

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PATRICK'S RC HIGH SCHOOL AND ARTS COLLEGE

Salford

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105986

Headteacher: Mr Bernard Swarbrick

Lead inspector: Michael McLachlan

Dates of inspection: 8th - 11th March 2004

Inspection number: 264498

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	913
School address:	Guilford Road Eccles Salford Greater Manchester
Postcode:	M30 7JF
Telephone number:	(0161) 789 4678
Fax number:	(0161) 707 1375
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Father L Devany
Date of previous inspection:	11 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Patrick's is a mixed Roman Catholic comprehensive secondary school catering for pupils in the age range 11 to 16. The number of pupils on roll is 913, which is around the national average and nearly 200 more than on roll at the last inspection. The vast majority of pupils are drawn from five primary schools and six parishes but the school also takes pupils from a further 20 primary schools. The majority of pupils are drawn from homes in below average and a significant proportion from well below average socio-economic circumstances and there are around half the national average of pupils drawn from homes where parents have had access to higher education. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is average. Overall, attainment on entry is below average and boys' attainment on entry is lower than that of the girls. Almost all pupils are white with only ten pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none of these have English as an additional language or are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, at 14 per cent, is around the national average although the numbers of pupils with statements of special educational needs, at 1.3 per cent, is below the national average of 2.4 per cent. Overall, the school has a stable population. Nearly all pupils leave the school to enter further education, training or employment and only one per cent of pupils were not placed last year. St Patrick's is a Beacon school and the school achieved Arts College Specialist School status in September 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3654	Michael McLachlan	Lead inspector	
13346	Chris Bailey	Lay inspector	
2049	David Klemm	Team inspector	English
22046	Josephine Jolliffe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages (French, German and Spanish)
10088	Rob Forsyth	Team inspector	Mathematics
17799	Anthony Stoddart	Team inspector	Science
28106	Michele Majid	Team inspector	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Special educational needs
8089	Philip Braide	Team inspector	Design and technology Art and design
1994	Helen Olds	Team inspector	Geography Citizenship
3930	Roy Pitcher	Team inspector	History
20411	Stephen Bell	Team inspector	Art and design, and ICT
11975	Thelma McIntosh-Clark	Team inspector	Music
19295	Peter Wall	Team inspector	Physical education Business education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with many very good features. Pupils achieve well in a caring, Catholic community because of good leadership and good teaching. A strong ethos leads to very good attitudes and behaviour by the pupils. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The new headteacher provides very good leadership and is ably assisted by a strong, rapidly developing, senior management team with many very good qualities and a supportive governing body that knows the school well and that is improving in its role as the critical friend of the school.
- The senior management team has set a good agenda and pace for change and the developments are strongly supported and valued by the vast majority of teachers, parents and pupils.
- Boys' achievement on entry is below that of girls' and this persists throughout the school and fewer than average numbers of boys achieve the highest GCSE grades.
- Very good spiritual, moral and social education and good cultural education promote the pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes to work and each other.
- Pupils have very good support and guidance and fully support the school.
- Aspects of accommodation are unsatisfactory and there is insufficient access to and use of computers in some subjects.

Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school has achieved Beacon status for its work in transition between primary and secondary schools and has recently gained Arts College Status. GCSE results initially quickly improved but with increased numbers, have settled back to around national averages, so the rate of improvement is below the national trend. The key issues arising from the last inspection have, in the main, been addressed. Particularly good progress has recently been made in strengthening the support and monitoring roles of senior management and extending the breadth of the curriculum in Year 10 to improve motivation and examination results. Improving boys' performance remains an issue for the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall, achievement is good across the school. Standards of work seen during the inspection are average in Years 7 to 9 indicating good achievement, as overall, pupils, particularly the boys, start school with below average standards. The standards attained by the pupils in the end of Year 9 tests in 2003 were average in English, maths and science. The standards of work seen shows an improvement in English and mathematics where they were above average but they remain average in science. Standards seen in other subjects are average apart from French, history, geography and mathematics where they are above average and in Spanish, German and music where they are below average. Compared with the achievements of schools with similar social intakes, standards are well above average. However, because of boys' weaker attainment on entry, which continues throughout Years 7 to 9, the progress made is just below average, compared with schools with overall similar attainment on entry.

Year 11 results

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average points scores (*in the best 8 subjects) in GCSE and GNVQ examinations.

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with average points	all schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	B	* B	* C	* D

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

In Years 10 and 11, the standards seen in the inspection are at least average in all subjects apart from, geography, art and design and design and technology where they are above average and this improving picture represents good, overall achievement. In 2003, standards in GCSE were near national averages at 5 A*-C but above average for 5 A*-G and 1 A*-G. Standards are well above average compared with schools with similar social intakes but are below average compared with pupils' prior attainment. This is principally due to the below average performance by boys. Standards were above national averages in geography, art and PE and in line in other subjects. They were below national averages in mathematics, ICT and German and Spanish. Overall girls' achievement is better than boys'. Pupils from different minority ethnic groups achieve as well as their peers, as do pupils with special educational needs. The school contributes very well to the pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Overall attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good** with some very good features. The **good** teaching leads to good learning. Improving systems are in place to assess what the pupils know and to track and report their progress. The curriculum is good across the school and the improved option choices and vocational courses, recently introduced into Year 10, have made a significant impact on motivation and the quality of teaching and learning. Overall, pupils with special educational needs are well cared for, although there are insufficient support staff to fully meet all their needs. The school provides good care and very good support and guidance. Reports to parents give clear indications of the National Curriculum levels or GCSE equivalent grades achieved but are inconsistent in setting out targets for improvement in subjects. Links with parents are good. Links with local primary schools and the communities it serves are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The leadership of the new headteacher is **very good**. He has an approachable, consultative style, which is valued by all involved in the school. He has improved the number, skills and responsibilities of senior staff well since the last inspection. The governing body is well led, informed, supportive and is rapidly developing its role as critical friend. Governors meet all statutory requirements. Relevant and timely improvements are in progress and have the support of parents, pupils and staff. The governors and headteacher are supported well by committed new and long serving senior managers and department leaders. The school is a well managed, very orderly community. Self-evaluation is thorough, accurate and very well used in identifying and then targeting areas for improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have very positive views of the school. They welcome the way the school has progressed since the last inspection and value the changes to the options systems and the consultative style adopted by the senior management team. Pupils value highly the way the school includes them in developing policy and responds to their views. Parents expressed some concerns over the support provided for some special educational needs pupils and for pupils in the lower sets. Overall, inspectors found provision in these areas to be at least satisfactory and often good, however, there were insufficient support staff available and links to all outside support agencies were not equally strong.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise the attainment of boys with particular reference to:
 - taking early action when pupils enter the school to address any differences between boys' and girls' attainment;
 - developing boys' ability to write longer pieces of work in all subjects;
 - increasing the proportion of boys achieving the highest grades at **GCSE**; and
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to become independent learners.
- Provide access to and increase the use of ICT facilities within subjects.
- Address the accommodation deficiencies identified, particularly in music, science and geography.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall, pupils' achievement is **good** because pupils start school with below average levels of achievement and the standards of work seen by the end of Year 9 and 11 are **average** and sometimes better. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 were average in 2003. Overall, results in the GCSE examinations were average in 2003 but boys achieved less well than girls. Overall, results, though variable, have been around the national average for the last three years but the overall rate of improvement is below the national trend.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because overall, the standards of work seen at the end of Years 9 and 11 are average whilst the overall attainment on entry to the school is below average.
- GCSE results in Year 11 are much better than schools with similar free school meals, though just below average when compared to schools with similar attainment at the end of Year 9.
- Boys' achievement on entry is below that of girls and this persists throughout the school.
- There are fewer boys than average achieving the highest grades in GCSE examinations.
- The numbers of pupils achieving at least five GCSE passes or one GCSE pass **at grades A* to E** is well above average.
- Overall, standards and achievement in art and design and physical education are above average.
- Results vary with each year group and are not improving as fast as the national picture.

Commentary

1. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school, particularly the boys', as measured by the national tests at the end of Year 6, is below average and there are fewer, more-able pupils than average.

Key Stage 3 - Years 7 to 9

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.6 (33.0)	33.4(33.3)
mathematics	36.2 (33.7)	35.4(34.7)
science	33.7 (31.8)	33.6(33.3)

There were 191 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Standards of work seen during the inspection are average in Years 7 to 9, indicating good achievement as overall, pupils, particularly the boys, start school with below average standards. The standards attained by the pupils in the end of Year 9 tests in 2003 were average in English, maths and science. The standards of work seen shows an improvement in English and mathematics where they were above average but they remain average in science. Standards seen in other subjects are average apart from French, history, geography and mathematics where they are above average and in Spanish, German and music where they are below average.
3. In 2003, standards were well above average, compared with schools with similar social intakes. However, the progress made by the end of Year 9 was below average, compared with

schools with similar attainment on entry, as measured by the average points achieved by pupils. This is due to a number of factors. A significant proportion of pupils, mainly boys, just reach the standard required to gain a National Curriculum level, whereas most girls tend to achieve the middle or higher marks within the level boundaries. Overall progress is then reduced because the boys do not catch up with the girls by the end of year 9. Since the last inspection, results in English improved dramatically but have fallen back to the national average. Mathematics has show recent improvement and is now above national averages and science has remained close to the national average. Whilst overall results are now just above the national average, because of early gains following the last inspection, the overall trend of improvement is below the national trend.

