons students respond positively and learn more quickly as a result. In some lessons however teachers' subject knowledge is insecure and too little work is covered. As a result learning is unsatisfactory. In a small proportion of unsatisfactory lessons learning was minimal as a result of teaching failing to engage and motivate pupils.

97. As a result of inadequate time and very limited coverage of the locally agreed syllabus programme of study, Years 10 and 11 pupils are not receiving their statutory entitlement to religious education. The school is in breach of statutory requirements in these years. The leadership of the subject within the school is therefore unsatisfactory. The leadership of the head of department however is good within the confines of the time allocated and the curriculum and staffing structure provided. Departmental management is satisfactory. The clarity of vision and sense of purpose of the head of department are good. Good support for a large number of non-specialist teachers is provided and the scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 is well planned. The subject's contribution to pupils' personal development is satisfactory in the lower years but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. However, the good links with faith communities makes a contribution to pupils' understanding, both of other cultures and faiths.
98. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory, because although the development of schemes of work and the guidance and documentation provided for the non-specialist teachers is good, there has been no improvement in provision in Years 10 and 11.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in systems and control are good.
- Pupils are underachieving in resistant materials.
- There has been recent improvement to standards in food technology in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils are well behaved and have positive attitudes to learning.

Commentary

99. Standards of work are below average overall by Year 9. They are above average in systems and control because teaching is consistently good and pupils have adequate time to study the subject. In food and textiles, most pupils have insufficient time allocated for them to reach average standards. Their understanding and use of the design process is satisfactory but their knowledge of materials and nutrition is below average. Higher attaining pupils in textiles work creatively and produce well-finished items of soft furnishing. Standards are well below average in resistant materials and pupils have poor understanding of the tools and materials they use, mainly because of staffing difficulties.
100. GCSE results were well below average in 2003, mainly because results in food and resistant materials were poor and lowered the overall standard. In work seen, by the end of Year 11, standards are below average. This is an improvement, particularly in coursework for food. Standards in resistant materials remain well below average because of staffing difficulties but show some small improvement because of additional support provided for pupils in recent months. Pupils have a good understanding of control systems and they use appropriate technical vocabulary. They have sound drawing skills. In textiles, pupils have good practical and

design skills and their written work shows sound understanding of the materials and processes they use. Coursework folders are well presented. Pupils with special needs make similar progress to others because in most lessons teachers know their needs and provide appropriate support.

101. Achievement is satisfactory overall in relation to prior attainment and the assessed ability of pupils. It is good in systems and control because pupils respond very well to the depth and rigour in lessons and textiles where pupils are expected to reach high standards and to work creatively. It is unsatisfactory in resistant materials because pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn about the materials they use or to develop their practical skills to an appropriate level. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning in all materials areas and they behave well.
102. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Sometimes it is good and occasionally very good. The best lessons have pace and challenge that stretch all pupils. Teachers make good use of ICT to present information effectively so that pupils' learning is memorable. Imaginative teaching methods are used to encourage pupils to develop analytical skills and to think for themselves. In some lessons, pupils do not learn enough about the materials they use and there is not enough rigour or attention to planning for lessons. This does not always take account of learning needs of higher attaining pupils so that they are sometimes insufficiently challenged.
103. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Appropriate action is being taken to improve standards and progress is now closely monitored. Therefore, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Evaluation of the work of the department is now more clear-sighted and pupils can now opt to follow vocational courses.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Drama

104. In drama, pupils in Year 7 enter a role well, some convincingly in their short scenes. They use their knowledge of acting techniques, building on these effectively. The best of these was quiet and reflective, showing considerable understanding of the situation and holding the audience's attention throughout. Standards in drama are average in Years 7 to 9. Pupils are achieving well. In Year 11 standards overall are below average. Standards of acting are average but coursework is not as strong as their practical work and will pull down pupils' final grade. In view of their below average starting points they are achieving satisfactorily. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 are below average.
105. Teaching and learning in drama in the three lessons observed were very good. The very reflective approach to the work by teacher and pupils is proving successful at all stages. Questions are probing and challenging, exploring aspects of citizenship and personal development and these can involve highly sensitive relationships and concepts. He uses his own skills as an actor to demonstrate points that arise in the discussions. As a result of this, pupils are encouraged to comment further and then take their thoughts and ideas into significantly improved performances. The teacher is also excellent at using their responses to widen their knowledge of dramatic techniques and technical language. Pupils are confident to speak their thoughts and to criticise constructively and sensitively, using appropriate language. Their understanding and skills grow because the lessons are planned and organised to achieve this. As a result pupils are very involved in what they do. They enjoy their work and behave very well, working together enthusiastically in group activities. Overall, drama has maintained the standards observed in the previous inspection and continues to make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT is used creatively and imaginatively.
- Significant improvement has been made since the previous inspection in some aspects of the work of the subject.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to experience the world of art at first-hand.
- Pupils' research work in their sketchbooks is uninspired.

