

INSPECTION REPORT

BEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL

Leigh

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106523

Headteacher: Mr S Preston

Lead inspector: Mr D Pittman

Dates of inspection: 13th – 17th September 2004

Inspection number: 268343

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1201
School address:	Manchester Road Leigh Lancashire
Postcode:	WN7 2LU
Telephone number:	01942 760032
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Green
Date of previous inspection:	March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bedford High is a mixed, larger than average comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 16. The number of pupils on roll is 1201 (boys 613; girls 588). The gender imbalance is particularly noticeable in Year 10. Relatively few pupils are from socially advantaged homes. The school was an amalgamation of a boys' grammar and a mixed secondary modern; consequently it is situated on two sites approximately 200 metres apart. There are very low numbers of pupils from a minority ethnic background or having English as a second language. The number of pupils on the special educational needs register is above average as is the number of pupils eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is also above average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties but a substantial number have behavioural difficulties. Overall, standards of attainment on entry are below average. The school successfully acquired Business and Enterprise status in September 2003. Another successful feature is the school's involvement with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), which has its own facility on site.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16976	D. Pittman	Lead inspector	
13786	S. Walsh	Lay inspector	
12499	M. Durkin	Team inspector	English; English as an additional language
1407	P. Scott	Team inspector	Mathematics
1779	D. Leonard	Team inspector	Science
8090	F. Turns	Team inspector	Art and design
23891	P. Slape	Team inspector	Design and technology; Work-related learning
29972	J. Webster	Team inspector	Geography
18447	R. Cohen	Team inspector	Business studies
31963	M. Padmore	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
17404	J. Tolley	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
22501	S. Jones	Team inspector	Citizenship; Music
4676	M. Griffiths	Team inspector	Physical education; Special educational needs
10895	D. Wasp	Team inspector	History; Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bedford High School provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. The headteacher's vision and commitment to improvement have created an innovative ethos within the school; it is effectively led. Overall standards are currently below the national average at Year 9 and Year 11. However, the school's overall performance in GCSE examinations is above that of similar schools. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory; pupils achieve in line with their capabilities. Pupils are given appropriate guidance and support; their progress is monitored satisfactorily. A broad curriculum provides well for pupils' needs and aspirations. A good range of enrichment activities enhances pupils' personal development. The school gives **satisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Results in GCSE examinations are above those of similar schools. However, standards in the national tests for Year 9 were well below the average of similar schools.
- The attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of boys are unsatisfactory; they are adversely affecting their achievement and the achievement of others.
- The school is effectively led, with an open and supportive style of management.
- The provision in modern foreign languages and the personal development programme are unsatisfactory.
- The school's partnership and involvement with the community are good.
- Attendance levels are below national averages.
- An innovative curriculum reflects well the business enterprise culture of the school
- The co-ordination and management of special educational needs are unsatisfactory.

The school has made satisfactory progress since its previous inspection. Standards have risen in GCSE examinations but not in the national tests for Year 9. Raising standards in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) is still an issue. The addition of a vocational dimension and a broadening of extra-curricular opportunities have enhanced the curriculum provision for older pupils. The provision of information and communication technology (ICT) resources is significantly better. Attendance rates are still below the national average despite the introduction of effective monitoring procedures. The compilation and accessibility to assessment data have improved but all departments do not use data consistently well. Financial management is a strength.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall attainment on entry is below average. Standards in tests and examinations are below average. Given pupils' capabilities, **overall achievement is satisfactory at the end of Year 9 and Year 11**. Examination and test results have shown a static picture in previous years but the GCSE performance has improved, particularly in respect of five or more A*-C grades; however, there was a slight dip in results for 2004. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 9, standards in the core subjects showed some improvement on the 2003 results but they continued to be below national averages. The trend of improvement is broadly in line with the national picture. The proportion of pupils now leaving with no qualifications has fallen. In the context of GCSE performance, overall standards are below national results but above those of similar schools. Particularly good standards were achieved in religious education, music, art and design, business education and physical

education. Standards are well below average in French and German; achievement in these subjects is unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

The overall provision for the spiritual, moral social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils show a variable response to the satisfactory provision for social, moral and cultural education; insufficient attention is given to spiritual development. **Overall, the personal development of pupils is satisfactory.** Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally satisfactory, although a significant minority of boys, primarily in Years 10 and 11, are disruptive in lessons. Exclusion rates are low; attendance levels are unsatisfactory. Most pupils have a positive attitude to their work and take advantage of the learning opportunities provided by the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and there are examples of good or better teaching. Teaching in art and design, ICT, geography, history, religious education, music, design and technology and vocational courses is of a good standard; it is very good in physical education. The standard of teaching in modern foreign languages and personal, social and health education (PSHE) is unsatisfactory. In most lessons teachers' detailed planning is good and helps to promote pupils' learning skills. The best teaching motivates pupils, although in a minority of lessons tasks are not matched well to pupils' abilities and they become uninterested. The management of behaviour is not always effective in some lessons. The overall quality of learning is satisfactory. Some pupils are too reliant on the teacher and are not sufficiently engaged in independent learning. Assessment procedures are effective in collating information but are not sufficiently rigorous for monitoring progress in some subjects.

Overall, the school provides pupils with a good curriculum. The curriculum has been developed since the last inspection and has some significant strengths, such as the provision of vocational courses with an emphasis on an enterprise culture; the provision in physical education is very good. However, some weaknesses are evident, such as the inadequate use of ICT in some subjects and the poor provision for citizenship. The curriculum provision in modern foreign languages and the PSHE programme are unsatisfactory. The range of extra-curricular activities provided is good.

Procedures to promote pupils' care and welfare are satisfactory overall. The school provides satisfactory support and guidance and the induction arrangements for pupils are helpful and effective. The school council is successful as a forum for seeking pupils' views. The school has a good reputation locally; it is over-subscribed. There are good links with parents and an effective partnership with the community. The school has good links with other schools and colleges.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **effectively led and managed.** The leadership of the headteacher is good. He is ably supported by a strong team of senior and middle managers, who show good leadership and management. The overall governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and involved in the strategic planning of the school but are not sufficiently rigorous in monitoring its performance. The financial management of the school is good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are supportive of the school and of what it achieves. Pupils are involved in a wide range of activities provided and value the social benefits they gain from life in the school. Parents and pupils appreciate the help and support pupils are given by individual subject teachers, and the good relationships they have with them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are:

- Improve standards in the core subjects at the end of Year 9 with a particular focus on boys' achievement.
- Co-ordinate behaviour management strategies to nullify the disruptive effect of some boys on the quality of learning in the school.
- Continue to work on improving attendance levels.
- Improve the curriculum provision in modern foreign languages and the PSHE programme.
- Improve the management and co-ordination of special educational needs.

and meet statutory requirements by:

- Making appropriate provision for citizenship and a daily act of worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are below average. Examination results over time show an improving trend but this has not been the case in the Year 9 National Curriculum test results. However, there was a slight improvement in the 2004 performance. The overall **achievement of pupils is satisfactory**. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 is broadly satisfactory. Girls perform relatively better than boys in GCSE examinations and national tests. A minority of boys are under-achieving. Standards in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) are below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, the results of examinations and tests are below average. In comparison with similar schools standards were above average in 2003 GCSE examinations.
- Standards in the core subjects are generally below average. However, standards in religious education, art and design and physical education are well above average
- Achievement in Years 9 and 11, as seen in lessons, is satisfactory. Given pupils' attainment on entry overall progress is satisfactory.
- Achievement in modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.2 (31.3)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	33.6 (33.3)	35.4 (34.7)
science	32.2 (32.2)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 242 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. In the 2003 national tests taken at the end of Year 9 the combined results were below average. There was some improvement in the results of all three core subjects but standards are still likely to be below average. In 2003, results in English, mathematics and science were below the national average for each subject. In comparison to results in similar schools, results were well below average. Over the past five years the trend of improvement in results has been close to the national picture for boys and girls.

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	46 (42)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	86 (88)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	30.9 (31.3)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 247 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Overall performance in the GCSE 2003 examinations was below the national average but the trend of improvement was similar to the national picture. Performance for five A*-C grades was broadly average and, in comparison with results in similar schools, standards were above average. Particularly good standards were achieved in art and design, physical education and religious education. Examination performances were weaker in science, design and technology (graphics) and French. Overall standards in the 2004 examinations are again below average but fairly reflect the capabilities of a weaker cohort of pupils.

Standards seen during the inspection

3. Standards seen during lessons and in samples of pupils' work generally show an improving picture and are broadly average. By the end of Year 9 standards are average in mathematics, science, art and design, religious education, design and technology, music and physical education. Standards in modern foreign languages, however, are well below average. Test results at the end of Year 9 are lower than standards reached in lessons because pupils have poor recall of their earlier learning, partly as a result of weak independent learning skills and low literacy skills. Achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations, which encourage pupils to achieve appropriately. However, achievement is sometimes unsatisfactory because of the poor attitudes and behaviour of a minority of boys, which has a detrimental effect on learning. Achievement in numeracy is satisfactory but weak literacy skills are a barrier to learning.
4. In Years 10 and 11 standards are usually better than examination performance and are broadly average. Standards in art and design and music are above average. The positive effect of the Business and Enterprise status, including a well-managed department and good teaching, can be clearly seen in the good standards reached in business education. Standards in French and German are well below average because there is not enough good teaching and learning. The poor behaviour of a minority of pupils (primarily boys) negatively affects achievement in lessons
5. Gifted and talented pupils are usually appropriately challenged by the work in lessons and usually reach their potential. However, there are times in lessons when able groups are not sufficiently challenged; for example, previous work may be repeated or work may require a simple recall of knowledge rather than its application.
6. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress towards targets that are set for them. Occasionally, where lessons are well structured to meet their needs, progress is good. Pupils with behavioural difficulties who are working in mainstream classes often make unsatisfactory progress because teachers are unable to deal with the disruption that a large proportion of them cause. This is an area of concern which the school has recognised but has not yet been remedied

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is **unsatisfactory**. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are **satisfactory**. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory** but their spiritual development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although attendance rates have improved significantly, the poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils has a detrimental effect on their achievement.
- Pupils respond well to exciting teaching, which is well planned to meet their needs and enables them to succeed.
- A significant minority of pupils, usually boys, are disruptive and their behaviour has a negative impact on their own learning and the learning of others.
- Religious education lessons make an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

- Not enough is done in other areas to promote pupils' spiritual development.