Key Stage 4 - Years 10 and 11

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	49 (52)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	95 (93)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil best 8 subjects	34.6 (36.5)	34.7 (34.7)

There were 166 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In Years 10 and 11, the standards seen in the inspection are at least average in all subjects apart from geography, art and design and design and technology, where they are above average and this improving picture represents good, overall achievement. In 2003, standards in GCSE were near national averages at 5 A*-C but above average for 5 A*-G and 1 A*-G. Girls achieved just above the national average but boys were ten per cent below. Standards are well above average compared with schools with similar social intakes but are below average compared with pupils' prior attainment. This is due to the below average performance by boys in 2003 and the fewer than national average numbers of pupils achieving the highest grades. This reduces the average point scores for pupils and so places the school below similar schools in using this measure. This is not overly surprising given the lower numbers of high-attaining pupils starting at the school and the differences in boys' and girls' attainment, nevertheless the school needs to improve this situation.
- The school has recently introduced General National Vocational Qualifications into the curriculum but these have yet to impact on the GCSE results. GCSE standards in 2003 were above national averages in geography, art and design and PE and in line in other subjects. They were below national averages in mathematics, ICT and German and Spanish. The number of pupils achieving the top grades is lower than the national picture. Following the last inspection, GCSE results initially improved dramatically. However, the school has grown in numbers and these pupils have, in the main, had below average ability, consequently the results have settled back to around national averages, so the overall trend of improvement is below the national trend. Recent changes to the curriculum for the current Year 10 have had a marked effect on motivation and attainment. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was significantly better in this year group with over 40 per cent of lessons very good or better and achievement was overall, better in Year 10 than in Year 11, where the old curriculum remains. The school's target for the Year 10 group, for 5A*-C/GNVQ is significantly higher at around 60 per cent and, if the current good work is sustained, is achievable.
- Whilst overall achievement is good, girls' achievement is better than boys', in part due to their better levels of attainment on entry and also because boys have less well-developed, extended writing skills, lack independent learning skills and are less mature in their approach to and

presentation of their work. There are very few pupils from the different minority ethnic groups, all have English as their first language and are well integrated into the life and work of the school and consequently achieve as well as their peers. Their achievement in national examinations is in line with expectations given their ability and these pupils make good progress.

7. Achievement of the most able is satisfactory overall. The school achieves just above the national average at GCSE grade A but below at A*. In some subjects, notably English, home economics, history and French, higher numbers than average do achieve the highest grade and in art and design, nearly a third of pupils entered achieved these grades. In most cases, girls follow the overall trend and achieve significantly better than boys, so in 2003, seven per cent of boys achieved A*/A grades, whereas the national average for boys was 11 per cent. Eighteen per cent of girls achieved these grades, slightly more than the national average for girls.
8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils, as a result of the good teaching and the good support, when available, from the small number of learning assistants. However, work in some subjects is not always planned to fully meet their specific needs. Pupils with specific learning difficulties are withdrawn for extra support by the learning assistants, who keep detailed records of each pupil and have very good relationships with them and these pupils are making good progress. Consequently, in 2003, 99% of pupils left school with at least one pass at GCSE and 95% achieved at least 5 passes.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is **satisfactory**. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. The school's promotion of personal development and of spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen to come to school and their behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good.
- The school promotes very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff.
- The school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Pupils' attendance is monitored regularly and recorded in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Pupils' appreciation of other people's cultural traditions is promoted insufficiently.

Commentary

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002-2003

Authorised absence	
School data:	8.9
National data:	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0
National data:	1.1

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

9. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and whilst authorised absence is a little higher than the national figure, there is almost no unauthorised absence. The school has recently introduced an effective electronic system of recording attendance and this gives the school accurate and timely information about attendance, which is used well to carefully monitor attendance by heads of year for individual pupils and across the whole school by the deputy headteacher.

There is some lateness to school, although this is monitored well by the attendance officer, who also **works closely and effectively** with parents to reduce pupils' absence. Good attendance and improvement in attendance throughout the academic year, is well recognised through good systems that reward and praise pupils, form and year groups.

10. Behaviour in lessons is very good. Pupils are eager to learn, listen attentively and the great majority of pupils concentrate well on their work and complete their tasks. Pupils develop maturity as they progress through the school and are willing to accept increasingly responsible roles within the school, such as working as student receptionists in Years 7 and 8 and as prefects and mentors in Year 11. The school's revised behaviour policy is understood well by pupils and implemented consistently and effectively across the school. Pupils were fully consulted during the development of this behaviour policy and in a recent anti-bullying conference, and their very good involvement has contributed towards ensuring that high standards of behaviour are maintained. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs are very good. The Learning Support Unit makes a very positive contribution to modifying the disruptive behaviour of a very small minority of pupils, has provided effective advice and support on anger management and effectively helps in making possible the return of pupils to mainstream school life. Only two pupils have been excluded permanently in the current academic year and only three in the previous year. The rate of fixed-term exclusions is broadly average, taking account of local circumstances.
11. Relationships between pupils and pupils with staff are very good. There is only a handful of pupils from minority ethnic groups and there is a very high level of racial harmony and very good relationships between pupils. The school has effective arrangements to discourage bullying and has recently held a very successful anti-bullying conference involving many pupils, staff and governors.
12. The school is particularly successful in enabling pupils to develop spiritual, moral and social awareness and to apply principles distinguishing right from wrong. Pupils are closely involved in the communities it serves and in fundraising for several charities. The school provides a good programme to extend pupils' cultural awareness, for example through theatre trips, musical events and foreign visits however, the school lacks a specific planned programme to develop multi-cultural understanding within subjects and across whole-school activities to enhance this current good provision.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	888	48	3
White – Irish	6	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	1	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0

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

The number of pupils excluded was 36 in total.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning is **good** overall, with a significant proportion of **very good** teaching, particularly in Year10. The curriculum is **good** overall and is enhanced by recently introduced greater option choices in year 10, additional GCSE subjects and very good extra curriculum provision. Care, support and guidance is **very good** and support for careers development is **excellent**. Overall, links with parents are **good** and the community and colleges are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. The quality of assessment is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make very effective use of lesson time and plan lessons well to ensure good learning.
- Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects so pupils get expert teaching.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour promote good learning.
- Teaching and learning are very good in modern foreign languages.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to learn independently in some subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 117 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (3%)	24 (21%)	69 (59%)	17 (14%)	2 (2%)	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.

13. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are good in all subjects except in history particularly in Years 10 and 11 and modern foreign languages where they are very good, and in citizenship where they are satisfactory. There are no subject areas where teaching or learning is unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are good in all subjects except modern foreign languages, GNVQ, ICT and history, where they are very good. Learning is very good in art and design. There are no subject areas where teaching or learning is unsatisfactory.
14. Better lessons are characterised by brisk pace, probing questions, a range of activities and effective consolidation of new knowledge. Teachers show very good knowledge across the full range of specialist subject areas although, because of the large numbers of staff teaching the subject, in Citizenship this knowledge is only satisfactory. Teachers' planning is generally very good and lessons make very effective use of the time available. Relationships are good and often very good so for example, good relationships in physical education produce positive attitudes in pupils and they respond well to their teachers. In history, teachers' enthusiasm and good introductory activities get pupils quickly involved in learning, whilst in science, practical work helps pupils to understand underlying theory and cultivates analytical skills.
15. Pupils learn well. Overall, the encouragement and involvement of pupils in their lessons is good and in half the subjects, is very good. This motivates pupils effectively. However, opportunities for pupils to learn independently are limited as pupils, particularly boys, rely

heavily on teachers to structure learning and provide information. Pupils are able to work well together in small groups and discuss alternative views sensibly and without rancour. Teachers insist on good behaviour and overall, pupils' self-discipline is strong so lesson time is used productively and not wasted on disciplinary matters.

16. Out of 117 lessons seen, only two were judged to be unsatisfactory and only one to be poor. These were isolated lessons in different subject areas. In two lessons, a lack of specialist subject knowledge was a contributory factor and in one, the control of pupil behaviour was poor. The pace of the lessons was slow and pupils coped too easily with their work and so lost interest. As a result, a significant proportion of pupils were inattentive and easily distracted into other, unwanted activities. This in turn affected the learning of other pupils in the class. At the end of the lessons, inadequate consolidation of work done meant a significant number of pupils had failed to learn anything of consequence.
17. Overall, teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers have good knowledge of pupils' needs and use the Individual Education Plans to provide guidance and support for pupils although, in their current format, these plans do not identify the specific subject learning needs with sufficient precision to fully support subject teachers' planning. Although they are few in number, the well-qualified classroom support assistants provide valuable help and encouragement for the pupils in their care and show a good understanding of their specific needs. Specific support is well provided for a few pupils in the Learning Support Unit. The school has a very small number of pupils from ethnic minorities and none are at an early stage of learning English. The school has identified around 10 per cent of pupils as gifted and talented, who enjoy additional activities to provide more variety, challenge and difficulty in their work, although this does not always translate into pupils achieving the highest grades at GCSE.
18. The use of assessment data has improved rapidly recently and is now good. Whole school developments in the use of data, led by the deputy headteacher, are very good. Departments analyse their test and examination results and use the data to assess pupil progress, identify any underachievement and to set suitable targets for pupils. Pupils' school reports to parents are also evolving. The latest involve pupils in scrutinising results, identifying weaknesses and deciding what actions are necessary. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is competent but comments in some subjects rarely give specific indications of what pupils need to do next to improve their standards.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** across all years in the school. The school has improved the curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11, in response to issues raised at the previous inspection and has been innovative in introducing a General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) course in ICT for pupils in Year 9. **Good** opportunities for enrichment include an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and out-of-school study support. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall but aspects are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In all year groups, the range of subjects caters well for pupils' needs and aspirations.
- There are good opportunities for able pupils to take extra GCSE qualifications.
- The provision for personal, social and health education and careers is good.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities for additional study.
- There is not enough time for drama in Years 7 to 9, or for physical education in Year 9.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory in several subject areas.

