

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CANTELL SCHOOL**

Southampton

LEA area: Southampton

Unique reference number: 116469

Headteacher: Ruth Johnson

Lead inspector: R Peter J McGregor

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 268365

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1217
School address:	Violet Road Bassett Southampton Hampshire
Postcode:	SO16 3GJ
Telephone number:	02380 323111
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Alan Hunt
Date of previous inspection:	1 <sup>st</sup> February 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cantell is a comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 16, to the east of Southampton. It has specialist college status, gained in September 2003, for mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). It is larger than most secondary schools, with 1217 pupils. Although pupils of a wide range of ability attend the school, overall standards are below average at the start of Year 7. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is just under a fifth, which is high. Around a quarter of pupils have special educational needs mostly social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, which is above average. Four pupils have Statements of need which is well below the national average. The school includes a specialist 26-place unit for pupils with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia), most of whom do not have Statements. The school serves a socially mixed area, including some districts with significant deprivation. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals, at 19.2 per cent, is above the national average. A higher than average proportion of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Twenty-five pupils are refugees or asylum seekers. The community is able to make extensive use of school facilities. In September 2003, the school moved to completely new accommodation, built on the same site as the original. During the period of construction the school suffered significant disruption as the old buildings were demolished and the school re-housed in temporary accommodation on the same site. The school has difficulties recruiting and retaining staff.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3525	P McGregor	Lead inspector	Science
9537	C Marden	Lay inspector	
32278	D Roberts	Team inspector	English
33018	A Read	Team inspector	Maths
18178	I Matthews	Team inspector	
32231	A Lyons	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
33135	K Ropek	Team inspector	Art and design
30973	G Hancock	Team inspector	Design and technology
25073	S Jordan	Team inspector	History Religious education
2496	T O'Sullivan	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language
8104	J Child	Team inspector	Music
22042	J Challands	Team inspector	Geography
7926	J Bowden	Team inspector	Physical education Citizenship
19352	K Campbell-Platt	Team inspector	Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>12</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>39</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Cantell's headteacher had been in post for only three weeks at the time of the inspection. She has a clear vision for future improvement and has begun to take firm, positive action. **The effectiveness of what the school provides currently is poor.** Although many pupils' progress is satisfactory or better, standards overall are lower than they should be in national tests and lessons. Achievement is unsatisfactory, particularly in Years 10 and 11, mainly through poor attendance, pupils' misconduct and unsatisfactory teaching. School managers have not resolved serious issues that prevent pupils from doing their best. The school provides poor value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- The behaviour of many pupils in and out of lessons is unacceptable; staff supervision is poor
- Though some teaching is good, engaging and challenging pupils to achieve well, too often it is unsatisfactory and teachers do not match work to pupils' needs or manage disruptive behaviour
- Pupils' current achievements are good in the resourced unit and in some subjects, including English, but unsatisfactory in many, including maths and science
- Attendance is poor and some pupils truant during lessons. Procedures for checking on this are not routinely followed
- The school collects, and makes increasing use of, a range of data on pupils' attainment and potential but generally it is not yet used effectively to influence teaching and to guide pupils
- Statutory requirements are not fully met for pupils with special educational needs and for religious education and ICT. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship

**Improvement since the last inspection is poor.** Key issues for action have not been satisfactorily resolved. Some progress has been made in ensuring that pupils are taught ICT effectively, but other statutory breaches remain. Teaching and learning have not been monitored well enough and are now unsatisfactory. Recent improvements to assessment systems have not yet had sufficient impact on pupils' learning. Standards generally are lower, despite some improvement in maths and modern languages. Many areas of school life are less successful now than reported five years ago.