Commentary

7. The monitoring of attendance is good. Hard work by pastoral staff including office staff, effectively supported by the educational welfare service, has resulted in a steady year-on-year improvement in attendance rates. Although most pupils attend school regularly, the school has a high number of pupils with a history of poor attendance. Punctuality is unsatisfactory both in the morning and between lessons; pupils saunter between lessons with little urgency and during the inspection internal truancy was observed with some pupils nipping off if the opportunity arose. Attendance rates remain below the national average and limited attendance has a detrimental effect on a significant number of pupils' learning and depresses their achievement.
8. Where teaching was very good, as, for example, in religious education lessons, humour and empathy were used to very good effect and there was an excellent rapport between teachers and pupils. This resulted in lively and committed pupils who achieved very well. When work is well matched to pupils' needs, such as in most mathematics lessons, pupils can be enthusiastic and enjoy succeeding.
9. There are a significant number of occasions in lessons where the attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils are unsatisfactory and this leads to low-level disruption. Pupils are not prepared to stay involved with their work and they disrupt their own learning and the learning and achievement of their fellow pupils. This involves mainly, but not exclusively, boys and is a significant factor in the under-achievement of boys.
10. The majority of pupils behave appropriately around school but many are very boisterous. Although management systems are adequate to control the behaviour of the majority of pupils, they do not prevent a minority of pupils misbehaving in classrooms and in the corridors. Arrangements to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are not effective. Although there have been no permanent exclusions, fixed-term exclusions are average.
11. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory but their spiritual development is unsatisfactory. The school does not meet requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship. Although good quality guidance on themes for reflection is issued to form tutors, only a minority put the guidance into practice and little of any value happens in many registration periods. Pupils' involvement in assemblies, such as when the Year 11 drama group presented ideas about inclusion to a Year 7 audience, results in a high level of interest and involvement but assemblies are often dull, with a perfunctory prayer, and make little contribution towards pupils' spiritual development. Religious education lessons very effectively challenge pupils to explore religious beliefs and the way they impact on people's lives. However, insufficient thought is given to pupils' spiritual development in many other subjects and there has been insufficient improvement in pupil's spiritual development since the previous inspection. The personal and social development programme in particular makes an inadequate contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
12. In areas such as English, where moral development is strong, effective systems of behaviour management result in the minimum of disruption. Although individual departments, such as physical education, religious education, English and history, provide pupils with a strong moral steer, there are a minority of pupils who show insufficient respect for others' needs, interests and feelings. Pupils' social development is adequate. It is very good in physical education where pupils learn to work safely. However, in PSHE and modern foreign languages lessons pupils do not always get enough opportunity to develop collaborative skills. A good range of trips, visits and activities arranged through the English, music and history departments enhances the pupils' cultural development.

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	1171	93	0
White – any other White background	2	2	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	12	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	5	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0

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

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.5	School data	1.5
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The overall curriculum and resource provision is good but there are unsatisfactory aspects in the provision for citizenship. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily because of the quality of teaching and the positive attitudes to learning of most.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** and promotes average standards of attainment. Assessment procedures are generally satisfactory but results are not used consistently by all staff to monitor progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' effective planning and secure subject knowledge help to promote and develop pupils' skills.
- The active encouragement of some enthusiastic teachers helps to motivate pupils and can lead to a high level of productivity.
- The overall quality of teaching in modern foreign languages and PSHE is unsatisfactory.
- Marking is sometimes cursory and does not give pupils a clear idea of how to improve.
- Sometimes teachers accept too much unsatisfactory behaviour and this can have a negative impact on learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 138 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (3%)	24 (17%)	60 (43%)	40 (29%)	9 (7%)	1 (1%)	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. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and expertise and many teachers show enjoyment of their subject that is often enthusiastically shared with pupils. This ensures that pupils are able to acquire new knowledge and skills at a satisfactory rate. Teachers relate well to pupils and are able to motivate pupils. There is often an atmosphere of achievement and mutual respect. Pupils have the confidence to question teachers and develop new ideas and increase their understanding. Very detailed planning, together with good classroom organisation and a clear style of delivery, often result in good learning, for example in religious education, art and design, history and geography. However, there are times, for example in modern foreign languages, when the language pupils are studying is to developing pupils' skills and improving their learning.
14. In some subjects which are delivered by many teachers, such as citizenship, there can be inconsistencies in expectations. PSHE is often delivered by teachers who do not have in-depth specialist knowledge. This can negatively affect learning, as pupils are not always challenged to examine issues at a deeper level.
15. Occasionally work is not well matched to pupils' capabilities. This results in higher attaining pupils not being appropriately challenged and lower attaining pupils not being able to fully grasp concepts. This can result in unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour as pupils become bored or struggle to understand and lose interest. A significant number of pupils, usually boys, do not have well-developed listening skills. Teachers have to work hard to keep these pupils interested and involved and most are very successful. However, there are occasions when a lack of rigour in behaviour management results in these pupils, and sometimes their classmates, not learning effectively.
16. Mainstream teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There is some good teaching when teachers are deeply familiar with the needs of pupils and with the targets set for them and plan their work accordingly. Most teachers make good use of support staff and value their expertise. Specialist teaching of pupils who are withdrawn for additional literacy and numeracy support is of high quality. A multi-disciplinary approach to cater for the needs of pupils who are dyslexic is very effective. However, the planning of work to meet the needs of all pupils is inconsistent. The expectations of some teachers are unrealistically high and some teachers fail to ask for clarification of the guidelines that will assist them to deliver the curriculum more effectively. This applies particularly to the teaching of modern foreign languages. In music, teachers' planning does not sufficiently take into account the individual needs of pupils and tasks are not always sufficiently broken down. In science, support assistants are used particularly well but there is too little planning for skill development. The failure to co-ordinate the provision made in mainstream lessons for pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with behavioural problems, results in some of these pupils making unsatisfactory progress.
17. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but the quality of teachers' comments varies between subjects and between teachers. In some subjects, such as history and religious education, pupils' work is marked thoroughly with comments that show them how to improve; in others, including the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, marking is inconsistent in quality. Citizenship and enterprise in Years 7 to 9 are not assessed at all.

18. The data manager provides good quality information based on pupils' past performance. Teachers can see at a glance how well pupils in their groups are doing in relation to targets set for their future performance. An example of particularly good practice occurs in physical education, where teachers use assessment information very effectively to plan lessons with individual pupils in mind. However, available data is not used consistently across all departments to identify and support under-achieving pupils. At whole-school level, senior managers use assessment information well to help selected pupils to reach their potential in examinations, and to trigger curricular changes where under-performance is identified, as in the recent introduction of a modular mathematics course.
19. Pupils usually know their target levels or grades, but their knowledge of how to reach them varies between subjects. Examples of good practice occur in music, where pupils have a very good understanding of where they are now and how to improve, and business education, where pupils have target improvement plans. Although practice elsewhere is patchy, the school is introducing an 'assessment for learning' policy designed to help pupils in all subjects identify what they can and cannot do, allowing teachers and pupils to work together in setting appropriate learning targets. Pupil-friendly versions of the criteria are already in use in several subjects.
20. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The assessment policy provides departments with clear guidelines about marking pupils' work and good quality data is easily accessible for all teachers. However, inconsistencies still remain. Not all teachers actually use the data available to them, and learning targets for individual pupils are not yet fully in place across all subjects.

The curriculum

The curriculum provision is **good**; it is broad and balanced and meets the needs and aspirations of pupils well. Courses are effectively planned to ensure continuity and progression. As a result, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Statutory requirements are fully met with the exception of the requirements for citizenship and a daily collective act of worship.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An innovatory and developing curriculum meets the needs, aptitudes and aspirations of all pupils.
- Extra-curricular opportunities and curriculum enrichment are good; in sport they are very good.
- The curriculum provision in physical education and religious education is very good.
- Curriculum links with the community, industry, business and other schools are strong.
- The provision for PSHE, including education about sex, drugs, health and citizenship, do not meet statutory requirements.
- The time allocations for geography and history in Years 7 to 9 are below the recommended level.
- Monitoring and evaluating curriculum innovation and change lack planning and rigour.

Commentary

21. The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully meets statutory requirements except in the provision of PSHE, which includes citizenship, sex education and drugs awareness. The curricular provision for equality of opportunity, access and social inclusion is good. In physical education and religious education, curricular arrangements are very good. Following the previous inspection the school has successfully addressed most curriculum issues including the allocation of curriculum time in design and technology and ICT. A textiles component has been introduced to give balance to the design and technology curriculum. Issues relating to the modern foreign languages taught and the time allocated have been partially resolved. The

modern foreign language provision has been the subject of many changes since the previous inspection. There remain issues relating to the choice and combination of languages, time allocation and the impact on other option choices, for example in business education. All pupils now take double award science, eliminating the possibility of obtaining five accreditations in the subject. Increased technical support has been provided for science. Restructuring the school day has reduced the curriculum time lost through the movement of pupils between the widely dispersed school buildings. However, the issue remains.