Commentary

19. The curriculum provided for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 is good. It has been reviewed and re-constructed recently to meet the needs of pupils at all stages and of all abilities, and pupils and parents are pleased with what they see as considerably improved choice. In Years 7 to 9 it is broad and balanced and is enriched well by the opportunities for pupils in Year 9 to take two modern foreign languages and a vocational course in ICT. However, the limited time for drama and for physical education in Year 9, restricts curricular opportunities and depresses attainment in these subjects. Through the recent introduction of flexible setting within departments, good efforts are made to ensure that teaching and learning are appropriate to pupils' different needs and abilities. The school's strategies for improving literacy are well embedded in most subject areas, but opportunities for improving numeracy skills are missed in some areas. The national strategy for teaching and learning is implemented in most subjects, and has good impact in ICT. The school has achieved national recognition for its provision for sport through the Sports Mark award.
20. The school has effectively broadened the range of options available to pupils in Years 10 and 11, by introducing GCSE courses in several vocationally related subjects including law, media studies and statistics. Pupils are able to choose to take single or dual award science at GCSE, and are able to study two modern foreign languages, a small number of pupils take GNVQ course in ICT at intermediate level, and some pupils take certificates of achievement in religious education and modern foreign languages. A small number of pupils in Year 11 successfully attend a local college for part of the week to study level 1 National Vocational Qualifications in hairdressing and beauty therapy, painting and decorating or construction. However, these arrangements have not proved entirely satisfactory for some pupils who lack motivation and self-discipline. The school wisely intends to initially increase the number of internally provided GNVQ courses, so reducing the numbers of pupils attending external courses to those pupils for whom it remains the most appropriate provision. Further expansion is to be reconsidered when this strategy has been evaluated. As a result of these innovations, more pupils are prepared to continue their education beyond the age of 16. A well-organised programme of personal, social and health education includes very good careers education, but teaching and learning in citizenship are restricted because it is also taught within the single hour per week allocated to this aspect.
21. Overall, provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Good additional support is provided by the learning assistants, to enable pupils with special educational needs to access the curriculum but as these are few in number, there is limited support available within lessons. Staff in the Learning Support Unit provide timely intervention for pupils at risk of not attending school or to support those pupils who find return to school difficult. The withdrawal for literacy support is well planned and delivered by the special educational needs co-ordinator and the pupils appreciate the help they are given and make good progress. The special needs room, "Room 6", is a positive environment where pupils can do their homework and have help with course work. Staff use this room well to provide further opportunities to support pupils who, through physical disability, are unable to currently access all teaching rooms. This arrangement, whilst temporary, could be improved through a more detailed examination of the timetable and rooming requirements, to ensure the full range of curriculum is available. The school has usefully purchased a computer based interactive learning program that will be introduced as soon as staff have received the required training. There are very good specific, personal, social and health education activities in the Learning Support Unit, aimed at helping pupils gain life skills, such as raising self-esteem and anger management.
22. There is very good support for learning outside the normal school day. Pupils who are gifted and talented can attend one-year courses in law, media studies or statistics, which lead to a GCSE qualification. Booster classes in various subjects, support pupils in Year 11 preparing for GCSE examinations. There is a wide range of team sports and other sporting and musical activities, concerts are given twice per year, and pupils have opportunities to visit local amenities and to take part in foreign trips. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to come into contact with a diversity of cultures.

23. Overall, accommodation and resources, including staffing, are satisfactory although there are some significant weaknesses in each area. The school is well supported by an appropriate number of properly qualified staff for nearly all subjects but the number of support staff is low, given the numbers of pupils identified with some level of special educational needs. The accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. Several areas are in need of re-decoration and minor repairs to floors and fittings, and standards of cleanliness vary from good to poor. Although some improvements have taken place in science, teaching and learning in the subject are restricted by the continuing need to use non-specialist rooms. Accommodation for music is poor. Sound-proofing and storage is inadequate, there are no practice rooms, and the entire area is dirty and neglected. Rooms for geography and citizenship are scattered throughout the building, reducing opportunities for collaborative work. The temporary accommodation for art and design is well used but activities will remain restricted until the new facilities are completed. Unsatisfactory facilities for indoor activities in PE restrict teaching and learning opportunities. A major programme involving new art and design facilities and a Sports hall were in progress during the inspection to remedy the accommodation issues in these subjects. Overall, resources for learning are satisfactory, but there is not enough access to or use of ICT, in English, geography, history, modern foreign languages, design and technology, and music.

Pupils' care, guidance and support

The school's arrangements for ensuring the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are **good**. The school provides **very good** support, advice and guidance for pupils and involves them in its work and development **very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils enjoy close and supportive relationships with their teachers.
- Pupils have access to very good support, advice and guidance which helps them to make well-informed decisions about further study and career opportunities.
- Pupils are consulted very well about proposed changes in school policy and routines.
- A very small number of staff are not fully aware of the school's child protection practices.

Commentary

24. The school complies with local child protection procedures and the great majority of staff are fully aware of these procedures and know what steps to take if an incident arises. However, a very small number of staff are not completely familiar with these procedures and there is insufficient mention of child protection procedures in the Staff Handbook. Health and safety procedures are secure and no major hazards were noted during the inspection, although no risk assessment has been carried out on the major refurbishment work, which is currently in progress on the school's site. Accidents to pupils and staff are properly recorded and regular fire drills are held. The school's arrangements to promote healthy lifestyles, especially the benefits of healthy eating, require greater emphasis. The school's toilets are in a poor state of repair. Soap is not provided and the great majority of cubicles for both boys and girls lack secure locks and this adversely affects pupils' privacy and dignity. Supervision by staff of pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes is very good and this ensures pupils feel safe and able to socialise with friends.
25. The great majority of pupils benefit from the high quality of relationships between themselves and staff. This enables staff to offer support and advice to pupils in a focussed way, so that they are able to make realistic choices about what subjects to study for GCSE and options to pursue on leaving school. Very good careers advice is available for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and this will shortly be extended to other year groups. Pupils believe that they receive valuable advice about future careers and this helps them to make timely decisions about what to do on leaving school. This support is very good and nearly all pupils (99%) successfully move on to

further education or work based training or employment. Mentors make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. The school has developed several good and effective ways of recognising achievement and reinforcing motivation, including using postcards to parents and writing comments in the school journal, different coloured ink to indicate not only issues of concern but also praise for work or actions done well. Pupils, particularly those in the upper school, expressed their support and for these positive rewards.

26. There are good arrangements to smooth the transition from primary schools and close relationships exist with them. These arrangements are appreciated by both pupils and parents. The school council is an effective means of consulting pupils, and the school, on some issues, has been particularly quick to respond to decisions taken by the school council. The school has also consulted pupils on other issues, especially the behaviour policy and bullying conference and this resulted in the school making considerable changes to the policy and practice as a result. This consultation process not only demonstrated that the school took pupils' views seriously but helped to gain wide acceptance of the changes made. Pupils expressed very good support for these measures and felt they responded with maturity to changes introduced.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are **good** and links with the local community, and other schools and colleges are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have regular contact with teachers through planners.
- Parents support the school well in a variety of ways.
- Links with the local community are varied and very well established.
- Reports to parents have improved, as they now provide information on the National Curriculum levels and examination grades reached by pupils but they do not give sufficient information on what pupils need to know, do and understand in order to improve.

Commentary

27. Parents are supportive of the school. The parents' questionnaire and parents' meeting held before the inspection showed a high level of satisfaction with the school. Parents appreciate the planners, which each pupil has and these help both to facilitate communication with teachers and keep parents in touch with day-to-day issues. Parents receive a regular newsletter and attend consultation evenings and other school events, such as the Prize Night, in considerable numbers. Parents and teachers helpfully discuss educational issues over the phone on a regular basis and staff make home visits if necessary. There is good support for the special educational needs department and Learning Support Unit from the educational psychologist and the local education authority (LEA) support service. However, there is insufficient support from other outside agencies, which limits the number of pupils who have been transferred from school action to school action plus.
28. The school benefits from an active Parent Teacher Association, which regularly raises considerable sums for the school; for example, it recently raised £12000 towards funding the school's application for Arts College status. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents give a well-rounded picture of the school and meet statutory requirements. Reports give clear indications of the levels or GCSE equivalent grades achieved but are inconsistent in setting targets for improvement in subjects. Parents were consulted in writing about the school's revised behaviour policy but the school has yet to undertake surveys of parental views or use other methods of engaging parents more fully in consultation.

29. The school has Beacon status because of well-established links with its feeder primary schools and has close relationships with the communities it serves, an old people's home, hospice and the Rugby Club. The choir sings in local churches, including Salford Cathedral. Pupils make visits to local theatres and places of interest. Local businesses provide work experience for pupils in Year 11 and also advisers for business related projects, such as Young Enterprise, an inter-school competition, which has been won by St Patrick's for the last two years. The school is developing good links with local further education and Sixth Form colleges. Links with other educational institutions and the local community have continued to develop well since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management in the school are **good**. The contribution made by the governing body is **good**. The leadership provided by the headteacher is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's leadership, vision and sense of purpose are very good and provide clear direction in further developing a good school.
- The governing body, and especially the chairman of governors, have a clear and very good understanding of the strengths of the school.
- A senior management team with many very good features, vigorously supports the governors and headteacher.
- The self-evaluation programme is thorough, accurate and very well used in identifying and then targeting areas for improvement.
- The programme for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning is good, though there are inconsistencies in the pace of its introduction across all departments.
- Middle management is good and very good in most areas.