***In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.***

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations (using capped average GCSE points scores) at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	N/a	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.*

**Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall** at the end of Years 9 and 11. Results in English, maths and science at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were below average overall and well below the average for schools taking pupils of a similar ability into Year 7. Results for 2004 showed a slight improvement. Current standards show achievement to be good in English, but unsatisfactory in maths and science. The trend in results at the end of Year 11 has been downwards. Results at GCSE were below average in 2003 and lower in 2004. Although the similar school comparison was above average in 2003, this was based on schools with low Year 9 test scores in 2001. Overall, results indicate underachievement. Many pupils are currently working at below expected standards, given their attainment on entry to the school. In all years, variation in pupils' achievement reflects inconsistencies in

teaching quality. Specialist support for pupils with English as an additional language and some with special educational needs results in their satisfactory or better progress. Other pupils with special needs underachieve because teachers are not aware of their particular needs. Higher attaining pupils generally do better than their peers because work is suitable for them. Pupils' skills in using language, ICT and mathematics are underdeveloped. **Pupils' personal qualities are poor; their social, moral and spiritual development is unsatisfactory.** The school promotes good cultural awareness and the level of racial harmony is good. Many pupils' poor attendance and lateness or truanting from lessons shows poor commitment to work. The number of temporary and permanent exclusions in the past year has been exceptionally high and unacceptable. A significant minority of pupils behave in a way that disrupts many pupils' learning and a few cause serious bullying problems in the school community. Decisive action is being taken to tackle this.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides an unsatisfactory quality of education. Teaching is unsatisfactory** overall because it does not result in pupils learning effectively. With the additional factor of misbehaviour, pupils' learning is sometimes worse than teaching. A core of teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and plan work carefully to suit pupils, whereas other teaching has weaknesses in these areas. Assessment is not carried out consistently but systems are better for younger pupils. The curriculum is broad and balanced but does not meet all statutory requirements and is therefore unsatisfactory. Pupils have access to a range of activities as part of community provision. The unit for pupils with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) is very effective. Accommodation is good. Staffing and resources are unsatisfactory. Support and guidance for pupils is unsatisfactory, mainly because tutor time is not used effectively, and some health and safety issues remain to be tackled. The school's partnership with parents has not achieved a positive, shared approach to improving pupils' performance and attendance.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are poor.** Too little has been done to tackle barriers to improvement or to build on potential strengths, such as specialist college status. The headteacher's clear vision for the future is based on an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors have not done enough to hold the school to account for its decline, nor have they ensured that the school complies with all statutory requirements. Governance is currently unsatisfactory but governors are fully supportive of the headteacher's plans for action. Although some senior and middle managers have not focused on appropriate priorities, others have a clear view of what is needed and have already begun to move in the right direction.

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

Parents are mainly positive about teachers' efforts and enthusiasm and say that their children are generally happy at school. Meeting and questionnaire responses showed serious concerns about behaviour and bullying and poor communication, both of children's progress, and occasionally when parents had reported serious issues. Pupils were similarly concerned that bad behaviour was inhibiting their progress, particularly in Years 10 and 11. However, a high proportion of pupils also felt that the school was a good place to be. Overall the inspection team agree with concerns and positive views.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Establish a clear behaviour management policy, applied consistently by all staff, with mechanisms for dealing with bullying and for adequate staff supervision during breaks and lunch times
- Improve effectiveness of monitoring, particularly of maths, science and ICT, to raise achievement
- Strengthen leadership, management and governance, so that all in the school community are working towards clear, common goals
- Deal with attendance and truancy issues by applying current policies systematically and rigorously
- Develop the systems of assessment so that information is used to help pupils raise standards

and to comply with statutory requirements

- Ensure requirements for the teaching and learning of ICT and religious education are met
- Ensure that teachers have necessary information about pupils' special educational needs
- Provide a daily act of collective worship



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

The attainment of pupils when they join the school is below average overall. Results in national assessments were below average at the end of Year 9 in 2003 and were well below those of similar schools. There was some improvement in 2004. Results in GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003 were below the national average, though above average compared with schools which had similarly low performance at the end of Year 9. In 2004 the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades C or above declined from the 2003 figure. Current standards are below average and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.