22. Following local and national initiatives, the school in recent years has embarked upon considerable curriculum reform to meet the needs of the pupils more closely. More vocationally orientated and work-related courses have been introduced and, following the recognition of the school as a specialist business college, a wide range of business and enterprise courses has been introduced into the curriculum. The school is also developing courses that link closely with learning in the community. Curriculum managers have been appointed to oversee the implementation of community and business enterprise initiatives. Recognition of the high standards in art and design, music, the performing arts and sport has resulted in appropriate awards. Further curriculum change has resulted from other initiatives such as the Key Stage 3 National Strategy and its continuation and the good links established with primary schools. The effective links with other secondary schools and further education colleges enable transitions between the various phases of education to be smoother and more beneficial to the individual pupil.
23. The overall effectiveness of provision for work-related learning is good. Provision for work-related learning is made through a range of planned strategies, which provide opportunities for learning through, about, and for work. The school's Business and Enterprise status has promoted links with about 50 local companies, and curriculum developments in vocational courses in Years 10 and 11. There is a foundation for these through effective enterprise lessons in Years 7 to 9. Opportunities for vocational studies are built into all curriculum pathways and the majority of pupils take a vocational option. In the majority of lessons seen, teaching and learning are good and lead to good achievement. In a business studies lesson, pupils learn about work by experiencing 'batch production' of a real product within time limits. On a well-focused construction skills foundation course, pupils learn for work, when they develop brick-laying and site management skills in the schools' own CITB centre. All but six pupils were engaged in learning through work in Years 10 or 11 through work experience. The programme is satisfactory and helps pupils to gain an understanding of the world of work. Industry days provide another dimension to learning about work when pupils are actively involved in work simulations, trading, advertising and sales presentations. The school's approach to work-related learning is well managed, planned and organised to develop pupils' readiness for the world of work.
24. Responses to the parents' questionnaire indicate that parents are well satisfied with the range of activities provided. Those attending the pre-inspection meeting were appreciative of the recent curriculum developments in business and enterprise and vocational courses. In discussion with inspectors, pupils said that they enjoyed the range of courses and activities available.
25. The quality and range of extra-curricular provision and enrichment activities are good overall. In sport they are very good. As reported at the previous inspection, the provision is a strength of the school. There is an extensive programme of events related to expressive arts and many well-attended clubs take place at lunchtime and after school on a daily and weekly basis. There is a wide range of other events involving educational visits and community activities. Pupils interviewed were very satisfied with the range of activities they could enjoy. Whilst specific activities for gifted and talented pupils are provided, there are concerns about inconsistencies of the provision for these pupils within the curriculum. Homework facilities are available daily. Support for learning outside the school day is satisfactory.

26. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is sufficiently broad and balanced. Opportunities for pupils to be involved in a range of extra-curricular activities are good. Most pupils are supported within the mainstream classroom and follow the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils are often grouped by ability but it is not always the least able who require additional help. A shortage of support staff means that teachers often have to cope with larger groups of pupils in higher sets who would benefit from additional help. This applies particularly in mathematics and English. However, pupils who have low levels of literacy and numeracy are targeted to receive additional individual and small group support from the special educational needs co-ordinator and other members of the department. The quality of this support is often good.
27. Curriculum links between the senior management, the governing body and the curriculum areas are satisfactory. Each subject area is linked to a member of the senior management team and governors from the curriculum sub-committee of the governing body are linked to areas where there are statutory responsibilities, for example special educational needs, and developing curricular areas such as citizenship, literacy, numeracy and business education. The governors are well informed on curricular developments by curriculum leaders and senior managers. Recent curriculum developments are compelling governors to be more involved in decision making, which at present lies mainly with work under-taken by the headteacher and senior managers. Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating curriculum initiatives are insufficiently rigorous.
28. The school continues to develop initiatives arising from the National Strategy for curriculum change in Years 7 to 9. Recently, staff development has focused on teaching and learning styles and is currently addressing assessment for learning. The strategy has influenced, and continues to influence, curriculum change, but to varying degrees within and between curriculum areas. Some subject areas have made good strides in changing teaching methods using good practice in cross-curricular areas such as literacy, numeracy and ICT, whilst others have been less successful. For example, the use of the three-part lesson is inconsistent in its application. Where teachers use it, the plenary sessions show a wide range of effectiveness. Generally the components of the National Strategy have been satisfactorily introduced but as yet the school has not fully evaluated the impact it has had upon curriculum development and standards.

Accommodation

29. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. New science accommodation, a library and a resource centre have been provided since the previous inspection. Facilities for ICT, the refurbishment of food technology accommodation and other areas and the continuing re-decoration to maintain a pleasant learning environment have also taken place. However, the provision of toilets has not kept pace with the growth of pupil numbers. There is insufficient classroom accommodation for the teaching of theoretical aspects of physical education and changing provision for teachers is inadequate. There is no access for physically disabled pupils in the upper school. The refectory is too small to meet the needs of the large school population and this frustrates the school's desire to retain pupils on the site at lunchtime. Display is well used to provide a suitable aesthetic appearance in the older parts of the school. The sprawling campus is well maintained and kept litter free.
30. Accommodation for learning support is good. A recently refurbished room provides a stimulating work area. The accommodation for behavioural support is unsuitable. The room is very small and is on two levels, with steep steps dividing them. It is also a very noisy room, being adjacent to a hall where drama lessons regularly take place.

Resources

31. The school has attracted considerable resources to meet the innovations that are being implemented and these are benefiting all pupils. For example, interactive whiteboards and ICT

equipment and software are making teaching and learning more effective. There are, however, unsatisfactory features in resource provision such as the unsatisfactory provision of textbooks, work books and library books in some subjects, as well as of learning support assistants for pupils with special educational needs taught in mainstream classes. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the significant curriculum changes resulting from the new initiatives lack rigour, and some initiatives recently introduced are having greater impact than others. For example, the introduction of the enterprise culture appears to be having a marked influence whilst the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy is not influencing teaching and learning as well as expected. There is little secure evidence of the impact upon pupils' achievement of recent curricular innovations.

32. A good range of resources is available for the support of pupils with special educational needs. Books and materials take into account their differing abilities. Pupils with sensory and physical disabilities are encouraged to use their normal aids to speaking, listening, reading and writing. The special educational needs department supports the notion that pupils with learning difficulties should be given opportunities to develop ICT skills in all subjects. The school's hardware and software effectively support them.

Staffing

33. There is a good match between the number and quality of teachers and the needs of the curriculum. It is at least satisfactory in all subjects and good in most. Effective measures are taken to fill vacancies and to cover long-term absences. The school has been able to make an appointment of a Business and Enterprise manager from September 2004. The effectiveness of assistant teachers in meeting the needs of the curriculum is also good. The school is taking initiatives, for instance arising from Workforce Reform, to extend the role of support staff. Five well-qualified teachers make up the learning support department and there are nine support assistants. A recently appointed behavioural support teacher is in the early stages of establishing a resource centre. Links with learning support have not yet been fully established.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **satisfactory**. The school provides adequate support advice and guidance for pupils based on monitoring their achievements and personal development. There is satisfactory involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a well-established pastoral programme that ensures continuity of care.
- There is a good programme that helps new pupils settle in quickly.
- Registration periods are not always used effectively to support pupils' personal development.
- Provision for careers education is unsatisfactory and results in many pupils being inadequately equipped to make important decisions about their futures.

Commentary

34. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory and follow locally agreed procedures. An effective partnership with the local authority ensures that the achievement of pupils in public care is well monitored. Although arrangements to promote a safe working environment are good within individual departments, arrangements for regular rigorous whole-school risk assessments remain unclear. A lack of continuity in the management of health and safety, and the lack of meticulous monitoring by governors have resulted in minor weaknesses in policies and provision.

35. The school's pastoral system ensures that pupils are well known to staff. Improvements have been made to assessment processes and year heads now have access to a greater range of data to assist the identification of under-achievement. However, the use of data is not sophisticated. Registration periods are often not used effectively and this was noted in the previous report. New behaviour support has been established and although the vision for its use is good, effective programmes to modify pupils' behaviour have not yet been developed. The present accommodation for this purpose is unsuitable due to noise and a lack of space.
36. The programme for settling new pupils into school is good. There is a good range of visits and 'experience days' for primary school pupils in Years 5 and 6 and this ensures that pupils feel confident and secure when they start their secondary education. Year 7 pupils in the school appreciate the help and support they receive from Year 9 buddies.
37. Careers education is unsatisfactory overall. The programme of work experience is satisfactory and helps pupils to gain an understanding of the world of work. Many pupils arrange their own placements and this enhances the quality of provision. Careers education is part of the PSHE programme and teachers are required to teach PSHE if they have space on their timetable. Consequently many teachers lack expertise in careers education and this has a detrimental effect on the quality of provision. This is exacerbated by the lack of a well-planned programme of study that clearly indicates exactly what will be taught to whom and at what time. The careers library is unattractive and lacks resources. Connexions support is directed at pupils with specific needs such as those at risk of exclusion, those with poor attendance or those with special educational needs. This arrangement combined with unsatisfactory school provision results in the majority of pupils being inadequately equipped to make major decisions about their futures.
38. Pupils are able to express their views through the school council. Their views are acted upon when appropriate.
39. The early identification of pupils with special educational needs is effectively carried out. Good links with feeder primary schools enables the department to have clear profiles of pupils before they enter the school. Individual education plans are in place for most pupils requiring them but they are not always used as working documents in all classrooms. Not all teachers can produce them when required. The department is currently reviewing the situation with a view to introducing group educational plans. Realistic targets for pupils with statements largely reflect what statements have recommended. These are reviewed regularly. Progress is carefully monitored and recorded and good efforts have been made to track the progress of pupils through to their external examinations, where the benefits of 'special arrangements' are evident. Behaviour targets are set by heads of year. Pupils considered vulnerable when they enter the school receive specific support, which helps to raise their confidence and self-esteem. However, the co-ordination of issues relating to learning and behavioural needs is unsatisfactory.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents, other schools and the community. The school's educational and support programmes for parents, families and members of the community are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of information for parents about the life of the school and their children's progress.
- The school's Business and Enterprise college status has been used well to enhance links with local business.
- There are good links with primary schools that ease transition and raise pupils' awareness of an enterprise culture.