Commentary

30. Governance of the school is good. The governing body is a strong team of experienced members who bring to the group a wide range of expertise. It is well led by a committed chairman who knows very well the strengths of the school, of both pupils and staff. He is eager for all to do well. The governors, fulfil all statutory duties and have embraced the changing demands made of them and are fast developing an awareness of their role as a critical friend to the new headteacher and senior management team. They receive good support from both the local education authority and the Roman Catholic Diocese.
31. Over the relatively short time since his appointment, the headteacher has had a significant impact on the work of the school. This view is endorsed by the greater majority of pupils, parents, staff and governors. He has very clear vision of what the school can achieve and has the energy and commitment to put into place the changes and improvements needed for success. The style of management adopted is open, inclusive and consultative and this approach has enabled all staff at all levels to share in the planning. The school development plan is most comprehensive yet realistic and its timescale is within the school's potential. The structure of management has been reviewed and new appointments have been made in order to ensure clear lines of communication, consultation, monitoring and support. Training needs are clearly identified in the transformation that has already begun. The focus is firmly established on school improvement and especially on raising standards and promoting the inclusion of all pupils within the school and the importance of strong pastoral leadership and support is acknowledged well in the management structure. Heads and assistant heads of year have now a clear remit on a proactive approach to co-ordinating progress across subjects, in managing a caring climate for learning within which all pupils can achieve well.

32. The school's self-evaluation programme is central to much that is or has been put in place. It is already being fully and accurately used as a tool with which to check on the overall effectiveness of the work of the school. The headteacher and senior management team are now moving towards enabling all managers to share in and contribute to this process. Middle managers carry out a review of their area of responsibility that checks on the progress that has been made in seeking to raise attainment. There is already impact in some areas, though it is somewhat early to judge fully how this is showing through in pupil performance over five school years. For example, pupils in current Year 11 will only benefit from the beginnings of an improved approach to revision and examination preparation. In successive years improvement should be more marked.
33. The drive for improvement, identified in the development plan, is headed by the senior management team. All have clearly structured roles in monitoring and supporting the work of those departments for which they are given responsibility. Regular and constructive meetings are scheduled for feedback on the pace and direction of development to take place. Senior staff are leading the monitoring of teaching and learning by lesson observations and the demands on time, for the involvement of heads of department, have been identified as an area of concern if the process is to be fully implemented at all stages of management. There are some inconsistencies here that the team knows will need to be addressed.
34. Middle management show good leadership and management overall in most areas. It is very good in English, art and design, history and modern foreign languages. Management of music is unsatisfactory. The special educational needs department is well led and managed by the committed, special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), who, with the support of the line manager, ensures that the Code of Practice is being followed and that the learning assistants are very clear about their responsibilities. There is good communication with the heads of year and other departments. However, the SENCO has a very heavy teaching timetable, which limits further improvements being made. Most subjects have identified special educational needs in their development planning to ensure that these pupils' needs are met.
35. There are training needs already identified in some areas of management and the school is fully involved in making good use of the leadership improvement grant, in hosting a school led training programme on behalf of the LEA designed to raise awareness and competence in managing and leading in schools. In some departments, the opportunity to lead in an innovative, developmental yet co-ordinated role is a new experience but one that most managers across the school have eagerly embraced. This attention to training needs is part of the school's efforts to ensure high quality personnel and the school's efforts in this area have been externally recognised, as the school has achieved the Investors in People award. The recruitment, retention and on-going training of staff has high priority in the plans for development. Staff new to the school and particularly newly qualified teachers, benefit from a well-managed induction programme and the work of 'mentors' is highly valued. The school is supported very well by dedicated office and other support staff. Financial arrangements are well managed, principles of best value are adhered to and the Governor's sub committee fulfils its functions well. The school benefits from a range of additional resources through the Excellence in Cities programmes and these have been well used to enhance and strengthen the leadership and management of the school.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,686,474
Total expenditure	2 665,860
Expenditure per pupil	2,878

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	20,904
Balance carried forward to the next	20,614

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Provision in English is **good** with some **very good** features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and pupils make good progress.
- Teaching is good and often very good with pupils learning well.
- Pupils' attitudes are very positive and they work hard in lessons.
- The marking of pupils' work is constructive and analytical.
- Opportunities for more independent work, including the use of ICT, are underdeveloped.
- Pupils, especially boys, are not writing enough longer pieces of work.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Above average
Achievement: whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Very good Good Satisfactory	
Management of the department		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

Commentary

36. In 2003, the results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were at the national average with girls doing significantly better than boys. GCSE results in 2003 were above the national average in English language and English literature, with girls doing especially well and boys achieving results in line with boys nationally. On entry to the school, standards vary from year to year but are overall, below average with relatively few, very high attainers and with boys significantly behind girls. In Years 7 to 9, pupils achieve well and in the current Year 9 are reaching standards above the national average. All pupils develop very good listening skills and many high-attaining pupils, especially girls, can express their ideas clearly about the books they are reading, although their reading out loud is not as strong. Pupils work well on improving the accuracy of their spelling, punctuation and grammar and can use technical language to describe how language operates. The content of boys' writing is less well developed and opportunities for all pupils to write extended pieces of work are somewhat limited. Standards in Year 11 are above average, In Years 10 and 11, high attainers often express a mature understanding of the literary texts they are reading and can write fluently about a range of topics. Middle-attaining pupils start to use a more mature written vocabulary but are less confident when writing creatively. Girls are achieving higher standards than boys because they read more widely, have more extensive written vocabularies and their responses to literary texts are more mature. The very small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
37. Achievement throughout the school is good because teaching is uniformly good and sometimes very good. In a very good Year 10 lesson, pupils with special educational needs worked hard and responded well because the pace of learning was brisk with a range of active learning activities and challenging teacher questioning. By the end of the lesson, pupils had developed a good understanding of the Carol Ann Duffy poem and could express personal

views about its content. Teaching is planned systematically and is based on the national strategy for teaching English. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and their classroom management skills are excellent. Pupils respond very positively; they work hard and concentrate well. They share ideas in mixed gender groups and are prepared to work at home. Teachers mark work thoroughly and set appropriate targets for improvement. Provision of more opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills, including the use of ICT, and to write longer pieces of work would enhance their learning.

38. The head of department provides very good leadership and good management for the department. Schemes of work and lesson plans are detailed and comprehensive and priorities for future developments are clear and appropriate. Teaching staff co-operate well and share ideas. Teachers make good use of assessment data to monitor pupils' progress but there is no systematic monitoring of teaching, which would help to disseminate the very good practice in the school. Drama is offered as an option in Years 10 and 11 and the quality of this provision is very good, with pupils achieving well. A small group of Year 10 and 11 pupils take GCSE media studies as an after school activity and are achieving above average standards. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Attainment in Year 9 is not as high but standards at GCSE are stronger. In Years 7 to 9, opportunities for drama remain limited. The department has the potential to continue to improve.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

39. Standards of literacy are **average**. Since the last inspection, greater attention has been paid to improving spelling with good practice, for example, observed in history and form tutor periods. All pupils have reading books and are encouraged to read in form tutor time. Key words are well taught across the curriculum, especially in mathematics, geography and science. In modern foreign languages, grammar is taught well with a high priority given to improving speaking and listening. Standards of writing in history are above average, with good opportunities for pupils to write extended essays but this is not as well developed in other subjects. Girls are achieving higher standards than boys.

Modern foreign languages

The overall provision in **modern foreign languages** is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in French are above the national average.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- There is a very good range of languages offered.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support learning.
- Performance data is not used sufficiently to set pupils targets for improvement.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection		
French	Above average	Above average
German	Below average	Average
Spanish	Below average	Average
Achievement: whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good
Quality of learning	Very Good	Very Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Very good	
Management of the department	Very good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

Commentary

40. The examination results show that in 2002 the performance of Year 11 pupils was above average in French, with a higher proportion of higher grades than found nationally. Girls performed better than boys in the tests, with a similar picture in 2003. The results in Spanish and German were below national average, due in part to staffing difficulties and to inconsistencies in the assessment of course work. The teacher assessments and tests for Year 9 pupils, show that standards are above average in French. Year 9 pupils are not tested in Spanish or German.
41. During the inspection, standards seen were above average in French, both in Year 9 and in Year 11. Standards seen in Spanish and German were below average in Year 9. Standards in Spanish were broadly similar to the national average in Year 11 and close to the expected level in German in Year 10. In Year 8, all pupils regardless of their ability, begin to study either Spanish or German (alternated each year) as a second language. However, the amount of time it is taught each week is reduced and therefore pupils do not reach the same level as they do in French by the end of Year 9. Given the late start and the limited time studied, pupils are making satisfactory progress in Spanish and German in Years 7 to 9 and continue to build satisfactorily on their achievement in Years 10 and 11. Until this year, all pupils in Year 10 have studied at least one language, although pupils may now choose whether or not to study a modern foreign language. Pupil achievement in French is good across the school and the study of French is well supported by the study of either Spanish or German. Speaking and writing skills are satisfactory and listening and writing skills are good. The higher attainers can produce extended pieces of writing and, in French they are in line to achieve the higher grades.
42. Teaching is never less than good and overall, is very good. Occasionally, there is exceptional teaching which is high on challenge, fast in pace and keeps pupils involved and motivated. Innovative techniques are being used to tackle the underachievement of boys in monthly single sex classes. In these classes, activities which appeal to boys are used to engage their interest and promote learning. Planning is usually of very good quality with particular account being taken of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils. These pupils are making very good progress because the work they are given is appropriate to their level of attainment. Gifted and talented pupils are being fast tracked and take GCSEs early. Teachers use the target language to very good effect in the classroom, ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunity for speaking and listening. Teachers are making very good use of the Key Stage 3 Strategy to plan and structure lessons. This is having a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and consequently pupils' learning is good in both key stages. Questioning is used to good effect to stretch pupils and to check learning. In one lesson, the teacher swiftly recorded what pupils could or could not answer orally to assess learning. Teachers energetically use a wide range of teaching techniques to introduce, reinforce and extend language. Marking is inconsistent but when it is good it is detailed, encouraging and

gives guidance on how to improve or reach the next level. A language laboratory and a suite of older computers are available but these are not systematically used as teaching aids.