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

- Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall in mathematics, science and ICT. In Years 10 and 11, it is unsatisfactory in religious education, geography, history and design and technology
- Pupils do well in English, art, music and physical education
- Most pupils with special needs do not achieve as well as they could because teachers do not have the information they need to plan appropriate support
- Pupils at an early stage of learning English and those with special educational needs, who receive specialist support, do well because of the dedicated teaching they receive
- Pupils' competence in language and literacy, mathematical skills and ICT is below average

#### **Commentary**

1. Results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below average in English, and below average in mathematics and science. The school did not meet its ambitious targets. Results in 2004, when compared with the results of 2003, show an improvement in English, a smaller improvement in mathematics and similar results for science. English results are lower than those of both mathematics and science. Over time, results have been below the national results but generally matched the upward trend. Boys do relatively better than girls and the difference between the boys' results and the national averages is less than it is for girls.
2. Current standards of work in Year 9 remain below average overall. Pupils achieve well in English because of the good teaching. They enter the school with weaknesses in literacy, and standards in English are now in line with national expectations. In mathematics, higher attaining pupils do well but weaknesses in teaching are preventing some other pupils from doing as well as they could. Pupils' achievement in mathematics, science and ICT is unsatisfactory because they do not make the progress expected and standards are below average. However because of the dedicated teaching which pupils are now receiving in ICT, there are indications that standards are rising. In physical education, art, music and religious education, pupils achieve well because of good teaching. In other subjects, pupils are making satisfactory progress, achieving as expected, considering their starting points. There was little difference between what boys and girls achieved in the work seen, indicating that differences in results over time are likely to reflect the relative abilities of candidates and variation in subject choices at GCSE.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31 (32.6)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	34.4 (33.7)	35.4 (34.7)
science	32.6 (31.4)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 245 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. In 2003 the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A\* to C was below the national average. The proportion gaining five or more grades A\* to G was also below average, although the proportion gaining 1 or more A\* to G was average. Results in 2004 have declined. The school fell well short of its targets, particularly for the proportion of pupils targeted to achieve five or more A\* to C grades. The boy:girl difference is similar to that at the end of Year 9, where boys are closer to the national average for boys than the girls are to their national average. Over the past four years the trend has been downwards, compared with a rise in national figures over the same period.
4. Results showed considerable variation between subjects. English results were well below the national average in 2003 but were higher in 2004. Science results were below average in 2003 and slightly lower in 2004. Mathematics results were below average in 2003 but showed some improvement in 2004. In most other subjects, 2003 results were below average; art and design were average, textiles and music were above average as were some modern languages. Results in modern foreign languages show considerable variation between years. Relative to other subjects, art and design was the strongest subject and English the weakest. Girls' and boys' performance varies from subject to subject.
5. Pupils do not make the progress expected from Year 9 to the end of Year 11. Standards now in Years 10 and 11 in most subjects are relatively lower than those at the end of Year 9. This reflects the less effective learning in those years, which has as its main causes the behaviour of pupils and unsatisfactory teaching. Overall achievement is unsatisfactory. An exception is the standards of those pupils in the higher sets, where often they are above average and achievement is good. Standards in English are still below average, but pupils are now making good progress due to the improvements in teaching. Mathematics and science standards are below average, in spite of the success of pupils in the higher sets, and overall achievement is unsatisfactory. ICT standards are below average and achievement unsatisfactory, reflecting the unsatisfactory teaching and learning of pupils in this subject over time. Standards in modern foreign languages are average overall and achievement satisfactory. Pupils in the GCSE religious education groups also achieve satisfactorily. Pupils are achieving well in art and design, music and physical education but in other subjects achievement is unsatisfactory.

***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	39 (41)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	85 (79)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (91)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	30.8 (30.1)	34.7 (34.8)

*There were 232 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

6. Pupils in the higher sets and those who are gifted and talented generally achieve better and reach standards at least in line with their capabilities. Good provision is made for these pupils, such as additional languages, early entry and extension work for some subjects. Pupils with English as an additional language show satisfactory achievement; those who are at an early stage of learning English often achieve well because of the additional specialist support they receive. Refugee pupils, notably those of Somali origin, are supported by a part-time specialist and make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs also do well if they are taught by the specialist support staff. Generally,

however, the far greater numbers of pupils with special needs, who do not receive this support, do not do as well as expected because specific information on their needs is not shared sufficiently with teachers.