Commentary

40. Good communication keeps parents well informed about the work of the school and their children's progress. Parents are satisfied with what the school provides and appreciate its open door policy. The school regularly seeks parents' views and acts upon them when appropriate. Many parents try to support their children's education but there are a minority of parents who do not value education and are less supportive. The annual reports to parents about the children's progress and standards are good.
41. The school has well-established good links with the local community. Members of the local community are used to coming into school to use its sports facilities and to attend the centre for music tuition. The school also hosts the local carnival. The Business and Enterprise college status has been used well to develop and enhance links with local businesses. These links have been used to enrich pupils' experience, for example during industry days.
42. However, the school's educational and support programme for local community members is only in its infancy. There is a developing vision for the future and staff have been appointed but are not yet in place. Courses have started, but at present mainly attract older members of the local community. Parent education and family learning activities are planned but are not yet part of the curriculum. The school is aware that there is a need improve the identification of local needs by working more effectively with other local agencies and groups in order to provide higher quality and more focused provision.
43. Specialist college funding has been used well to improve partnership with feeder primary schools. A good number of initiatives have enhanced the transition from Year 6 to Year 7 and pupils' understanding of enterprise. It has been a greater challenge to develop links with other local secondary schools and these are in an earlier stage of development. Various visits to and from local colleges ensure that pupils develop some awareness of local post-16 provision.
44. Links with parents are good. Parents of pupils in Year 7 are offered a literacy and numeracy resource pack and are encouraged to support pupils at home. The school operates an 'open door' policy where parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have. Bilingual support is available if required. There is good attendance by parents at annual reviews and meetings related to pupils with special educational needs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is effectively led and managed. The leadership of the headteacher is **good**. A strong team of senior and middle managers supports him well; they provide good leadership in the school. There is satisfactory management of the school; efficient and effective monitoring systems have been put in place although there is some inconsistency of practice in departments. The overall governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are involved in strategic planning but are not so involved with monitoring and evaluating the impact of developments on standards. The financial management of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership by the headteacher is good; his vision provides purpose and direction for the school by creating an innovative culture.
- Senior managers and most middle managers carry out their delegated roles well.
- The co-ordination and management of special educational needs, modern foreign languages and the PSHE programme are unsatisfactory
- The leadership and management of the physical education provision are very good.
- Financial management is good; it is efficient and supports effective decision making.

Commentary

45. The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear sense of direction for the school. He is creating an ethos that builds upon the principles of respect for the individual and high expectations to sustain and improve standards. The school has placed an emphasis on improving the effectiveness of learning in lessons, supportive self-review and involvement with the community. The school is generally managed satisfactorily with a clear purpose to consolidate strengths and promote innovation.
46. Developments in the school are based on good quality financial planning. This is reflected in the detailed and successful bid for Business and Enterprise status, the effective control of the budget within tight financial constraints and the management of the financial impact of 'workforce reforms'. The school improvement plan needs to be more closely linked to budgetary allocations. The plan clearly identifies whole-school priorities such as raising standards, improving the curricular provision and focusing on the quality of teaching and learning.
47. An effective senior management team ably supports the headteacher. The team works well together and shows a firm commitment to the objectives of the school. Quality assurance procedures and data collection are detailed and support the intention to improve standards. For each subject, targets are drawn up which have clear criteria, so that success or otherwise can be measured.
48. The overall governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors show commitment and are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work. They support the school well and have been particularly active in promoting the Business and Enterprise bid and improvements to the school buildings and surrounding environment. Governors have been encouraged to be more proactive in their role of monitoring and evaluating provision but are not sufficiently challenging about strategic issues or questioning of performance details. The governing body has a good working relationship with the staff. The information given in the annual report is relevant and meets statutory requirements. However, statutory requirements are not met in relation to citizenship and collective worship,
49. The overall quality of middle management is satisfactory. There are examples of effective management in a variety of contexts in the school. These are primarily in the areas of pastoral care, the humanities, and the expressive arts and business education. The leadership and management of physical education are very good. There are weaknesses in some subjects, which require attention. These relate to the co-ordination and management of special educational needs, modern foreign languages, PSHE and citizenship. The management of design and technology needs to be rationalised to give it greater coherence. A more general feature is the need to achieve greater consistency in the use of assessment data in order to make the monitoring of pupils' work more effective.
50. Arrangements for performance management are good. Teachers are aware of their strengths and weaknesses but further development is required in order to improve the monitoring and evaluation of teachers' work. A structured programme of focused lesson observations, analysis of planning documents and review meetings is in place. Generally, this works well in identifying priorities for development. However, the under-achievement of some groups of pupils with associated behavioural issues has not been sufficiently addressed. Arrangements for the support and professional development of newly qualified teachers are good. The evaluation of the effects of in-service training on teaching and learning is well established. All staff, including financial, administrative and site management staff, are involved in training and make a significant contribution to the work of the school.
51. Overall leadership and management of special educational needs are unsatisfactory. This is due to the lack of consistent practice throughout the school. Behavioural support is an integral area of special educational needs and yet it remains a concern and is not fully incorporated into

learning support. Teachers are sometimes struggling to cope with large groups of pupils who have special educational needs and associated learning difficulties. The school is successfully operating the Code of Practice. Good relationships are established with a range of outside agencies. The department is well supported by a governor with responsibility for special educational needs and the school is fully complying with legal requirements in respect of its 52 pupils with statements. However, overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is not well enough managed or co-ordinated.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	4,580,896
Total expenditure	4,389,656
Expenditure per pupil	3,676

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	18,554
Balance carried forward to the next	209794

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving because of good leadership.
- Teaching and learning are effective and sometimes good or very good, leading to nationally expected achievement.
- The curriculum is rich and varied and pupils are encouraged to think and reflect.
- Pupils are not all aware of how to improve.
- Work is not always matched to pupils' needs and, therefore, a minority of pupils, particularly boys, are not challenged enough.

Commentary

52. Results and current standards reflect gradual improvement. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, taking into account the 2003 results as well as work seen. The new head of department has succeeded in developing a shared vision for the improvement of teaching and learning.
53. In work seen, pupils' attainment by the end of Years 9 and 11 is below average. This represents improving standards because when the pupils joined the school, their standards were well below average and low in writing. Girls do better than boys and the department has produced new schemes of work and is developing more rigorous targeting to prioritise the achievement of boys. Standards in literacy, especially at Level 5, have improved. Standards in English were below average for Year 11 pupils in the 2003 GCSE results but have improved. Most pupils have a basic knowledge and understanding of literacy skills by the time they have been in the school for three years. Their oral skills are good in classroom discussion but falter in formal situations. Writing standards are below average; some pupils have not grasped key skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar, although their work is generally well presented. Writing is creative and pupils enjoy creating imaginative and descriptive stories. The standards of all pupils are benefiting from a wider choice in the variety of writing assignments and increasing differentiation in lesson planning. The use of ICT is effective in developing pupils' writing standards and the quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and the able and talented achieve satisfactorily. .
54. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and sometimes good or very good. In a small minority of lessons, pupils learn less than in others because they are not involved enough in their own learning or classroom management strategies are less effective. Occasionally the work is not closely matched to the pupils' needs and they are not challenged enough. In the good and very good lessons, there is a brisk pace, pupils are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. Pupils enjoy exchanging ideas with each other and their teacher in an atmosphere of achievement and respect. In a Year 11 lesson on short stories, the pupils thoroughly enjoyed exchanging ideas in an atmosphere of high expectations. Consequently, they presented their findings in a deeply felt and expressive manner, because the teacher sensitively drew out their ideas and encouraged their thinking. The behaviour of a minority of pupils adversely affects their learning.
55. The leadership of the department is good. The new head of department has been well

supported by the senior management team and staffing is much more stable. She has instituted new systems and procedures and has a clear educational vision that inspires both teachers and pupils. Teachers share the preparation of schemes of work and departmental responsibilities; as a result, they regularly discuss what is best for the pupils. Newly qualified teachers are given clear guidelines and support to achieve effective teaching and learning. Procedures for assessment are clear but the analysis of the standards and potential of individual groups of pupils is at an early stage. Some pupils are not aware of their standards or targets and therefore are not sure how to improve. The department is aware of this and has begun to address the issue.

56. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. Pupils' standards have been maintained and literacy teaching has been used effectively to target further improvements in English language for pupils. The shared commitment to raise the standing of the subject coupled with the determination of the head of department means that it has the capacity to succeed even further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. Management at a senior level is not yet effective in putting policy into practice. Standards in literacy are a barrier to learning in some subjects, particularly for boys. Writing is a weaker area when pupils come into school. The management of 'catch up' lessons for pupils on Level 3 in Year 7 is not effective enough. Consequently improvement is too slow. In contrast, an initiative in the English department aimed at these pupils was successful because of good teaching and leadership. In departments such as English, history and art and design, where attempts have been made to improve pupils' basic skills, advances are taking place. In other departments, such as modern foreign languages, pupils are not making appropriate progress.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern languages is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average in French and German.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory and lead to significant under-achievement in French and German.
- Teaching and learning in Spanish are satisfactory and enable pupils to achieve as they should.
- Leadership of the department is poor and has led to a significant decline in standards since the last inspection.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory.
- Pupils are not confident in speaking and responding in French and German

Commentary

58. By the end of Year 11 standards of work seen in modern foreign languages are well below average. Boys' achievement is significantly lower than that of girls. In French, standards of work seen are well below average. Higher and average attaining pupils write short accounts and letters and take part in simple dialogues to communicate ideas in the past, present and future tenses but they are heavily dependent upon written notes and guidance to do this. This adversely affects their pronunciation and they find difficulty in responding spontaneously as a result. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs express information simply following models very closely. Despite low levels of literacy amongst a large proportion of pupils, which create significant barriers to their learning, this represents unsatisfactory achievement in relation to prior attainment. In GCSE examinations in 2003 the proportion of candidates attaining A*-C grades was well below average although the proportion of pupils entered for the examinations was above national averages. However, there are too many pupils

gaining lower grades. In German, standards are very low and this is reflected in examination results in 2003. Although numbers entered for German are very low this represents poor achievement in relation to the prior attainment of the pupils involved. In German, pupils have a poor grasp of basic vocabulary and structures and find essential language skills difficult because of this. In Spanish, standards of work seen are below average; this represents satisfactory achievement in relation to prior attainment. Pupils are confident in speaking and responding and they write short accounts but there is little evidence of writing, speaking and responding spontaneously and at length, or independently of written notes and prompts. In the GCSE examination in Spanish in 2003 the proportion of candidates attaining A*-C grades was below average but the proportion of candidates entered for the examination was well above national figures. Over the previous three years there was an improving trend in examination results in French and Spanish but a severe drop in standards in 2004. Overall, there has been a steep decline in standards in modern foreign languages since the previous report.

59. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall. Pupils' attitudes vary in response to the quality of teaching. Generally pupils are concerned to do well and are co-operative but become restless and lose concentration when their needs are not adequately addressed and tasks are too difficult or do not present them with an appropriate challenge. They respond well to games, group and paired work.
60. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. In French and German pupils can make satisfactory progress in individual lessons but achievement over time is unsatisfactory mainly because of the lack of consistency across the department which does not ensure that pupils are able to build effectively on previous learning. There are examples of some good practice leading to good progress and achievement in lessons; this is mainly focused in Spanish lessons. Overall there has been a decline in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection.
61. Teachers' command of the languages they teach is good and on those occasions where the language is used effectively to conduct activities, pupils benefit and listening skills are well developed as a result. However, too often this is not the case; the language is used ineffectively or erratically and opportunities are missed to develop pupils' skills.
62. Planning is usually appropriate with clear presentations of new language, well-sequenced activities and resources which enable pupils to build effectively on previous learning. This is most effective when pupils are given opportunities to use the language themselves in pairs, small groups or in whole-class activities such as games. However, in many lessons teacher-led activities reduce pupils' opportunities to use the language themselves and this results in a lack of confidence and competence. Pupils respond very well when they use the language to find out information but this is not fully developed across the department and pupils lose interest when paired work is simply used for rehearsal rather than for real purposes.
63. In some lessons, steps in learning are missing or there is inadequate practice or support given to ensure that pupils are able to complete tasks successfully. Time is not always used effectively; there is often undue emphasis in lessons on reading and writing to the detriment of speaking and listening. This has an adverse effect on pupils' confidence and creates barriers to learning for a large proportion of pupils.
64. Leadership and management are poor overall. The day-to-day administration and organisation are satisfactory but action taken to halt the decline in standards has not been effective and improvement since the last inspection is poor. Recently steps have been taken to adapt the curriculum to better meet the needs of pupils, to improve attitudes towards learning and to build on the strengths of the department but their impact is yet to be seen. The monitoring and development of teaching and learning are not effective in achieving consistency or in raising standards. Teachers do not work effectively as a team to share and spread the good practice which at present exists in pockets in the department.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Below expected standards and achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Good teaching and leadership.
- Unsatisfactory performance, attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of boys in Years 10 and 11.
- Low levels of literacy, recall and retention amongst average and lower attaining pupils.

Commentary

65. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Pupils' attainment on entry in Year 7 is broadly in line with national expectations. It is higher than the below average results in the national test at the end of Year 9 but similar to standards of pupils' work seen during the inspection. Early indications show that standards at the end of Year 9 have risen markedly in national tests taken earlier this year. This is an improving picture. It arises because increasing emphasis is being placed on informing pupils of their potential and setting realistic yet demanding personal targets to reach expected levels of attainment. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well below the national average and have remained at this level since the time of the previous inspection. Absence at the time of the GCSE examinations and low levels of retention and recall are contributory factors. Achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. This is because there is a significant minority of average and below average boys who have poor attitudes towards learning and have irregular attendance. They are underachieving. In Years 7 to 9 there is no difference in the standards reached by girls and boys. However, in Years 10 and 11, girls are performing much better than boys at the higher GCSE levels (grades A*-C). Generally, girls apply themselves well and have more positive attitudes towards learning. More competent pupils, including those who are recognised as very able, reach standards that fall short of the highest grades (A*-A) awarded nationally. There is scope for recognising the learning needs of these pupils and planning more demanding and challenging work to extend their skills and understanding.
66. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well when taught in small groups by specialist teachers outside of the department. Similar pupils fare worse when taught in larger groups by specialist mathematics teachers without learning support. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 9 are similar to those in science and better than those in English. At the end of Year 11, pupils perform worse in mathematics than they do in other examination subjects, except science, French, history and design and technology. Generally pupils have a sound knowledge and use of numeracy, which helps their learning of new ideas. However, pupils are given few opportunities to use, apply and develop their skills in numeracy in order to solve problems. They are less competent in the use of aspects of literacy, in particular reading with understanding. This has implications for pupils developing independent learning techniques, doing homework and reading examination papers. Pupils' basic skills in ICT are satisfactory but the very good facilities available are under-used at present to help pupils develop new skills.
67. Teaching is good overall. It is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11, where it is satisfactory. This is because in a few classes the unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils serves to disrupt the teachers' planning and this diminishes their own and other pupils' achievement by reducing the pace and effectiveness of learning. There are some good features. These include good subject knowledge and the effective use of resources. There are inconsistencies between teachers in applying guidelines within the National Numeracy Strategy for teaching mathematics, for example displaying key words, stating lesson objectives and using plenary sessions effectively. Pupils are over-reliant on the teacher to provide the momentum for learning in most classes, particularly those in Years 10 and 11; this declines

when pupils engage in independent and group activities. The quality of assessment is satisfactory. Marking is regular and positive but not always in line with departmental guidelines and pupils fail to complete tasks satisfactorily. This is because a significant number of pupils decline to take an element of responsibility for their own learning. Insufficient textbooks, library books and work books mean that teachers are restricted in changing pupils' attitudes towards personal learning.

68. Leadership is good. A substantially new team of teachers has a commitment to raising standards and results. There is an improving vision for helping all pupils to achieve better. Management is satisfactory. Newly qualified teachers are well informed and supported and essential department functions are effectively organised and administered. Schemes of work are thorough and helpful to teachers. Monitoring aspects of teaching and learning in areas such as planning, marking and homework is not sufficiently rigorous
69. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection. Teaching is better and expectations of pupils are higher. Pupils are better informed of their progress and curriculum reform is beginning to have an impact on their achievement and upon methods of teaching. In Years 10 and 11, there remain differences between the achievement of girls and boys, and unsatisfactory pupil attitudes and behaviour continue to affect the quality of some teaching and learning. The department is well poised to make further improvements in the immediate future.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. Pupils' competence in numeracy at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is satisfactory. The successful introduction of the requirement of the National Numeracy Strategy for pupils in Years 7 to 9 has meant that pupils have developed confidence in using and applying number and extending their mental skills. Appropriate training for all teachers means that opportunities to use pupils' skills are transferred to most other subjects across the curriculum, where they are planned for and exploited successfully and satisfactorily. Most subject departments have a written policy in the use of numeracy and requirements are built into their schemes of work. By the end of Year 9 pupils manipulate numbers using the four rules of arithmetic, interpret simple graphs and measure accurately. For example, in a lesson in Spanish in Year 8 pupils were asked to carry out addition exercises in the target language. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 11, pupils, including those who are the least competent, are using a wide range of numerical skills. There is a substantial use of them in science, geography and design and technology. In science the drawing and interpreting of graphs, the transposition of formulae and the manipulation of numbers using fractions, decimals and percentages figure prominently. In geography, the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in numeracy are exploited systematically. For instance, Year 7 pupils can interpret data expressed in pie charts, bar charts and line graphs. In Year 8 the pupils use and interpret scattergrams of earthquake frequency and intensity whilst Year 11 pupils carry out simple statistical analysis including tallying, ranking and correlating. In design and technology the use and manipulation of formulae in electronics are features of the work. Most subject departments show that pupils' attainment in numeracy is secure enough so as not to hold back progression in learning in their subject.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' interest is captured through a variety of approaches to learning, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Some boys are inattentive, restricting their achievement and that of others.
- Teachers probe and develop pupils' understanding by the effective use of questioning.
- Marking of pupils' work does not always show them how to improve.

Commentary

71. Results in Year 9 National Curriculum tests were below the national average in 2003, and were similarly below in 2004; pupils did less well than expected bearing in mind their prior attainment. In GCSE examinations, results in 2003 were in line with the average nationally, but were below the average in 2004. Pupils at this stage did better than expected in relation to their performance in national tests two years earlier, but the proportion gaining the highest (A* and A) grades was very low. Boys did less well than girls.
72. Pupils' achievement in lessons is satisfactory overall. Achievement is held back by the poor behaviour of a significant minority of inattentive boys in Years 7 to 9 which affects the progress of other pupils. In Years 10 and 11, achievement in lessons is a little better because the wide range of course choices, including applications of science and a vocational qualification, motivates all but a very small number. Furthermore, a significant minority of boys in Year 11 do not attend lessons. Standards when pupils enter the school in Year 7 are average. In lessons and other work seen during the inspection, standards are also average when pupils leave in Year 11. Test results at the end of Year 9 are lower than standards reached in lessons because pupils have poor recall of their earlier learning, partly as a result of limited grasp of scientific terminology. Key words are not used effectively enough to help pupils overcome this hurdle.
73. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but several of the lessons seen were only just satisfactory, and one was unsatisfactory. Although teachers plan their lessons with a variety of activities to engage pupils' interest, this is not always effective because a minority of boys, mostly in Years 7 to 9, are intent on disrupting the lesson. For example, in one good lesson, the teacher planned very well, including a game to reinforce pupils' learning about microbes; however, overall achievement suffered from the disruption resulting from interruptions by three or four boys. Several other lessons were observed in which small groups of boys disrupted the progress of other pupils; teachers do not always confront such behaviour firmly or early enough. Teachers often use questioning very effectively to probe and develop pupils' understanding, as in Year 11 when the teacher encouraged pupils to think for themselves in linking increased pulse rate during exercise with underlying scientific reasons. Teachers and teaching assistants are effective in providing support for pupils with special educational needs, allowing them to progress at the same rate as others. Lessons are usually well planned, but teachers do not always provide extension work to stretch higher attaining pupils, restricting the pace of their learning and achievement. Teachers often provide too much direction, leaving pupils too few opportunities to develop their independent learning skills, for example by planning and evaluating their own work. The quality of marking is inconsistent. About half the teachers mark thoroughly, with helpful written comments, but others make superficial comments that do not show pupils how to improve.
74. Leadership and management in science are satisfactory. The department runs smoothly and teachers work well together as a team, for example in implementing new courses. However, implementation of the National Strategy for teaching pupils in the 11 to 14 age range and setting targets to help them improve has been patchy. Monitoring is not effective enough to reduce inconsistencies in teaching, for example in the quality of marking.
75. Standards have remained similar to those at the last inspection. Interaction between pupils and teachers is now better; accommodation is significantly better. However, low level misbehaviour and frequent absence still hinder pupils' progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is very good.
- Resources for ICT are good.
- The department offers a good, innovative curriculum.
- The overall quality of teaching is good with some examples of very good practice.
- The whole-school management of ICT is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