43. Pupils behave well, they generally have very good attitudes to learning and the steps being taken to engage boys are having a good effect. Pupils listen well and are polite. Most exercise books are well kept but too many are not cared for well enough. Occasionally, some pupils do not finish work and do not take enough pride in their work. Pupils benefit in the provision of French, Spanish and German from a team of well qualified and competent teachers. There is very good access for all pupils to the languages curriculum, which is enhanced by a good range of activities such as visits to France and Spain, as well as French coffee mornings.
44. The department benefits from very good leadership and management. Innovative practices are being tried to good effect and very good routines and high standards are promoted by the head of department. There is capacity to improve the strategic use of data to set targets and focus support. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The team of specialist teachers have good command of the subject.
- Good classroom behaviour is well established and pupils are attentive and interested in their work.
- Individual progress and levels of attainment are monitored regularly to inform target setting and lesson planning.
- Planning of lessons is thorough and effective with clear goals set for all.
- Teachers brief pupils well on the aims of each lesson and the National Curriculum levels being targeted.
- There is good continuity and progression from primary Year 6 into Year 7.
- A good, simple pupil self-assessment process has been devised but is not yet consistently used across the department.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Average
Achievement: whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good Good Satisfactory	
Management of the department		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

Commentary

45. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are above average. In the 2003 national tests, an above average proportion of pupils reached the national expectation and half of the pupils achieved the higher levels. In Years 10 and 11, standards of work seen were average and higher than the standards attained in the 2003 examinations, where girls were close to average and boys significantly below average.
46. The achievement of pupils is good across all year groups. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers set realistic targets and plan lessons well. Teaching is effective and there is good interaction between the teachers, learning support assistants and

the pupils. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory overall. These pupils are identified through the detailed analysis of assessment data and then activities are planned and provided in class, in homework and in extra lessons to extend and challenge these pupils. Girls achieve significantly better than boys in the main because they start with higher standards when they join the school.

47. Teaching and learning are good in all years. Good teaching is characterised by well-planned lessons, informed by good knowledge of the range of abilities and prior attainment of the pupils. Lessons are well paced and divided into several timed phases with a variety of activities, enthusiastically led and with good command of subject matter. Teachers interact well with pupils, monitor progress closely during lessons, and offer appropriate support and encouragement. Homework is set regularly to consolidate and extend class learning. Pupils' learning is good because they contribute well in class to the development of concepts, rules and procedures, demonstrate success in practising and applying what they have learnt, solve problems and are involved well in the lessons when asked to explain what they are doing and why. Pupils show very good attitudes to learning. They are well behaved, attentive and interested in their work. Assessment is good, it is used effectively and regularly to inform pupils and teachers of current individual levels of achievement, in order to set appropriate targets and plan suitably challenging lessons and learning resources. The straightforward and potentially very effective self monitoring pro-forma for pupils to record their attainment of curriculum level descriptors, is not yet consistently used.
48. Leadership is good. The acting head of department has established a range of new developments in assessment and target setting that are effectively implemented with the support and co-operation of the teaching staff. There is a clear vision towards planned improvement in standards. Management is good. Departmental policies and procedures are monitored to ensure that they operate effectively and efficiently. There are good displays of pupils' work, descriptions of the work required at each National Curriculum level and key mathematical vocabulary and this improves the working environment. Effective use is made of new technology, with interactive whiteboards to enhance presentations and involve pupils in the development of concepts and procedures. The introduction of a modular mathematics course in year 10 is proving effective in further motivating pupils and raising attainment. ICT is used effectively to investigate and develop graph work. A "Maths Week" of competitions and activities effectively raises the profile and promotes the subject. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and assessment and target setting are now more effectively used.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. Overall, provision in mathematics across the curriculum is **satisfactory**. All subject departments are provided with exemplar material and guidance documents and a theme is identified for each term, for example, graph work and charts, which generated a whole school display of pupils' work. In French, German and Spanish, counting and telling time are developed orally and in writing, and there is a department policy on number skills. In design and technology, pupils use measurement and calculation for marking out effectively, used graphs in food technology and in graphics products to support surveys and where teachers also effectively discuss and demonstrated scales and geometric measuring techniques. Further development is needed in other subject areas. Mathematics lessons include regular and frequent activities to develop and ensure pupils handling of number and measures, through oral and written tasks. Calculators are used accurately and appropriately, and checks on 'reasonableness' promoted. The overall standard of numeracy is satisfactory.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships between teachers and pupils allow good teaching and learning.
- Well-planned lessons make good use of the time available.
- The use of non-specialist rooms for teaching science is unsatisfactory.
- Good use is made of data to guide curriculum planning.
- There is insufficient provision and use of ICT equipment.
- Pupils' good behaviour makes lessons effective.
- Teachers' marking gives little advice on how pupils can improve their standards.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Average
Achievement: whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good	
Management of the department		
Improvement since the previous inspection		
	Satisfactory	

Commentary

50. Overall, standards are close to the national average. Results of national tests for pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were close to average but below the average for pupils from similar schools. The performance of boys has been significantly below that of girls for the last three years. Results in the GCSE dual award science examinations in 2003 were below the national average, though compared to their prior attainment, pupils make satisfactory progress.
51. In Years 7 to 9, the standard of pupils' work seen is average. Higher-attaining pupils draw graphs competently, use simple equations and write chemical equations in symbols. Lower attaining pupils do fewer calculations and write formulae in words. Standards of presentation vary from good to unsatisfactory, as some pupils are allowed to produce poor quality freehand sketches as diagrams. Standards seen in Years 10 and 11 are average. Higher-attaining pupils effectively use a range of equations, draw competent graphs but have few opportunities for independent learning. Lower-attaining pupils effectively use a range of worksheets and a restricted range of equations. Effective teaching ensures that the standards of pupils with special educational needs are in line with their prior attainment. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They enter school with standards close to the national average and by the end of Year 9 their achievement is satisfactory. They make steady progress and by the end of Year 11, achievement is satisfactory as standards remain close to the national average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily because teachers find time in class to encourage and guide them, although spelling errors in pupils' books are rarely corrected.
52. Teaching and learning are good across all year groups. The best lessons are well planned, brisk and include a variety of activities, which make learning effective. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, so pupils behave and concentrate well. Teachers give clear instructions, so pupils understand the risks involved in practical sessions and work safely and productively. In less effective lessons, the pace of the lesson is slow and the work is unstructured and this reduces what pupils know and understand by the end of the lesson. Whilst overall learning is good and pupils show willingness to participate, in some mixed sex groups, girls play a minor role in practical work, so they do not learn as well as they are able. There are insufficient computers available in the laboratories to enhance pupils' learning and independent thinking. Teachers' marking effectively praises good work but gives insufficient guidance on what pupils need to do or learn to improve their standards.

53. Overall, leadership and management are good. The head of department sets a clear vision and agenda on how the department can improve standards. Much good work has been done recently to assess pupils' performance and set targets for development. The curriculum is developing well as teachers co-operate to contribute to developing activities for the scheme of work. Day-to-day organisation is good and teachers and laboratory technicians well deployed. Some lessons take place in ordinary classrooms, so that despite teachers' efforts to provide suitable activities, the logical progression needed to build up scientific knowledge is often broken, leading to lower achievement and reduced motivation for some pupils. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the subject have improved the curriculum and the attainment of pupils.
- The very good attitudes of pupils and commitment to examination work are leading to improved achievement.
- The impact on standards of the good and often very good teaching.
- ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory overall, but unsatisfactory in some areas.
- The department needs to ensure all pupils in Years 10 and 11 are having access to ICT.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Average
Achievement: whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Very good Very good Good	
Management of the department		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

Commentary

54. The standards of pupils in Year 9 in 2003, according to teacher assessment, was below average but standards seen in the inspection in Years 7 to 9 was in line with national expectations. GCSE results were significantly below the national average in 2003, but again the standards seen during the inspection were average. As pupils start school with below average attainment in ICT, achievement in all years is therefore good. Pupils are in line with achieving this year's targets. This is the result of good teaching and very good leadership and management, involving significant changes to the curriculum. The achievement of boys was well below that of girls and this is being effectively addressed by the introduction of a General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in ICT that has shorter units and shorter tasks in lessons. In addition, boys are paired with girls for collaborative work to improve evaluation design skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well by teachers and sometimes other pupils. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is good. They are set challenging target grades by teachers and are encouraged to use the computers in their own time. Further challenge is planned in the next round of options as these pupils will take the GNVQ in reduced time, giving them opportunities to study further subjects and will also have the opportunity to take the Advanced Vocational Certificate examination.
55. Teaching is good overall. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good and teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good and often very good. Good teaching is characterised by very good subject knowledge and very well-planned lessons. Relationships with pupils are very good and behaviour is managed very well. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will work hard and work has a high level of challenge. Teachers make very good use of questioning to ensure understanding and use time at the end of lessons well to recap on lesson objectives. As a result, learning is good and pupils make good progress and achieve well. They are engaged in their work, want to improve their levels and are trying hard to get good grades in the examinations. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen, subject knowledge was less secure and, although the lesson was well planned, the plan was not followed consistently and as a result, the pupils did not consolidate their knowledge and progress was unsatisfactory. Overall, assessment is very

good. Pupils' work is assessed at the end of each unit and pupils know the National Curriculum levels they have reached. Marking is very detailed and gives pupils clear directions as to how to improve. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have record books where they assess what they have learned in each unit. Pupils in all years are aware of how well they are achieving and what they have to do to get higher levels or better grades. There is a computer club during most lunchtimes and after school, where pupils can continue their coursework. This is well subscribed and gives staff the opportunity to help individual pupils to improve their work. The department uses literacy well and key words are emphasised in lessons.