7. Standards of English language and literacy are below average. Some subjects, such as religious education do focus on developing literacy skills, but the absence until recently of a whole-school co-ordinator, has inhibited overall progress. Competence in ICT is below average; subjects do not have sufficient access to computers, although in art and music provision and use is good. The co-ordination and development of mathematical competence across the school is unsatisfactory.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are poor. Their personal development is unsatisfactory overall. Promotion of cultural awareness and understanding is good. For social, moral and spiritual development provision is unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The disruptive behaviour of a significant minority of pupils is having a detrimental effect on many pupils' learning
- A few pupils cause serious bullying problems in the school community
- The poor attendance of many pupils contributes to their underachievement. School systems for dealing with this are not yet fully implemented
- Many pupils enjoy coming to the school and appreciate how it tries to provide for them
- Pupils feel that the new headteacher is taking effective action against bullying
- The school successfully promotes racial harmony and celebrates other cultures

### Commentary

8. Behaviour and attendance have declined markedly since the last inspection, as has the provision for personal development.
9. Behaviour around the school site is poor and is not helped by insufficient social areas for pupils to congregate in and a lack of supervision by staff at break and lunch times. Pupils are boisterous, pushing and shoving on staircases. Some are openly defiant of teachers. Most pupils do not like the atmosphere at break times and resent pupils whose behaviour disrupts their lessons. The poor attitudes and behaviour in lessons affects the achievements of all pupils in those lessons. A minority of pupils are rude to their teachers, do not listen, call out and refuse to cooperate. In contrast there are pupils who take a pride in their work and are keen to do well.
10. Many pupils spoken to felt that bullying was a serious problem and that it was not effectively dealt with. However some said that they have confidence in the new headteacher to deal with incidents decisively. School records show that the school has taken allegations of bullying seriously and has thoroughly investigated them, provided support for the victim and put in place strategies and sanctions to stop the bullying behaviour. In some cases this has been successful and pupils accept this, but it has not been enough to take away the fear of intimidation.
11. In the questionnaire responses and in the meetings with pupils, many demonstrated mature attitudes to learning. They were keen to do well and appreciated the efforts that the school was making to help them do their best.
12. Many pupils have a low attendance record. In the last year, about one third of pupils had less than 90 per cent attendance and in the first three weeks of this term it was nearly half the pupils. In addition to this, punctuality is poor.

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2002-2003)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.2%	School data	1.3%
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.*

13. For the year 2003-04 the unauthorised absence figure increased substantially to 2.1 per cent. The reasons for the high level of absence are a combination of the pupils' attitudes to school, some parents condoning absence and the school not stringently applying the procedures for monitoring attendance. The school has invested in a computerised registration system which should allow the school to pick up absences quickly throughout the day as pupils' attendance at each lesson should be recorded. However, not all teachers do this and discrepancies are not regularly picked up. Consequently pupils can be found hiding in stairwells and around the site when they should be in lessons. This problem is compounded by teachers sending pupils out of class who then move freely around the site.

14. The level of temporary exclusions last year was exceptionally high. The total number of exclusions for the year 2002-2003 (as shown in the table below) was 150 and involved 84 pupils. Last year there were 309 temporary exclusions for 139 pupils. These exclusions have not been successful in improving the behaviour in the school. In the current term, a suitably rigorous approach has been applied to exclusions, both permanent and temporary, using them judiciously to try to minimise inappropriate behaviour.

***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	942	132	1
White – Irish	5		
White – any other White background	26		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	17	10	
Mixed – White and Black African	7		
Mixed – White and Asian	26	2	
Mixed – any other mixed background	18	1	
Asian or Asian British – Indian	84	5	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	26		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	15		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	16		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4		
Black or Black British – African	13		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1		
Chinese	7		
Any other ethnic group	10		

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

15. Provision for social and moral development is patchy with some good examples in religious education lessons, where teachers strongly promote the need to respect others' views, and in geography, where moral issues relating to the environment are examined. In many lessons, pupils are encouraged to work together and this is particularly successful in physical education where pupils look after each other as well as working together. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility in the school community through being prefects, school councillors or peer supporters and pupils take these responsibilities seriously. The inconsistent application of the school's behaviour policy results in unsatisfactory promotion of moral and social development overall.
16. Very few moments of spirituality were seen during the inspection with pupils having few opportunities to reflect on issues in depth. The school is not meeting its obligations to provide a daily act of collective worship. It has been successful in developing a community that is racially harmonious through celebrating different religions and cultures throughout the curriculum. Great thought is given to how topics should be introduced to pupils so that racial stereotypes and misunderstandings are avoided.