76. Pupils enter the school with below average standards in ICT. They achieve satisfactorily and by the end of Year 9 overall standards for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are just below expectations. This is reflected in the teacher assessments awarded to Year 9 pupils in 2004. The courses followed by most pupils are good and enable them to demonstrate competence across the range of skills and areas of knowledge and understanding required by the National Curriculum. In a pilot project in Year 8 some pupils are following an applied ICT GCSE course with a view to early entry for the examination. This is a good level of challenge for this group and is an example of the innovative approach of the department to the curriculum.
77. The standards gained by Year 11 pupils in the 2004 GCSE ICT examination were below likely national averages. It is clear from the figures that track the progress pupils make over their years at the school that most pupils in the examination group achieved well. The present Year 11 pupils following the GCSE ICT course are achieving well. They produce clear descriptions of the problems they aim to solve using ICT and design simple systems. Their writing is often limited, for example when they evaluate or annotate their work. They rely overmuch on teachers to point out ways in which they can improve.
78. The majority of pupils in Year 11 do not follow a discrete ICT course; however, the school has developed a number of courses that include extensive use of ICT. Because of these arrangements there is compliance in Years 10 and 11 with National Curriculum requirements. Standards in these years are below national expectations.
79. The head of ICT is presently responsible for the management of ICT across the curriculum. He works hard to deal with a number of complex matters. However, a number of major issues remain to be fully addressed by senior management. There is no whole-school scheme of work in place. This needs to be developed to ensure that all subjects contribute to the development of ICT skills, to avoid duplicating effort and to make sure that departments are able to make full use of ICT to help raise standards in their own subjects. A whole-school scheme of work is also necessary to inform resource allocation and training needs.
80. The teaching of ICT is good and there is very good teaching in the department. Despite this, some teachers, on occasion, experience difficulties largely caused by some poor behaviour by boys. The more experienced teachers have developed very good relationships with pupils and this helps to engage them well in learning. Less experienced teachers have yet to develop these relationships fully but are working well to establish them. Teachers have good subject knowledge, as is evident in the quality of their planning and the support and advice they give to pupils. The expectations of all teachers are high and these are reflected in the level of challenge in lessons. Teachers are delivering lessons that have good structure, featuring introductions that set the context for learning, main activities that push pupils on and final sessions that celebrate progress. This results in a coherent learning experience for pupils who can see where their efforts will lead. More use could be made of the interactive whiteboards to help engage and stimulate pupils' interest.

81. The leadership by the head of department is very good. He is creating an effective team of teachers. He leads by example and is a very good practitioner. Under his leadership the department is offering a wide range of challenging courses. Technical support is good and makes a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

82. Overall standards in ICT are below national expectations. Cross-curricular ICT is not systematically delivered in the school and its impact on raising standards in ICT and in other subjects is correspondingly patchy. One reason for this is the lack of a whole-school scheme of work to co-ordinate the provision of ICT across the range of subjects. Resources are good though some subjects report difficulties in accessing equipment when they need it. There is some good teaching of ICT in a number of subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Overall the quality of provision for geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall provision for geography reflects a strong department handicapped by insufficient curricular time in Years 7 to 9, which affects standards.
- Well-planned lessons engage pupils and drive learning.
- Pupils achieve well.
- Pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve.
- The department is ably led and well managed.
- There are still no opportunities for off-site fieldwork in Years 7 to 9.
- The subject's contribution to citizenship, literacy and numeracy is well planned and very effective.

Commentary

83. Attainment is broadly average. Baseline testing of pupils on entry reveals great variations but overall standards are below average. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. By Year 9, they have a better, though still limited, idea of where places are. They know, for example, why earthquakes occur and understand why the devastation they cause depends on where they happen. Standards remain below average because a single lesson each week is not adequate to cover the National Curriculum in sufficient depth and detail. Some classes get even less time when time is lost transferring from the other site. The numbers opting for the GCSE course are rising. In 2003, the percentage gaining grade C or above matched the national average and was much in line with the pupils' performance in other subjects. Girls outperformed boys but no more so than nationally. There were few low grades reflecting the success of strategies for supporting the least able and those with special educational needs. A small number of pupils achieve the highest grades. The emphasis on coursework is well judged and leads to work of a high standard.
84. The quality of teaching overall is good. The way teachers manage their classrooms is a particular strength. Time is not wasted nor do reluctant pupils have an easy ride. Lessons are well planned around carefully prepared, often locally-based, resources which engage pupils. Teaching is enriched by the good use of video and case studies. What drives learning are shared aims and the way lessons combine a variety of approaches, giving them pace and structure which holds pupils on task. Pupils therefore rise to the high expectations their teachers have of them. Year 10 pupils, for example, were first introduced to settlements but

then expected to justify their own decisions about them.

85. There is some outstanding teaching. A casual holiday snap and a snippet from a John Wayne film showing the same Utah landscape 60 years earlier were typical of the planning which drove learning for an unsupported, boy-heavy, bottom set, Year 9 group with many behavioural problems. They were told they *would* enjoy the lesson, and the format, content and introduction of new key words ensured that they did. Always in charge, the teacher goaded, encouraged and engaged this challenging group, adding pace by means of a levelled work sheet. Pupils repaid him with commitment and hard work. The teacher's first-hand knowledge of the area led the class along absorbing diversions – into the study of sandstone rocks for example. Excellent achievement in terms of gains in the knowledge of changing landscapes, the skills of descriptive writing and of analysing photographs and rock samples and the understanding of the processes at work was obtained.
86. Relationships with teachers are relaxed and productive. Some pupils, often boys, are careless spellers. Their powers of description are limited but most contribute willingly in lessons. They behave well. Most now take a pride in presenting and completing work. Regular assessment keeps them informed of their progress. They contribute to their own targets. The continuing lack of off-site fieldwork in Years 7 to 9 deprives pupils of first-hand experience of geography as well as the social benefits. Opportunities to broaden the horizons of a largely urban group should be developed.
87. The department regularly reviews its performance, monitoring results and teaching so that development is well informed and matches the shared commitment to raising standards. Resources have improved although the department's good ICT facilities reported in the previous inspection have been dismantled. Access to ICT and therefore its use by pupils present some problems. Accommodation is unchanged. The department could do more to stretch gifted pupils in mixed-ability classes. The department makes a good contribution to cross-curricular themes such as citizenship, literacy and numeracy.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is insufficient time in Years 7 to 9 to cover topics in depth.
- Teaching is good overall with some very good and excellent features.
- Recent GCSE results have been below national expectations for the higher grades.
- There is an excellent programme of visits to places of historical interest.
- The department is led and managed well with very clear documentation.
- Pupils show very positive attitudes in class.

Commentary

88. In recent GCSE examinations, results in A*-C grades have been below national expectations and, in A*-G grades, they have fluctuated at or below national norms. In lessons seen and work analysed during the current inspection, standards are below those expected by the end of Year 9, and a major contributory factor is that many pupils enter the school with low levels of literacy and limited subject knowledge. Despite this, pupils acquire historical skills from Year 7 onwards and higher attaining pupils are able to express their ideas well in writing, for example in some well-written essays by Year 8 pupils on Tudor religious changes. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, however, have a limited grasp of historical skills and would benefit from a wider range of materials to suit their individual needs. At this stage, curriculum time for history is low with the result that topics cannot be covered in sufficient depth. However, overall achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. In Years 10 and 11, all pupils

develop their historical knowledge and understanding to a greater depth and standards are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 11. Pupils achieve well at this stage in relation to their prior attainment

89. The quality of teaching is good overall and there are examples of very good and excellent practice. Teachers use subject knowledge very well to motivate pupils and to give them the confidence to develop their historical understanding. Lessons are planned thoroughly and a very wide range of techniques is used to stimulate pupils, including the use of interactive whiteboards, video, drama, paired work and short written tasks. All these features were seen to excellent effect in a Year 9 lesson on working conditions in factories in the 19th century. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and, as a result, the latter work hard and are keen to take part in classroom discussions. There is a very good rapport between teachers and pupils and most pupils show very positive attitudes to their learning.
90. The department is led and managed well. The previous inspection report noted deficiencies in marking, monitoring and long-term planning. This is no longer the case. Marking of pupils' work is very thorough and there is a clear development plan for improvement. Targets and levels are used to good effect and there is an excellent programme of visits to places of historical interest. ICT also plays an important role in the work of the department.
91. Overall, good progress has been made since the previous inspection to address the issues raised. History is an increasingly popular subject in the school and the key issue now is to improve GCSE results, especially in the higher grade range.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the full GCSE examination are well above national averages.
- The subject makes an excellent contribution to the personal development of all pupils.
- Teaching is good overall with examples of very good and excellent practice.
- There are few opportunities for pupils to visit sites of religious interest.
- Leadership and management are good, especially in terms of planning and documentation.
- Higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 lack sufficient challenge in their written work.