56. Leadership is very good because there is a clear view of where the subject is going and what is needed to improve and is making good progress. The subject leader is very well supported by the deputy head as line manager and this has made a great difference in raising the profile of the subject. There is good progress in the achievement of targets in the school development plan. This includes raising attainment and reducing the gender gap with the introduction of GNVQ ICT. The subject leader is well aware of the need to ensure that pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive specialist ICT classes leading to an accredited course, instead of the present pattern of teaching ICT on a cross-curricular basis. Management is very good because the new programmes of work have been very well planned and very good support is being given to newly qualified and non-specialist teachers. The very good leadership and management have had an impressive impact on standards, so that overall improvement since that last inspection is good.

ICT across the curriculum

57. Pupils' standards and their ability to use ICT across the curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. Pupils use word processing well and are able to search effectively for information on the internet. There is good use of ICT in geography, where gifted and talented pupils have the opportunity for extended projects. The physical education department is making good use of spreadsheets and graphs and the digital camcorder to monitor performance. In design and technology, there is frequent use of ICT in graphic design and boys show higher standards of presentation and more intelligent content when ICT is used. However, there is insufficient use of computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing. Although the use of ICT is satisfactory in modern foreign languages, staff do not make full use of the available facilities. The use of ICT is unsatisfactory in music and history.
58. Although the two ICT rooms and the library are spacious and well planned, overall, accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory as there are insufficient computers to ensure that they are regularly available for all subject areas. Departments are aware of the need to improve and extend ICT opportunities and have included this in their development planning. The school development plan rightly acknowledges the need to provide more computers and to extend and update software and Arts College funding is targeted to improve facilities. The ICT department has begun to effectively monitor ICT in other subject areas and is mapping this to ensure that all requirements are fulfilled. A new website is being designed and is near completion and will be a positive addition, as each department will have an area for curriculum resources and homework, which can be accessed by pupils and parents.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE examination results in 2003 were above the national average.
- Pupils achieve above national expectations in Years 7 to 11.
- Teaching and learning is good and on occasion excellent.

- There are too few opportunities for monitoring and sharing classroom practice.
- Accommodation and resources, including ICT are inadequate.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Above average
Achievement: whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Satisfactory	
Management of the department	Satisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory	

Commentary

59. Results in 2003 GCSE were above the national average and geography was one of the strongest subjects in the school. In recent years, groups have been small. Overall, standards are above average in geography. At the end of Year 9, standards are above those found nationally. Girls achieve better than boys. Pupils have gained a good knowledge and understanding of geography. Through class work and the enrichment programme, the gifted and talented and the most able, achieve very well. Research and enquiry techniques are well developed. The presentation of their work shows a high level of competence. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds achieve well, as do those for whom English is an additional language. Students with special educational needs also achieve well in relation to their capabilities. There is a strong emphasis on literacy. Most lessons introduce key words and there are regular checks on the use of vocabulary. Graphs are often accurate.
60. Standards in Year 11 are above average. The most-able pupils achieve well. They demonstrate a mature depth of knowledge and understanding and a high level of skill application to compare theoretical patterns of social geography with a practical analysis of their field study data from Skipton. Average pupils collect and analyse data on pollution well and although lower-attaining pupils' written analysis is of a lower standard, the work of boys and girls is enhanced by the use of ICT through word processing and graphs. However, some higher-ability pupils find scale difficult to interpret. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as others.
61. The teaching and learning in geography are good and there are examples of very good teaching in Years 7 to 9. One lesson was excellent. Teachers are well informed and in the most successful lessons, planning is thorough and challenges all pupils to achieve as well as they can, through a range of different learning opportunities. For example in a Year 8 lesson, where changes in farming practices were considered, the interesting starter activity immediately involved pupils in paired discussion. Rapid and well-matched question and answer sessions involved all pupils. Teachers have high expectations but on occasions, lessons are too dominated by the teacher and there are too few opportunities for students to express their own ideas in groups or independently. Pupils are kept too quiet and the pace of learning is less effective. Boys' work is often incomplete. Marking is consistent but there are too few comments to explain how pupils can improve their work.
62. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The department is an experienced team and it is committed to raising standards. Following changes in the option system, geography has become more popular. GCSE standards improved in 2003 but are projected to be lower in 2004 and rise again in 2005. Schemes of work, criticised in the last inspection, particularly for Years 7 to 9, contain insufficient guidance in the number of lessons allocated and the availability of suitable resources. The department runs smoothly but there are too few opportunities for monitoring good classroom practice and for exemplars to stimulate

professional discussion. The accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory. There is no departmental provision for ICT and access to other facilities is limited. Teachers carry books and equipment to non-specialist teaching rooms and as there are fewer facilities available to support students learning the subject, this has an adverse affect on standards. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leadership is very good, secure and robust.
- The teaching is very thorough.
- The department works very well together and is constantly looking for ways to improve.
- The department makes a very good contribution to the raising of standards in literacy.
- The lack of ICT facilities is a severe weakening factor.
- Pupils' self-assessment skills have not been developed yet.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Above average	Average
Achievement: whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good
Quality of learning	Good	Very good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Very good	
Management of the department	Very good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

Commentary

63. In 2003, pupils taking GCSE, starting from a low base, achieved results in line with the national average and this is good achievement given their prior attainment. Although girls attained somewhat more highly than boys, the gap has been narrowing. Years 7 to 9 present a similar picture of good achievement and in 2003, by the end of Year 9, teachers' assessments indicate pupils attain national averages. The standard of work seen is above average in Years 7 to 9 and average in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are taught all the requirements of the National Curriculum. They show that they can use and evaluate sources, historic arguments and views, and recognise the link between historical cause and effect when studying diverse topics, such as the Romans or 20th century wars. Overall, pupils respond well orally but some pupils' responses are limited by their low level literacy skills. The department is promoting literacy well in its teaching and this is improving standards overall and particularly for pupils with special educational needs. The pupils' attitude to their work is consistently good in all year groups and they show a marked and rapid willingness to involve themselves in work. A striking feature is the manner in which they enter the room and immediately settle into a short, individual or small group task, which sets a very good tone for the lesson.
64. The teaching is consistently good in Year 7 to 9 and even better in Years 10 and 11 and is good overall. Everything is well prepared and the necessary resources are readily available. The pleasant but clear work ethos is recognized by all and pupils respond well to this style of teaching. The sharp goals and challenging historical concepts keep the pupils alert, so that pupils reach good standards giving them a real sense of achievement. Some of the topics, such as Medieval England, could be enriched by greater human detail to make the topic more relevant, although small but interesting ploys, such as putting drawings of rats around the room when introducing the Great Plague, help to make lessons memorable. Similarly, simple

strategies such as flash cards to highlight, sequence and review ideas are used effectively to secure pupils' understanding of complex topics. The department has insufficient access to ICT and is therefore unable to conveniently draw upon the wealth of materials available to enrich history lessons. This deficiency is a hindrance to raising standards, especially in Years 10 and 11. Well-structured teaching enables pupils to recall and draw connections between factual materials. Teachers encourage collaborative work well and the ease with which pupils work efficiently in groups is central to the department's strategy for raising standards. Strenuous efforts to develop good assessment techniques are being introduced and the emerging policy of enabling pupils to continuously assess their own level of work should help to raise standards further.

65. The major feature noted in the inspection was the manner in which a cohesive, strongly led department has enabled the pupils to achieve with increasing competence in recent years. The head of department is a very good and industrious leader who has taken the department forward as far as resources, accommodation and staffing have allowed. Now that these have improved, he is proving to be both a very good leader and manager and also a good role model for his newly qualified assistant. He has implemented the improvements required since the last inspection. The improvements needed now are to enhance independent learning through ICT and other support materials and to refine the assessment procedures used by teachers and pupils.

Example of outstanding practice

GCSE lessons in history. What could have been an unexceptional, mundane lesson for reluctant pupils had become a brilliant arena of interaction for young students.

It was just 6 weeks to the GCSE examination for 24 pupils. The topic was the effect of the Enclosure Acts. The lesson quickly began, as usual, with a game activity which was relevant, introductory, demanding taking only 5 minutes but setting the scene well and raising expectations. Very sharp, good-humoured questioning based on the game followed. Involvement was the key as well-prepared materials were produced as if out of a hat. They were shown examples of model examination answers at levels G, C and A. As they explored the features required to gain various grades, there was a growing sense of confidence as their self-assessment against the criteria helped them know that they could do better than they originally thought! Suitable source material for and against enclosures was produced and pairs of pupils evaluated the conflicting claims. The flow of the lesson was exceptional. Fresh, relevant knowledge and clues were given whenever appropriate. The source materials were modified as they became the anvil for group discussion. Standards relating to detail, relevance, human impact and the awareness of controversy were insisted upon. The pupils were becoming mature young students. They then wrote the introductory paragraph to a GCSE question. The remaining four paragraphs would be written at home. A pupil who had only achieved 32 per cent in the Year 10 examinations but through similar excellent teaching had achieved an A grade in the Year 11 mocks was one of the class who left smiling in anticipation of completing the work well at home. A sense of purposeful achievement prevailed.

TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching, which is good or better in Years 7-9 and 10 and 11.
- The weaker performance of boys' written work.
- The good quality materials written by the department used to support learning.
- The lack of a sufficient amount of ICT equipment in the department.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Above Average
Achievement: whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Satisfactory	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good Satisfactory Satisfactory	
Management of the department		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

Commentary

66. Overall, standards are in line with national averages. Standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with national averages. Standards at the end of Year 11 in GCSE examinations are in line with national averages, with some low grades. Standards of work seen during the inspection are average in Years 7 to 9, although many pupils have started from a low base. Standards of work seen in Years 10 and 11 are above average. Standards for pupils with special educational needs are average.
67. Overall, achievement is good with pupils' work improving consistently as they get older. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory and in Years 10 and 11 is good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because staff have an understanding of their needs and provide specific help. Planning is good and ensures different approaches to aid learning through varied materials, tasks and teacher support. Pupils from different ethnic minority groups achieve well because they receive sufficient levels of support, guidance and help. The achievement of able and gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory because the department identifies them and ensures challenge is provided through diverse projects and teacher encouragement. Boys achieve less well than girls specifically in their written work. In the 2003 GCSE results, girls were approximately one grade ahead of boys overall.
68. Overall, teaching is good with aspects that are very good. Good teaching is characterised by teachers having secure subject knowledge for their areas, well planned lessons, clear learning objectives made known to pupils, encouragement and engagement of pupils and the expectation of high standards of behaviour. Where learning is good or better, pupils are able to fully understand how each part of the work they do in lessons builds into a whole project over a longer period of time. Learners are committed and concentrate hard to develop their skills and understanding. They collaborate well and have good working relationships with each other and their teachers. Assessment is good. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and benchmarked against national standards. The department uses data well to track pupils, set expectations and intervene when pupils fall behind or lose motivation.
69. Overall, leadership is good as there is a sense of purpose for improvement allied to a coherent plan for development. The design and technology team is cohesive, enabling a consistent approach to planning. Pupils are further involved in the department through additional activities at lunchtime and after school. The leadership is now better focused on pupils' achievement with consistent monitoring of performance against benchmark grades. Overall, management is satisfactory because there are consistent systems for planning, course coverage and monitoring of pupils' learning. As yet, there has been no formal classroom monitoring of teaching by the head of department, which is a weakness.
70. The key issues from the last report have been addressed and the department has introduced strategies to improve pupil performance in Years 7 to 9 and 10 and 11. The department has revised pupil workbooks and materials, which support pupils well in their learning. The department has also introduced greater use of ICT to improve resources for learning and offer

a wider curriculum experience. The revised curriculum in Years 7 to 9 offers a more balanced range of design and technology to all pupils.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Expert staff with significant subject knowledge.
- Temporary accommodation is affecting standards adversely.
- Very good leadership vision for arts college development.
- Good team work and very effective management.
- Maintenance of very good relationships with pupils and high standards of behaviour.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Above average
Achievement: whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Very good
Attitudes of students to their work	Very good	Very good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Very good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Very good	
Management of the department	Very good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

Commentary

71. Overall, standards are above national averages. Standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with national averages for pupils who started from a low base when in Year 7. Standards at the end of Year 11 in the 2003 GCSE examinations are high and above national averages, with few low grades and a well above average proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades. Standards of work seen are average in Years 7 to 9, above average in Years 10 and 11 and above average overall. Standards of pupils with special educational needs are above average. Boys and girls do equally well in the subject.
72. Overall, achievement is good. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good and in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because staff know who they are and offer extra help at key times. Planning is very good and includes appropriate strategies for all pupils, through varied materials and tasks with careful teacher support. Boys' and girls' achievement is the same overall. Pupils from different ethnic minority groups achieve as well as other pupils. The achievement of able, gifted and talented pupils is good because the department targets them with special activities.
73. Overall, teaching is good with some very good teaching. Teaching seen in Years 7 to 9 is good or very good and in Years 10 and 11 is also good. Good teaching is characterised by well-planned lessons and very good pupil teacher relationships, based on mutual respect. There is a strong level of intellectual challenge from enthusiastic teachers, good use of time and an insistence on high standards of behaviour. Teaching could be further improved by teachers more clearly defining what is to be learned in the lesson, what criteria are to be used to assess the quality of the work and better identifying activities, which promote different outcomes for pupils with different abilities.
74. Overall, learning is very good. Learning in Years 7 to 9 is good and in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Where learning is very good, pupils are able to fully understand their work, both in part and as a whole. Learners are committed and concentrate hard to develop their skills and

understanding, they collaborate well and have very good working relationships with each other and their teachers. They make links between their work and that of artists studied. In Year 11, pupils set themselves high targets and make good progress to meet them. Learning could be improved for younger pupils, where clear and memorable links between their own work and that of artists studied are made and reinforced. Assessment is good because the department consistently helps pupils to understand their levels of achievement and what they need to do to improve.

75. Overall, leadership is very good because there is a clear and obtainable vision for developments of excellence, not only for the department but also across the school and its wider community. The recently achieved Arts College status offers the opportunity for the school to build on the very secure foundations of expert staff to exploit the benefits of art education. Overall, management is very good because there is strong teamwork, consistent systems for planning, good course coverage and effective monitoring of pupils' learning. There is an effective performance management system and teachers regularly see each other teach. Knowledge and understanding of pupils' performance is good. Lack of technical support increases the load on teachers however and temporary accommodation is restrictive on teaching and is adversely affecting standards at present but the new building, currently in progress, should address this issue. The key issues from the last report have been addressed and the department has maintained high standards. In addition, planning has been improved and the department has set about accurately setting targets and monitoring pupils' performance against national benchmarks.

Music

Provision for music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good.
- Standards of attainment are adversely affected because the accommodation is poor.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls.
- Provision for **ICT** is unsatisfactory.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities brings pupils into contact with the wider community.
- Music makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Below average	Average
Achievement: whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Satisfactory Unsatisfactory Satisfactory	
Management of the department		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

Commentary

76. Standards of attainment in music by pupils at the end of Year 9 were just below average in the most recent teachers' assessments and similar standards were seen during the inspection. Boys attain less well than girls. In the GCSE examination in 2003, results were below average. However, standards of attainment in work seen in Year 11 were average, and in Year 10 were a little above average. The trend has risen over the past two years as the department has re-established following staff changes. Pupils with special educational needs attain in line with their abilities and the attainment of able pupils who have instrumental tuition is above average.

77. By the end of Year 9, pupils' achievement is good overall, as most pupils in Year 7 enter the school with attainment well below average but they make good progress in composing, and more-able pupils work freely and imaginatively so they reach standards, which are just below national averages. Achievement is better in Years 7 and 8 than in Year 9. Although more able pupils, and girls of average ability, make satisfactory progress in composing, a significant number of boys, and many pupils with lower ability, make unsatisfactory progress in listening skills and knowledge of musical terms, due to the lack of separate practice spaces in the music room, which prevents them from hearing their work properly. In Years 10 and 11, most pupils perform well and their compositions are imaginative and well structured. They use sequencing keyboards competently but lack of sufficient equipment prevents them from using computer technology effectively. Pupils' poor recall of musical terms and historical features, hinders their achievement in the listening and appraising element of the GCSE examination. Pupils with special educational needs achieve less well than others because the work is not properly matched to their needs. A number of pupils who are gifted or talented achieve well because they are encouraged to have instrumental tuition and to take part in extra-curricular musical activities.
78. Teaching is generally good, although there is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. At its most successful, lessons are well planned, activities are appropriate, and lessons proceed at a good pace. Relationships are good and pupils respond positively and enthusiastically. Pupils' work is regularly and helpfully marked and pupils know how they can improve. However, when activities are not well matched to pupils' abilities and understanding, pupils become inattentive, do not learn well, and class control becomes difficult.
79. Leadership is satisfactory. The recently appointed head of department has successfully established a wide range of activities and opportunities for public performance. Management is unsatisfactory. There is no scheme of work for the GCSE classes beyond the examination syllabus; the scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 has not yet been adapted to fully meet pupils' individual needs, and links with assessment criteria are not properly developed. The quality and consistency of teaching, including instrumental teaching, are not fully monitored. The accommodation is unsatisfactory and unpleasant. There are no separate spaces in which pupils can listen to their work, storage is inadequate, and the entire area is dirty. The space for instrumental teaching is poor.
80. Both members of the department give generously of their time to a number of well-organised, instrumental and choral activities. Pupils regularly perform in school and in the local community, and from time to time at prestigious venues such as the Whitworth Gallery and Salford Cathedral. The department is now firmly established following a short break in leadership and has the capacity to secure further improvement. The department is making a good contribution to pupils' personal and cultural development and standards have been maintained so that overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good and often there are very good features.
- Learning is consequently good and pupils' attitudes are positive.
- Most pupils achieve well, especially in Years 7 to 9 and in examination classes.
- Assessment, though thorough and well organised, measures pupils' skills well but there is insufficient attention given to assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- Current, indoor accommodation is inadequate and results in a narrow range of activities for pupils although the building of a new sports hall is imminent.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Average
Achievement: whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Satisfactory
Attitudes of students to their work	Good	Good
Quality of teaching	Good	Good
Quality of learning	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Satisfactory Good Good	
Management of the department		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