17. A significant number of pupils have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some of these pupils have pastoral support plans and are guided and supported by the teachers in the school Inclusion Unit and from the LEA pupil support services. Instances of poor behaviour seen in lessons show that, in many cases, these pupils' attitudes are poor. Teachers are not given sufficient guidance about the management of such pupils or the nature of the work they should be doing.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is unsatisfactory. Teaching overall is unsatisfactory and so is the curriculum because of areas that are not meeting statutory requirements. Accommodation is good, the new buildings having made a significant impact on the quality of the main teaching areas. Staffing and resources are unsatisfactory. Arrangements for pupils' pastoral support and guidance are unsatisfactory. Problems with the management of the site, beyond the immediate control of the headteacher, result in issues of health and safety not being dealt with as quickly as they should be. Links with parents are not effective enough; they are satisfactory with other schools and colleges, and good with the local community.

#### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 are unsatisfactory overall. In over one third of lessons, the attitudes and behaviour of a significant number of pupils have a detrimental effect on other pupils' learning, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Some unsatisfactory teaching and learning was observed in most subjects. Good and very good teaching observed in a number of lessons enabled pupils to make effective progress. The school lacks an appropriate whole-school strategy for managing pupil behaviour in the classroom. Poor pupil attendance and punctuality also contribute to unsatisfactory learning. Assessment of pupils' progress is improving but use of recorded information is currently unsatisfactory.

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

- In too many lessons, work is not matched to pupils' needs and inadequate management of pupils' behaviour results in unsatisfactory learning and achievement
- Some subject teams have developed a consistent approach to lesson planning and class management which results in a higher proportion of good teaching and learning
- Most teachers do not make good use of their knowledge of pupils' performance

#### **Commentary**

##### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 149 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (0.7%)	19 (12.7%)	58 (38.9%)	42 (28.2%)	25 (16.8%)	3 (2.0%)	1 (0.7%)

*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.*

18. Teaching and learning have significantly deteriorated since the last inspection. They are good in English, physical education, music and art in all years and in religious education in Years 7 to 9. In mathematics, science and ICT they are unsatisfactory throughout the school, and in geography in Years 10 and 11. In other subjects the quality observed was satisfactory. The quality of teaching is similar to the quality of learning in Years 7, 8 and 9, with around four in every five lessons observed being satisfactory or better. In Years 10 and 11, although teaching was slightly better, learning was worse mainly due to the increased problems caused by the unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of some pupils. In all subjects, some good lessons resulted in pupils learning well.
19. Where the teaching is good or better, teachers have good subject knowledge and enable pupils to acquire new skills and understanding. Lessons often follow a successful three-part format of a clear introduction, followed by a range of activities and finishing with a summarising session. The pupils have a clear understanding of the behaviour expected by the teacher. The quality of teaching was

generally much better in lessons for more able pupils. In the subjects where leadership is well established, staff teams plan well and usually manage pupils' behaviour well. Teaching and learning are more effective as a result and help pupils achieve well in those subjects.