Commentary

92. Results in the full course examination have been well above national norms in recent years. Results in the short course examination have been just below national expectations but they show a steady improvement. The gender imbalance noted in the previous report has been redressed and the achievement of boys now matches that of girls. Standards seen in the current inspection are in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 9 and pupils achieve well in terms of their prior attainment. During Years 7 and 8 they acquire a good understanding of Christian beliefs and customs, as well as those of other world religions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism. On these themes some very detailed work on Buddhist beliefs was seen from Year 9 pupils. During Years 10 and 11, pupils develop a thorough knowledge and understanding of spiritual and moral issues, such as prejudice and discrimination. Higher attaining pupils write fluently on these topics but some pupils lack sufficient literacy skills to develop their ideas fully in writing. Standards at this stage are in line with national expectations generally and well above national norms for those following the full GCSE course.
93. The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good or excellent. Teachers show considerable enthusiasm and those who lack subject specialist skills are given good support in

classrooms. Teachers encourage all pupils to become active participants in lessons and there is a very strong sense of shared purpose that allows all pupils to improve their learning. This was fully demonstrated in an excellent Year 10 lesson, during which pupils showed considerable maturity in debating the origins of the universe and the existence of God. Classroom organisation is very strong and, as a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and show commendable respect for their teachers and for each other. In order to improve on this positive picture, higher attaining pupils would benefit from more challenge in their written work in Years 7 to 9.

94. The previous inspection report noted concerns about monitoring, assessment and departmental planning. These deficiencies have now been rectified and the leadership and management of the department are good. Documentation is very thorough and assessment is used well to monitor pupils' progress. The subject makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development, especially in the area of multicultural understanding. ICT is being developed well but there are few opportunities at present for pupils to visit sites of religious interest.
95. Overall good progress has been made since the previous inspection. This is now a strong department, well poised for further development. The recent full-course GCSE results are particularly commendable.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall, and standards are improving significantly.
- There is a need to develop common practices and a whole department ethos.
- Assessment practices in Years 7 to 9 are not consistent.
- The use of ICT in coursework varies, and CAD CAM is underdeveloped.

Commentary

96. In 2003 GCSE results were well below average overall and performance in contributory subjects varied widely. In 2004, early indications are that examination standards have risen significantly overall. Improvements in resistant materials and textiles mean that subject performance is generally more even, but remain lower in graphic products. Assessment indicates that standards are broadly average in Year 9.
97. By the end of Year 9, standards of work seen are average. Pupils' experiences on entry to the school are very varied and overall below average; achievement is therefore good. In food technology, standards are improved by the use of very good pupil workbooks, which underpin pupils' knowledge and understanding, and improve work organisation. Across the department there are differences of expectation in the application of graphic techniques to communicate and clarify ideas, in the development and annotation of designs, and in evaluation. This means that standards vary. In a good food technology lesson, pupils were working towards a mini-enterprise assignment. This is not unique, and the department contributes well to the school enterprise culture. The organisation of teaching groups and departmental support for individuals mean that all pupils achieve equally well.
98. By the end of Year 11, standards of work seen are broadly average overall, and achievement is, therefore, satisfactory. Improvements are taking place such as the application of CAD (computer-aided design); focused teacher deployment and coursework monitoring are beginning to improve the attainment of boys. All pupils now achieve equally well. In food

technology, expectations are high and coursework is well monitored and organised into units of work. In electronics, pupils utilise modelling techniques well when they develop their circuits. In general, prototyping techniques are not used sufficiently.

99. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 are good overall. In Years 7 to 9, there are differences across the department in expectations and terminology, which affect pupils' perception of the design and technology process. Assessment of work is variable, and not related closely enough to National Curriculum levels. The short manageable tasks in the emerging Key Stage 3 Strategy are maintaining interest and lesson pace. Teachers develop good relationships with pupils in all years, and this is helping with boys' attainment. In Years 10 and 11, assessment practice is more secure. Regular review and verbal feedback to pupils are not sufficiently matched with written targets linked to shared examination board criteria in all subjects. The increasing application of CAD, is not matched by opportunities for CAM (computer-aided manufacture), and this is partly responsible for a lack of progress in graphic products standards. The quality, format and style of coursework folders vary with expectations across the department.
100. Leadership is good. The department has identified and implemented strategies to impact on teaching and learning, and standards are rising. Day-to-day management is satisfactory, but co-ordination of the two areas has yet to impact on the implementation of common and shared good practice. Good attention is paid to health and safety. ICT facilities are inadequate for class groups and this leads to varied application. CAD CAM in particular are underdeveloped. The computer control element of systems and control is not delivered. Some rooms are being used at the limit of their capacity. The department offers opportunities in a range of courses and child development, plus appropriate entry-level vocational courses, such as building and motor vehicle studies.
101. Improvements have been satisfactory overall since the last inspection. Textiles is now integrated into Years 7 to 9 teaching, and standards in resistant materials have now improved. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved, but poor attendance and lack of ability with theory work still depress standards. There are still issues related to the management structure in the department which need to be resolved, and ICT and CAD CAM resources are still limited.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE examination results are very good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The achievement of pupils is good.
- Girls are outperforming boys significantly.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT.
- The department is well led and managed.

Commentary

102. At the end of Year 9, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above is below the national average. At this age girls are performing significantly better than boys. This gap is bigger than that experienced nationally.
103. Over the last few years the percentage of pupils achieving a GCSE grade A*-C has been consistently above the national average and was well above average in 2004. Girls dominate

the top two grades and outperform boys significantly. Pupils perform better in art and design than they do in their other GCSE subjects.

104. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are in line with the national average. Pupils are able to successfully use the basic elements of art and design in both two and three-dimensional media. Standards of research and the use of colour are above the national average, but drawing is generally below the national average.
105. Standards of work seen in Year 11 sketchbooks are below national average but the standard of completed artwork is above the national average. All pupils use research and critical studies effectively and are able to incorporate new ideas and techniques successfully into their own work. Standards of drawing are below the national average for all pupils at this age.
106. Pupils' experience of art and design at primary school varies considerably. In general, however, standards on entry to the school are below the national average. However, as a result of good teaching within a wide and varied curriculum the achievement of pupils of all abilities from Year 7 to Year 9 is good. Good achievement of all pupils continues on GCSE courses but very few boys are opting to study the subject at this level.
107. The quality of teaching is good. Most lessons seen were either good or very good and only one lesson was judged unsatisfactory. Lesson objectives are clearly communicated to pupils and new skills and techniques are demonstrated effectively to the whole class. Pupils benefit from carefully structured and timed lessons, which ensure pace, challenge and a variety of activity.
108. Pupils of all abilities benefit from individual and small group support. Teachers make effective reference to the work of famous artists and other cultures, resulting in new techniques being successfully incorporated into the pupils' own work. Classroom resources and art materials are carefully selected and prepared. However, ICT is not used for art making or image development.
109. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department leads by example. She has a clear vision of how overall provision will be improved as well as how the subject can make its contribution to whole-school priorities. Carefully planned schemes of work ensure a good coverage of the National Curriculum and the department has achieved Artsmark status. Limited resource allocation and a lack of teacher expertise are acting as barriers to the use of ICT to produce art. Data on the performance of pupils within groups is not analysed and, therefore, is not informing teaching or curriculum planning. Teaching performance and standards are not monitored rigorously enough and teachers do not have clear targets for improvement. The department provides additional teaching after school and organises a successful annual GSCE exhibition. Pupils benefit from working alongside visiting artists.
110. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards have improved and the department now offers a more broad and balanced curriculum.

Drama

The provision in drama was not inspected in detail but some lessons were seen.

111. The teaching of drama is an asset to the curriculum. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teaching of drama not only broadens the curriculum, but also improves standards because pupils are able to transfer the skills they have learned into other subject areas. Teaching and learning emphasise decision-making skills and provide opportunities for pupils to think for themselves. Pupils learn well overall because the lessons are well prepared and they enjoy the subject. Emphasis on varied activities, personal development and collaborative work enhances the enjoyment and motivation of the pupils. In a Year 7 lesson and a Year 9 lesson, preparations and presentations were thorough and skilful. This was because of the high

expectations of the teacher and carefully targeted lesson planning. A wide range of extra-curricular activities contributes to the positive ethos of the school.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in Years 10 and 11 as a result of very good teaching.
- Music technology resources are very good and are used effectively to enhance pupils' composing skills.
- Assessment procedures in Years 7 to 9 are not clear enough in helping pupils to understand what is expected and how to improve the standard of their work.
- The range of the extra-curricular provision is good and contributes significantly to pupils' personal development.

Commentary

112. GCSE results for 2003 were well above the national average for A*-C grades. Since the previous inspection results have been consistent. In 2004 fewer pupils achieved the higher grades but pupils achieved well in relation to their prior attainment.
113. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils are developing their composing skills well and show good knowledge and understanding of musical elements and devices. In group work they perform with an awareness of others but their instrumental skills are less well developed. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with varied previous musical experiences and have below average skills overall. However, with the benefit of good teaching pupils achieve well by the end of Year 9.
114. Standards of work seen in Year 11 are above average. Pupils' listening and appraising skills are good. They show good knowledge and understanding of musical elements and the characteristics of different musical periods. They compose well-structured and coherent pieces using music technology. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well in Years 10 and 11 as a result of very good teaching and the extra support provided after school, and because most receive instrumental or singing lessons.
115. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Pupils learn well and make good progress in their music lessons because teachers have high expectations. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Lessons are well planned and pupils are helped to achieve the musical learning objectives through the effective use of well-chosen resources and varied musical activities that integrate composing, performing and listening. However, lesson planning does not always address the needs of pupils of different musical abilities sufficiently well. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use their musical skills effectively to clarify learning points. Questioning is used well to check pupils' knowledge and understanding and to reinforce the learning of technical music vocabulary. Homework is being used more effectively to reinforce learning than at the time of the previous inspection. Relationships are good and pupils behave well and show good attitudes towards their work.
116. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The head of department has high expectations and a clear drive for improvement. However, departmental self-evaluation could be more rigorous, particularly with regard to the analysis of assessment data to develop strategies for further improvement. Teamwork is strong and there is a consistency of approach. The department provides good extra-curricular provision that includes a range of instrumental and singing tuition, music ensembles, performance opportunities and regular visits to the theatre and concerts. These contribute significantly to the pupils' personal development as well as to the further development of their musical learning.
117. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The music accommodation has been much improved and is now satisfactory. However, some further work, including

refurbishment, is required to make better use of the area behind the ground floor classroom. Although there has been some improvement in assessment procedures in Years 7 to 9, assessment criteria are still not clear enough for pupils to understand what is expected and how to achieve at a higher level. ICT resources are now very good and are being used effectively to develop pupils' musical learning and to enhance their composing skills.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning throughout the department is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Every teacher shows a high level of commitment.
- Extra-curricular sporting provision is very good.
- Dance is still not catered for sufficiently well.