Commentary

106. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are below average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, considering their below average standards in this subject when they join the school in Year 7. By the end of Year 9, they draw vigorously in charcoal, producing lively portrait studies that express character and emotions effectively. Their composition work is careful, and they use bright colours and bold shapes to produce attractive still life studies. Pupils' three-dimensional work is well made, and includes lively masks, clay models, and decorative ceramic murals. However, their research in their sketchbooks lacks vigour and excitement, and they do not experiment enough with materials.
107. In 2003, GCSE results were below average. Pupils did broadly as well in their art and design as they did in most of their other subjects. Results vary considerably from year to year, depending on the standards at the start of the course of those pupils who choose to take the subject. Standards of work seen in the current Year 11 are average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Their work in ICT is strong, and they use it imaginatively and creatively. For example, they use multiple exposures to investigate movement, and manipulate images to create complex patterns and shapes. Their drawing is accurate, and portrait and figure work shows a sound grasp of form and proportion. However, they do not have enough opportunities to study the world of art at first-hand. As a result, their research lacks an appreciation of the importance of scale and texture.
108. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers give good individual advice, and methods and materials are active and interesting. For example, in a lesson on drawing animals, pupils worked in charcoal, sketching out large outlines, which they smudged with their fingers to create subtle tones and lively surfaces. Interest levels were high, pupils tried hard, and good learning was the result. In other lessons, however, materials and methods are not as interesting, pupils' attention begins to wander, and the pace of the lesson slows. This restricts learning overall to a satisfactory level.
109. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Significant improvement has been made in the use of ICT, and in providing opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness. In addition, pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11 has improved, and is now satisfactory. However, more limited progress has been made in other areas. For example, development planning is still not sharp enough, and the quality of teaching and learning remains at a satisfactory level. Curriculum leadership and management are therefore satisfactory overall.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards are below average, pupils are achieving satisfactorily.
- Pupils enjoy music.
- Some aspects of the new course in Years 7 to 9 are not challenging enough.
- More computers are needed for pupils to improve their composition in Years 7 to 9.
- There has been significant improvement since the last inspection.

Commentary

110. Standards by the end of Year 9 are below average. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Many pupils are developing good keyboard and other instrumental skills, and performing of all the musical activities is the strongest. Pupils in Year 9 also compose lyrics and music for a song, but lack of sufficient computers means that most efforts are very simple. Their songs show that they understand the relative lengths of notes to achieve a convincing rhythm, but written versions show that most fail to understand the relative strengths and numbers of beats in a bar. Standards in Years 7 and 8 are higher, and show the benefit of work done in the primary schools by the head of department.
111. Standards in Year 11 are also below average. Pupils play and sing quite sensitively. At this stage pupils use ICT for their compositions and as a result these are more sophisticated. Even so there are insufficient computers for the pleasingly large groups in Years 10 and 11 currently. In the results over the last few years only small numbers of students have taken the examination. Results have been below average with no pupils achieving the highest grades. In 2003 the group was too small for the results to be statistically valid.
112. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement. For instance pupils are aware of their strengths and weaknesses in music now because teachers assess them regularly and have begun to share National Curriculum levels with them. In Years 10 and 11 the grading criteria for the examination are used to assess work and pupils are familiar with these. Pupils are beginning to know what they must do to improve although this is too new to affect standards positively yet. Also pupils learn well in practical lessons because the teachers give them good individual advice particularly when playing keyboards and other instruments. This is a good feature of the assessment process and of teaching and learning which are now satisfactory overall. Effort has gone into creating new and more interesting projects for the pupils. These are appealing and enjoyable for pupils and make a significant contribution to their cultural development. For example pupils' study of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' was illuminated by reading part of the Heiligenstadt Testament.
113. There are still improvements to be made. Interesting though the projects are, as yet they are insufficiently challenging to help push standards up. There are insufficient keyboards for two classes and some of these are failing, providing the teachers with problems during the lessons and taking them from valuable teaching time. The second teaching room is far too small for a whole class doing practical work. At least a third of the pupils have to work in the creative arts foyer, where the noise disturbs lessons in other subjects. When all the pupils assemble in these cramped conditions behaviour deteriorates. In another lesson some pupils found it quite difficult to concentrate fully when working in groups. They were not monitored closely enough by the teacher to ensure they made the most of the time allowed them. Otherwise lessons are well planned and organised and pupils work systematically and enjoyably through their tasks, especially when teaching is at a stimulating pace.
114. Approximately 65 pupils learn to play instruments. The orchestra and the choir have about 25 pupils in each. Pupils perform regularly at concerts in and out of school providing good opportunities for their personal development. The department is now led and managed satisfactorily and this is a major improvement since the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good with knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers setting high expectations in terms of participation and behaviour.
- The leadership of the department is good.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are well supported.
- Though many pupils are capable of awards outside GCSE, they do not have the opportunity to do so.