20. In a number of lessons, the work set is not well matched to the pupils' prior knowledge or their capabilities. In these lessons, pupils often misbehave and teachers have difficulty in ensuring pupils learn effectively. Although teachers have adequate subject knowledge, they are often unsure about the strategies for managing pupil behaviour. Expectations of what is acceptable are inconsistent. Several subject teams do not follow a consistent approach to the management of pupil conduct although some individual teachers do employ successful strategies.
21. Late arrival to lessons by individual pupils and significant pupil absence are further contributory factors in unsatisfactory learning and underachievement. Teachers often do not challenge pupils who are late.
22. Homework is set regularly in most classes although the rate of completion is variable and classes were seen where very few pupils had actually completed the work. In most cases, the work is relevant to the topic being studied.
23. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language, including refugees, is satisfactory overall and good when specific help is given. In a Year 11 geography class, for example, where the support teacher had full access to the lesson plan, she provided well-focused guidance. Support teachers have performance data on pupils, but do not always make best use of this to plan how topics should be taught.
24. Gifted and talented pupils are well provided for in some subjects and the school provides a range of additional opportunities to ensure that they are motivated and well taught. Although the school identifies these pupils, there is no monitoring of how well they are doing.
25. Few teachers promote literacy and numeracy in their subject areas. Where this does happen, pupils often benefit from work that suits their capabilities and learning is more effective. Some good use is made of ICT but access to computers is difficult and, overall, pupils' ICT skills are not developed sufficiently in subject lessons.
26. The school has developed a range of good procedures for the measuring and analysis of pupils' performance. Subject departments now have target grades for all pupils but generally insufficient use is made of the information. Most teachers do not use the results of assessments to inform their planning or make adjustments to teaching for individual pupils or groups. The marking of pupils' books is inconsistent and in some subjects, such as geography, books are often left unmarked for long periods. There are, however, examples of good practice. In English, assessment procedures are very good because the results of pupils' assessments are used to adapt the curriculum and modify the teaching to improve pupils' learning. Whilst pupils know how they are doing in most of their subjects, they do not know what they need to do to improve. The assessment of pupils' performance overall is unsatisfactory.
27. Overall, teaching does not cater well enough for pupils with special educational needs. Certain groups, such as those with specific learning difficulties or those with Statements, are well supported, particularly when taught by specialist staff. The successful strategies used by the specialists are not applied consistently across the school by other teachers. For example, work is not modified to meet the pupils' needs. There is no effective system to ensure that subject staff are made aware of those needs. Learning support assistants often provide valuable support in lessons but there is no whole-school plan for their deployment. Assessment is good for those pupils with specific problems where the specialist support is available. For the much larger number of pupils with more general needs, it is inadequate, except in those departments such as physical education and English which have made much progress in adjusting the curriculum and teaching to meet their needs.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but it is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Statutory requirements are not fully met in ICT and in religious education in Years 10 and 11. Provision for enrichment and extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. The quality of accommodation is good, with some very good facilities but also some inadequate features. Resources are unsatisfactory as both access and provision for ICT are inadequate. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum does not meet statutory or local requirements for a daily act of corporate worship, cross-curricular delivery of ICT and religious education for pupils in Years 10 and 11
- The school's curriculum is broad and generally well balanced, although its organisation has created time-tabling difficulties
- Provision is unsatisfactory for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and for pupils with special educational needs
- A significant shortfall in appropriately qualified and experienced staff detracts from pupils' achievements
- Weaknesses in sound-proofing and outdoor areas affect what can be achieved in music and physical education; the site does not have enough social areas where pupils can 'let off steam' at break times

### Commentary

28. Although all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, access to ICT is restricted in most subjects. The time dedicated to PSHE is insufficient to deliver the programme in appropriate detail and planning of the programme does not always ensure that pupils develop the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory because teachers are not made aware of their needs. There is a satisfactory programme for gifted and talented pupils in several areas of the curriculum. This includes some off-site provision at the local sixth form college as well as a range of extra subjects.
29. In Years 10 and 11, in addition to the National Curriculum, a range of courses provides good preparation for many pupils for subsequent stages of their education or for working life. A small number of pupils who have difficulty coping with a full range of GCSEs are able to attend a local college for some of the week. They study a range of vocational courses in preparation for a Certificate in Skills for Working Life. An accelerated learning programme provides opportunities for higher achieving pupils to study AS level maths, three sciences and three options in an English programme. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to study two modern foreign languages. Unfortunately the planning and organisation of these courses, combined with recent banding arrangements, has created overall time-tabling problems and has been one of the reasons for a number of split classes in several curriculum areas. As a result, learning has been impeded.
30. Procedures for monitoring, evaluation and review of the curriculum have not been formalised and are ineffective. The school has no curriculum policy statement. Neither the planning of the curriculum nor its evaluation fully reflect the specific aims and targets set out in the specialist school development plan. The school does not have an appropriate focus on promoting a culture that is sufficiently technological.
31. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory and good in physical education, music and dance, where it has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils also have access to various evening activities as part of the school community programme. Art provides an after-school 'drop in' facility, which is well attended, and some subjects organise special after-school classes.