Commentary

118. Pupils achieve well in examinations and numbers taking courses have been consistent over the last few years. In the 2003 GCSE examinations the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades was above the national average on the long course. Results for the short course were disappointing, being attributed to poor attendance and a failure to complete coursework. In the 2004 examinations every pupil entered achieved a grade A*-C whether taking the long or the short course. Numbers of pupils taking the examination increased this year. Consistently good results are undoubtedly due to the hard work of teachers who monitor progress effectively and keep pupils well informed about how their work can be improved. The provision of a short course for pupils with low levels of literacy is very effective. The results of tests at the end of Year 9 indicate good achievement when compared to the average and below average ability of the majority of pupils on entry to the school. They show that pupils work hard and have very positive attitudes to their work. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for. Although work is not always specifically planned for them they are not disadvantaged by this. They are very well supported by teachers and their peers and make good progress.
119. Standards are broadly average between Years 7 and 9 but improve to above average by the time pupils are ready to move into the upper school. Standards in badminton are particularly high and have improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils display very good hand and eye co-ordination and they have a good understanding of the skills required to improve their game. Pupils show high standards of work on the trampoline with some individuals displaying outstanding talent. The same applies to gymnastics where both boys and girls are capable of producing exceptional work. As pupils move through the school, their standards in hockey and rugby improve and most pupils display very mature attitudes to their work.
120. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve standards that are often above average. They are able to pass accurately in football and move well off the ball in order to create space. Most pupils begin to incorporate twists and rotations into their trampoline sequences, showing very good awareness of safety. Boys and girls play equally well in hockey. Their stick work is often good and blocking techniques are effectively demonstrated. Although no theory lessons were observed it is clear from looking at pupils' GCSE work that they develop a good understanding of the body and the way it works. They work hard to produce high quality theoretical as well as practical work, although low literacy skills adversely affect the progress that some pupils are able to make.

121. Teaching is very good throughout the school. Subject knowledge is very secure and there is a high level of commitment to raising standards. All teachers are very good disciplinarians and class control is very strong. Very well planned lessons provide pupils with opportunities to evaluate their own efforts as well as those of others. Planning to identify specific tasks and resources for pupils with special educational needs is strong. Teachers' expectations are high, which result in pupils improving their performance as they move through the school. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils lead to high levels of enjoyment and commitment to high standards. Pupils with particular talents are encouraged to extend their learning not only in school but through the provision of specialist help out of school.
122. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The quality of information and accompanying schemes of work is excellent. Members of the department are very good role models and as such they encourage all pupils to be correctly and smartly dressed for their activities. Teachers are committed to providing a wide range of extra-curricular activities which pupils are keen to attend. As well as achieving good results in inter-school competitions a significantly high proportion of pupils both past and present have progressed to county, area and national teams where they have enjoyed considerable success. Progress since the last inspection has been good but the curriculum remains unbalanced by the continued lack of provision for dance.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business education

Provision in business education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is successfully embedding the business and enterprise ethos and entitlement in Years 7 to 9.
- There is no assessment and evaluation framework for the enterprise provision.
- Standards at age 16 are above national expectations.
- Pupils achieve well and good value is added.
- There is good teaching from a dedicated team.
- Leadership and management are good but the current structure places major burdens on management.
- Weak literacy skills restrict pupils' progress.

Commentary

123. The school received designated Business and Enterprise status in 2003. A major objective of that status, namely to embed a business and enterprise ethos and entitlement for all pupils, has been effectively achieved for many pupils in Years 8 and 9, who have discrete lessons in the subject. A wide variety of business and enrichment activities, such as a business master-class, effectively underpin this provision.
124. By Year 9, pupils know and understand the enterprise process and effectively engage in courses of study in personal economics and business projects. There is insufficient data to make comparisons in terms of national standards. Nevertheless, the current cohort of pupils have clearly made good progress, both in terms of knowledge and understanding, from the low levels of attainment which they had at entry to the school.
125. Standards at the end of Year 11 are above average. The results of the applied GCSE course in 2004, with a small cohort, were disappointing. Results in GCSE examinations, and the work seen in class and in pupils' files, are above national levels. Boys' attainment is better than that found nationally and all boys attained well in comparison with their results in most other

subjects. Girls attain standards in line with national figures. The strength of the pupils' class work is their basic understanding of the subject matter and their steady accumulation of knowledge, which is well organised in their files. Pupils confidently deal with business concepts and apply appropriate business terminology effectively. For example, in a Year 11 class on production methods, pupils successfully and appropriately used expressions such as 'appropriate productivity' when discussing the merits and demerits of 'batch' and 'flow' production methods.

126. From a baseline attainment at entry to the course in Year 10, which is average, pupils' achievement is good, particularly in the maturation of their understanding of business concepts. Weak literacy skills, which are common in most pupils, restrict even higher achievement.
127. Teaching is good. Teachers form a committed team and they know their subject well. The best lessons are characterised by pace and challenge. Where lessons are satisfactory, teachers do not always have sufficient strategies to engage the more challenging pupils. Good use is made of both formal and informal assessment and pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work, thus providing a firm basis for learning. Learning is mostly good and reflects the good teaching, which takes pupils' knowledge and understanding to a deep level. Pupils' response is nearly always good, although some pupils, mainly lower attaining boys, do not always behave in a manner conducive to work and this affects their learning adversely.
128. The curriculum is wide and enriching. Resources are good. The department has a range of effective textbooks and there is good access to ICT. Accommodation is good. Staffing levels are good. The recently appointed newly qualified teachers give an in-depth strength, as specialists, to the work of the department.
129. Leadership and management are good. The head of department, who is also head of ICT, has overseen the production of appropriate documents, which deal effectively with most aspects of the work of the department. However, there is no assessment and evaluation framework for the enterprise provision in Years 7 to 9. In all his work, he is very well supported by his colleagues, particularly the business and enterprise college manager and the community manager, who in turn, support each other. All three provide very good role models for a department committed to high standards. Nevertheless, the current management structure places major burdens on all of them.
130. Business education was not reported on in the previous report, but the results continue to show good achievement year on year.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many teachers try hard to deliver acceptable lessons in difficult circumstances.
- The co-ordination and management of PSHE are unsatisfactory and have an adverse effect on pupils' learning.
- Unsatisfactory teaching results in pupils making insufficient gains in knowledge and understanding of important issues.
- PSHE lessons make an insufficient contribution towards pupils' personal development.

Commentary

131. The organisation of the curriculum has negative effects on teaching and learning in PSHE. Teachers are selected to teach PSHE if they have a suitable gap in their timetable. Many teachers try hard to deliver acceptable lessons but a large number deliver PSHE lessons without the skills and subject knowledge that are necessary to promote good learning. Expectations are often low and pupils are not challenged to think for themselves. The range of teaching strategies and methods is limited, resulting in some pupils becoming bored and pupils sometimes lose concentration. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop social skills such as collaboration and co-operation. Too many lessons have a significant reading or writing element that pupils find onerous and difficult, yet little work is done within PSHE lessons to develop literacy skills and skills in speaking and listening. Although there are some visiting speakers the numbers are low and opportunities are missed to add interest and expert knowledge to the programme.
132. There is lack of guidance for teachers regarding exactly what is taught to whom and at what time. This, together with ineffective monitoring, results in there being no assurance that all pupils have access to the same curriculum and a good quality of experience. Some pupils experience repetition of work and other pupils miss important elements, such as sex education. Teachers often deliver lessons in unsuitable classrooms that place unacceptable restrictions on the range of activities that can take place. Current arrangements do not guarantee that statutory requirements are being met regarding drug and sex education.
133. Inadequate consideration has been given to the connection between PSHE and improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The co-ordination and management of PSHE were identified as unsatisfactory in the previous report and remain so. A lack of formal monitoring of teaching, together with an absence of training, have contributed towards unsatisfactory teaching and learning.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The lack of a regular co-ordinator during the last two years has resulted in the National Curriculum requirements not being fully implemented.
- Statutory requirements for assessing pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 and for reporting to parents are not being met.
- Teachers have not received adequate training.
- Geography and history departments clearly identify opportunities for pupils to learn about citizenship in their schemes of work.

Commentary

134. Citizenship is taught within the PSHE programme. At the time of the inspection the co-ordinator for citizenship had been in post for only a few days.
135. During the inspection there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the standards pupils achieve by the end of Years 9 and 11 because there was a lack of work in pupils' folders, and citizenship modules were only being taught in Year 10.
136. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in the lessons seen. Pupils made satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of the topic through discussion but they were not always sufficiently challenged.
137. Since citizenship became statutory from September 2002, there has been no regular co-ordinator and, as a result, the requirements for the implementation of citizenship have not been met. A scheme of work, showing when and how citizenship is to be covered, with sufficient

time allocation and depth of coverage, and linking the three strands, is not fully in place. Some subjects, such as geography and history, clearly identify opportunities for pupils to learn about citizenship in their schemes of work but there is a lack of consistency across subjects. Teachers are mostly non-specialists, who have not received adequate training, and teaching and learning have not been regularly or adequately monitored because of the large number of teachers involved.

138. There are no procedures in place for assessing and recording pupils' achievement and progress. Pupils' attainment has not been assessed at the end of Year 9 and pupils' progress has not been reported to parents. This means that the school is not meeting its statutory requirements for citizenship.
139. Citizenship was not inspected at the time of the previous inspection but progress during the last two years has been unsatisfactory. The school has identified the weaknesses in its improvement plan and must now ensure that these are addressed in practice.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4

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

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

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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