Commentary

81. By the end of year 9, overall, standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils enter the school with below average standards and their prior experience in the subject is varied. In Years 7 to 9, good progress is made in most activities and in particular, levels of personal physical fitness are raised and there is a growing emphasis on the knowledge and understanding of fitness. These standards are sustained then through to Year 11 and by the time they leave school, most pupils have reached at least average levels of fitness and some are above average in their games skills. In the most recent GCSE examinations, in 2003, the number achieving A*-C grades was well above the national average.
82. Overall, achievement is good. Standards are improved in Years 7 to 9, from below average on entry to the school to average by the end of Year 9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because most tasks have sufficient different starting points so enabling pupils' to improve on their own personal standards and by so doing, gain the confidence to tackle the next stages of learning. In Years 10 and 11, achievement whilst satisfactory overall, is particularly good in examination groups. In the last two years, results have been above or well above the national average. Pupils achieve well as they start from average standards at the end of Year 9. Gifted and talented pupils are supported well and their achievement is good. They contribute strongly to the overall success of the school in team events and through their own endeavours, reach even higher standards in sporting events at representative level, including international competitions.
83. Overall, the quality of teaching is consistently good. All teachers are specialists in the subject and are well able to devise, plan and manage activities within which all pupils are presented with the opportunity to improve. Only rarely are tasks too prescriptive and beyond the reach of some pupils. The teachers work in an encouraging and enthusiastic manner and this approach is quickly mirrored by most pupils. Work with individuals is especially praiseworthy as the positive feedback given builds confidence and then an eagerness to seek for further improvement. The teachers demand high standards of behaviour and the positive response from most pupils ensures a good productive working atmosphere. As learners, pupils are given clear instructions and /or demonstrations that enable them to know exactly what to do in order to be successful. They then work eagerly and with enthusiasm to improve their own personal standards. Progress is often rapid because of this. For example, in Year 9 boys football, many pupils improved the accuracy and consistency of their heading skills as a result of intensive and well focussed practise. Pupils' progress is constantly assessed by the teachers and every effort is made to ensure that pupils know how well they are doing. The lack of sufficient indoor teaching areas limits the range of activities studied by pupils and means pupils are assessed mainly on their acquisition of games skills. This gives an imbalanced view of their overall achievement, for example in improving their levels of personal fitness. This will be rectified when the new facility is brought into use later in the year.
84. The department is strongly led and well organised by a capable and committed head of department. Changes in management and a new clearer structuring of line management across the school have ensured that there is increasing attention given to the monitoring of this

aspect of the work of departments. Since the last inspection, improvement is good. Teaching is now consistently good and the whole programme is delivered by specialist teachers. The leadership from the senior management team is giving invaluable support and the opportunity for the head of department to lead the subject team in making full and extensive use of the new sports hall is an ideal challenge for this department to make further improvements and it has the capacity to do this.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

85. The school is developing a range of vocational courses as part of the improvements to the Year 10 curriculum. Business Education is delivered in the school as part of the ICT department and is led and taught by the same team. Provision was sampled through discussion with pupils, scrutiny of their work and through discussion with the subject leader.

Business Education

Provision for business education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with national averages.
- Pupils are able to discuss and explain with confidence and understanding the work they have covered.
- Leadership and management of the subject within the ICT department is very good.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Not Applicable	Average
Achievement: whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	N/A	Good
Attitudes of students to their work	N/A	Very good
Quality of teaching	N/A	Good
Quality of learning	N/A	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Very good Very Good Satisfactory	
Management of the department		
Improvement since the previous inspection		

Commentary

86. Standards based on GCSE results in 2003 are in line with the national average for A*-C grades. This represents an improvement on 2002. The department has already analysed these results and predictions are that the next results should be further improved. Overall, standards of work seen with current pupils in Years 10 and 11, are in line with national averages and the work of able pupils is very good. Pupils are making good progress and overall achievement is good.

87. The quality of teaching, demonstrated through the range and quality of work produced by the pupils and through the pupils' ability to talk authoritatively about what they have covered and learned, is good. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows lessons are well planned and delivered and that pupils make good progress, given they have no experience of the subject before Year 10. Work is regularly marked and constructive and encouraging feedback is given. This ensures that all pupils know what to do in order to improve. Learning is good. Overall, pupils are confident learners and are able, within their level of ability, to discuss and explain well the work covered. Year 11 pupils use ICT skills confidently. For example, in an assignment about developing business opportunities, pupils use spreadsheets, data retrieval and graphics to illustrate the key principles and practice in this area. They are able to test and validate hypotheses and draw well on their practical experiences. Pupils are able to explain how

businesses are organised, how they deal with motivation and training. They understand the key differences between large and small companies and the role of stakeholders, although some pupils are not able to easily relate this understanding to different contexts. Pupils spoke highly of and valued the style of teaching they received and the way their work was assessed.

88. The subject is very well led and managed as part of the ICT department. The team is responsible for the teaching of ICT and business education and draws well on its ICT strengths to support the teaching of the subject. The department analyses and monitors pupils' progress well and, for example, has quickly identified underachievement by a few pupils and has instigated catch-up strategies to raise standards and expectations. Planning for future development is good, consideration is carefully being given to developing a business and communications qualification consequently and the subject forms a useful contribution to the schools plans to further develop in-house vocational programmes.

Other Vocational Courses

89. A handful of pupils in Year 11 attend two local colleges to study National Vocational Qualifications in construction, beauty therapy, hairdressing and painting and decorating. As part of a re-evaluation of vocational provision, the school is temporarily withdrawing from this programme apart from providing courses to meet the needs of a few individual pupils and developing in-house programmes.
90. Two courses, beauty therapy and painting and decorating were sampled by talking to pupils and scrutinising their work folders. The pupils involved in both courses valued the practical nature of the courses they took and the range of real life experiences these courses gave them. Pupils were able to confidently describe the processes, procedures and theory underpinning the techniques they were learning on the course. The pupils spoke with authority on how to conduct a hand manicure or how to prepare, paint and wallpaper a room. One boy had successfully decorated his own room, to what he described as a "high standard", as a result of the good instructions and teaching. They valued the quality of teaching they received and because of their experiences, had clearly mapped out their future progression when leaving school. Their choices include study at a post 16 college in Italy, equine studies, continuing with the course after joining the army and moving onto the NVQ Level 2 course at the same college.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Citizenship has been successfully implemented with a well-planned scheme of work.
- Good teaching and learning strengthen the new programme.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and recognise its importance.
- There are too many teachers involved in teaching the programme, making the consistency of classroom practice difficult to monitor.
- Many teaching areas used are unsuitable for discussion and group work.

Summary of key inspection judgements:

Judgement	Year 9	Year 11
Standards of work seen during the inspection	Average	Average
Achievement: whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Attitudes of students to their work	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good
Quality of learning	Satisfactory	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership		Good

Management of the department	
Improvement since the last inspection	

Commentary

91. Overall, standards are average from Years 7 to 11. From the work survey and the observation of lessons, pupils reach national expectations by Year 9. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds achieve satisfactorily. Students with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Achievement is satisfactory, as all students gain a sound knowledge and understanding of citizenship. For example, in Year 7 they realise what it means for people to become involved in the community and improve their social skills. A community policeman has been successfully involved in Year 8 classes in explaining the role of the police service. This raises pupil awareness of their responsibilities effectively.
92. In Year 9, pupils can engage in purposeful discussion. Students have acquired many aspects of the communication skills required for citizenship. They can, for example, analyse and respond to the issues surrounding the raising of local taxes for council services. They express their views confidently and effectively. Enquiry techniques provide good opportunities for them to investigate environmental issues, such as the relocation of the football stadium from the city centre to a green field site. However, occasionally, poor behaviour holds back their achievement because the teacher's classroom management is weak.
93. By the end of Year 11, pupils' standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Boys and girls can confidently participate in the discussion of social and moral issues, for example, those arising from a peer group video dealing with the responsibilities of parenthood. Careers education provides an excellent range of opportunities in preparation for adult life, through its network connections with the world of work from Year 9. Students generally behave very well as responsible members of the school community. They effectively participate and take responsibility in many school activities, such as library work. All students plan for charity fund raising events during form time, with suggestions from Year 10 which included non-uniform days.
94. Overall, teaching and learning is good. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 with some good features and good in Years 10 and 11. One lesson was very good. Lesson planning is good and includes a range of interesting well-ordered activities, which challenge pupils to participate, and record their points of view from well-managed circle time and discussion effectively. There are good opportunities for individual and collaborative learning. However, pupils' contribution is variable. Many work well, listen carefully and make constructive comments whilst others are easily distracted. On occasion, pupils achieve too little because the teacher is not strong enough in controlling poor behaviour.
95. The leadership and management of the co-ordinator are good. Following an initial pilot scheme, the curriculum has been recently revised to interpret the National Curriculum requirements accurately and to provide detailed guidance for teachers. However, too many teachers are involved and this creates problems for monitoring the consistency of teaching. There is no central area and some rooms are unsuitable for group or discussion work. Resources are good. Statutory requirements are met, in that citizenship was included in the pupil reports last year and further development is planned to improve teachers' assessment skills in this subject. Since the last inspection, citizenship has been introduced but it is not always recognised by pupils as a discrete element from personal, social and health education. Careers education is organised as a separate entity and enjoys strong links with the world of work.

Personal, social and health education

96. The school provides a good programme of study for personal, social and health education. This fully meets the statutory requirements for pupils' awareness of sex, relationships and

drugs issues. The clear scheme of work is interrelated with citizenship issues, to include health and safety, personal reflection, influences and pressures, bullying and harassment, although there is too little emphasis on issues concerned with healthy eating and no clear strategy exists involving the school canteen.

97. The personal, social and health education programme is effective in raising pupils' awareness of aims and ambitions in life and confronts attitudes and prejudice well as for example, in a Year 10 lesson, which challenged the group's reaction to a 'mugger' who was assumed to be male and deserved the punishment of the courts. Well-informed role-play and challenging tasks led to a deeper understanding of the issue and pupils reached satisfactory standards and achieved well. The teaching and learning was good because the groups were well organised. Pupils were able to participate maturely and achieve well. Pupils benefit from many different types of activities in the personal, social and health education programme but the teaching team, at over twenty staff, is too large for all lessons to be equally as effective, although the more sensitive issues of sex and drugs are well taught by experienced members of staff.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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