32. Pupils with English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum. Newcomers at early stages of learning English benefit from a structured induction programme. This is followed by phased integration into mainstream classes with ongoing support as required. This is, however, restricted by the small size of the support team compared with the 63 pupils it is currently supporting.
33. The specialist provision for pupils with specific learning difficulties is effective (see below). However, the absence of a coherent school approach to helping the considerable numbers of other pupils who need support, including effectively managing the work and deployment of the support assistants, means that overall provision is unsatisfactory.
34. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The school has had difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers. Currently, one third are either newly qualified, unqualified, or relatively new to the school. Science does not have a full complement of specialists. Biology teachers greatly outnumber the specialists in physics and chemistry. On a weekly basis, many mathematics and English groups are taught by two different teachers. Some subjects do not have enough support teachers in lessons to help pupils with special educational needs. There is no foreign language assistant.
35. The new school buildings provide good accommodation overall. Subjects have clearly defined areas with suites of rooms that provide good working conditions. Whole-school facilities are very good and include a performance area with tiered seating and a library and resources centre. The facilities for physical education are extensive. However, two thirds of the outdoor facilities were not in use at the time of the inspection because of problems with the tarmac and grass surfaces, and this is limiting what pupils can be taught. Lack of soundproofing affects standards in music. The design of the ICT accommodation, with 'islands' of computers which restrict the teachers' sight lines, makes classroom management difficult. The compact site does not provide enough social areas for pupils or areas where they may safely 'play' during breaks and lunch.
36. Overall, teaching resources are unsatisfactory. Provision of textbooks and equipment is sufficient, with the exception of data loggers in science. Improvements have been made in the availability of computers but have not done enough to reflect the school's specialist status. For example, design technology has insufficient provision for computer-aided design (CAD) and poor access to ICT facilities. The modern foreign languages department has limited access to Internet facilities and this is affecting its curriculum.
37. The curriculum remains broad and generally well balanced but the issues identified five years ago in religious education and ICT have not been resolved sufficiently. What is provided in PSHE and for pupils with special educational needs is not as good as it was at the time of the last report. Overall unsatisfactory progress has been made.

#### **The Resourced Unit for pupils with specific learning difficulty (SpLD)**

38. The resourced unit provision for the 16 pupils with SpLD is very effective in meeting pupils' needs and supporting their achievement across subject areas at both key stages. The unit is generously staffed, with three specialist teachers and a well-trained learning support assistant who also provides in-class support. Pupils get 1:1 support to meet their language and literacy needs. These are generally linked to curriculum areas and pupils are able to complete tasks set by class teachers and are then able to transfer their learning back to the classroom. The unit is well resourced with ICT equipment. Key strengths of the provision are leadership and the management, which has established thorough and effective procedures for assessment, monitoring and evaluating the progress made by pupils so that interventions are well matched to needs. Teachers in the unit show consistency in

approach and offer good guidance to class teachers to ensure that pupils with SpLD are appropriately placed and provided with challenging work. A number of other pupils at the school, with special needs in a range of areas, are also provided with very good support by unit staff.

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

The care of pupils is unsatisfactory overall, though some systems and staff make a positive contribution to pupils' well-being. The school provides unsatisfactory support and guidance to pupils. Pupils are involved satisfactorily in the life of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The supervision of pupils during break and lunchtime is inadequate
- The responsibility for managing aspects of the building and site is such that health and safety issues are not resolved as quickly as they should be
- The support and guidance for pupils' academic and personal progress is inconsistent
- Tutor periods are not used efficiently
- The school has some good procedures to gain pupils' views
- The induction of pupils into Year 7 is well managed