Commentary

115. In 2003 there was a significant increase in the number of pupils gaining the higher A*-C grade passes in the GCSE examination in physical education than in the previous year. The overall pass rate was average.
116. Pupils arrive at the school with a variety of levels of physical education skills and experiences with some below average. They settle into the school quickly, achieve well, and by the end of Year 9 standards are average. Pupils apply the techniques, skills and competition rules to many aspects of physical education. Basic skills are well developed and provide a sound platform for future development. The standard of swimming is good, with most pupils demonstrating a high level of competence in a wide range of swimming strokes. This good progress is continued in Years 10 and 11. By the time pupils are in Year 11 standards are average overall. Many, particularly those in the examination groups, are demonstrating skills in a wide range of activities that are at least average, with a few pupils doing even better. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated, are given much support from both teachers and other pupils and reach levels of attainment that are commendable for them. There is no evidence of pupils with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum offer. School teams take part in many inter-school matches and competitions and gain much success. Many pupils have represented Lancashire, and some have gone on to gain international honours. The Year 11 rugby league team is the current under-16 Powergen cup Lancashire section champions.
117. The good standard of teaching noted at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and teach lessons that are well structured, have a variety of activities, and are conducted at a brisk demanding pace. There is an expectancy that pupils will work hard, behave well and achieve good standards, and generally these expectations are met. Pupils' enjoyment of their lessons is evident.
118. This is a well-led and well-managed department. The good accommodation is well used and has a positive effect on pupils' attainment, and enjoyment of the subject. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills through alternative qualifications such as the Junior Sports Leaders Award. The staff who teach physical education work well together, support each other, and show a very strong commitment to their pupils.
119. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The number of pupils gaining the higher pass grades in the GCSE examination has increased. The ondoor accommodation has been improved by the provision of a very well equipped fitness suite.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Pupils follow a course in personal social and health education (PSHE). It is not well respected by pupils, teaching varies in quality from good to unsatisfactory, and the content overlaps to some

extent with citizenship. The boundary between the subjects is not sufficiently clear and consequently there is some inefficiency in the use of teaching time for PSHE. Citizenship is also taught through other subjects.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work is not planned for teaching citizenship and learning relies too heavily on occasional contributions from other subjects, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- Lessons in personal, social and health education contribute effectively to pupils' understanding in Years 7 to 9.
- The school's strong sense of community contributes to pupils' awareness of rights and responsibilities.

Commentary

120. Standards of work by Year 9 are average and achievement is satisfactory. Particularly in lessons in personal, social and health education, pupils have considered a wide range of issues. They have satisfactory understanding of basic aspects of democracy, parliament and personal and social responsibility. Written work is mostly short, but usually demonstrates personal thinking and reference to pupils' own experiences. Pupils at all levels of attainment produce writing which indicates good levels of interest and serious intent, for example when offering opinions in the guise of a newspaper advice columnist. Pupils welcome opportunities to express opinions but do not always listen to those of others. The writing of higher attaining pupils is characterised by greater length, and ability to consider alternative responses.
121. Pupils are not examined at the end of Year 11. There is too little evidence for judgements of standards, achievement or the quality of learning. In work seen in Years 10 and 11, citizenship usually occurs only as an incidental component of some lessons in other subjects. In English and history lessons, pupils discuss the experiences of individuals and groups in other times and places and under different styles of government but there is no explicit link to pupils' understanding of themselves as citizens. In careers lessons, however, content is clearly linked to understanding of citizenship.
122. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in lessons with clear relevance to citizenship for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Pupils are confident in expressing opinions and these are valued and praised by teachers. Poor listening persists in some classes despite teachers' efforts to establish the principle that everyone has the right to be listened to. Generally, pupils are willing to consider issues of citizenship and personal relationships. Some teachers lack confidence in teaching the subject. There is uncertainty about how citizenship issues should be dealt with explicitly when they are not central to the main purpose of a subject lesson.
123. Overall, leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory because an appropriate method of assessing and recording pupils' standards has been devised but not yet introduced. Statutory requirements are not met. However, the co-ordinator has effectively identified what needs to be taught and co-ordinated the responses from subject departments well. Departments have responded positively by identifying those elements of their subjects that can contribute to the development of pupils as informed citizens, but are not making these contributions explicit in all subjects. There is however, good practice in history.
124. The subject was introduced only recently and was not taught at the time of the previous report.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

The school has set up a number of vocational courses, mainly in collaboration with a local further education college. There is also a dual award GCSE in leisure and tourism. Some of these courses were sampled during the inspection.

125. The **leisure and tourism** course is taught entirely by teachers from the school and is a successful course with both boys and girls. All are achieving well. They make good use of local facilities, particularly the leisure centre and swimming pool that adjoins the school, as a basis for research. The attainment range of current students is wide, but all are working with enjoyment and commitment and at or above the levels expected from their attainment in other subjects. The course is very well planned and enables pupils to use and develop further their skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT in a context that interests them. Their portfolios are carefully managed and pupils are justifiably proud of them.
126. The **applied business** course and **applied ICT** course are taught by teachers from the local college who come into school. This is a well-managed arrangement and means that pupils' time is not wasted in travelling. Courses are well taught and students' achievement is good in business and satisfactory in ICT. There is a wide range of ability in ICT and the college teacher has not been provided with all the relevant assessment information from the school that would ensure that the work matches the needs of all pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).