### **Commentary**

39. Care of, and support and guidance for, pupils have deteriorated since the last inspection.
40. The school has good procedures for administering medicines and for first aid. Risk assessments are appropriately carried out for activities in lessons and for outside visits. In contrast to this, the level of supervision at break times is inadequate, with areas of the school out of sight of staff. This contributes to the poor behaviour of some pupils at these times. Several serious health and safety concerns were apparent during the inspection. The headteacher does not have the full management control needed to deal with them. This is resulting in inappropriate delays in the resolution of the problems. The windows can open fully so pupils could fall from a dangerous height. This was brought to the attention of the headteacher during the inspection who immediately arranged for the management company to address the issue. This was started during the inspection but not completed. During the inspection the vending machine in the community centre was vandalised resulting in jagged glass left in the machine. The management company did not effectively deal with this in spite of an inspector raising concerns about the risks to health and safety.
41. The headteacher has taken over the responsibility for child protection this term and has briefed staff so that they all know the procedures. However, because the previous post holder is not currently in school, it is not certain that the headteacher has all the relevant information about the pupils on the child protection register.
42. Tutors stay with their pupils throughout the school and know them well. Most pupils feel they could talk to an adult if they had a problem. The key role of tutors, up to now, has related to behaviour and attendance. This has not been effective. Unauthorised absence is increasing and behaviour has deteriorated since the last inspection. The school is currently developing the role of tutor to include monitoring each pupil's academic progress. Academic review days have been introduced by the new headteacher. Induction procedures for pupils joining the school in Year 7 are good.
43. There is a wide discrepancy between departments as to the quality of support pupils receive to enable them to make good progress. In some subjects, such as English, pupils know what levels they are working at and what they have to do to improve. In other subjects, for example mathematics, pupils' targets vary in their usefulness depending on which teacher they have. There is currently little routine exchange of information between subject teachers and pupils' tutors.
44. Wide variation is also apparent in the support and guidance given to pupils with special educational needs. Sound arrangements identify pupils in need of support when they start in Year 7, using information from feeder schools and baseline assessments. Procedures for monitoring changes in need and dealing with underachievement are not secure as they progress up through the school and, in some instances, pupils are misplaced in teaching groups or not given the appropriate support. Annual reviews are carried out for pupils with Statements, those in the resourced unit and

those with behaviour difficulties who receive support from the inclusion team. Measurement of progress against targets in their individual education plans is mostly effective. Records kept on other pupils with special needs, however, do not provide an adequate basis for monitoring their progress or planning support and interventions to meet their needs. No central information is available, for example, on whether parents are involved in target setting or annual reviews of progress. Overall, the support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory.

45. The ethnic minority support team includes a teacher with responsibility for home/school liaison who also provides bilingual support. Somali refugee pupils are supported by a linguistic and cultural mediator seconded from the local authority. The work of these staff, together with the inclusive ethos promoted by the whole team, gives good support to pupils.
46. The school actively seeks pupils' views through the school council and has responded positively to their request for more benches. It also surveyed their views on the quality of teaching and learning in the school in December 2003. This was a very useful exercise and led to a training session for teachers to address some of the issues the pupils brought up. Unfortunately, the school has not sufficiently monitored or evaluated the response of teachers to the issues. For example, pupils commented about the lack of marking in books and this is still an issue now.

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

The partnership with parents is ineffective. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory and they are good with the local community.

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

- Reports on pupil progress give parents inconsistent messages
- The school meets the needs of the local community well
- The programme of consultation meetings is good and improving
- Links with colleges extend pupils' opportunities for work-related learning

## **Commentary**

47. Partnership with parents is less effective than at the last inspection. Some effective links with the local community have been maintained.
48. The current successful system of interviews between tutors and parents to support underachieving pupils is being extended to cover all pupils. This will give parents more of an overview on how their children are progressing and involve them in setting targets for further improvement. The annual reports for parents give brief information about what pupils know and can do in subjects and usually about their progress. However, mixed messages are given by tutors and heads of year about such things as attendance. Often the importance of good attendance is not sufficiently stressed when absence has been high. The school consults parents through the parents' association over policies such as homework and assessment but this only involves a few self-selecting parents and does not necessarily represent the views of the majority. A wider, more consultative process is being introduced. The school has not always dealt effectively with parental complaints and there are instances where parents' letters have remained unanswered and issues not dealt with satisfactorily. However, the new headteacher is aware of this and procedures for ensuring that parents' concerns are dealt with are now much more rigorous. The inspection findings support the parents' views that they have not been well informed and that views were not sought from all parents.
49. Provision of facilities for the community has improved significantly with the new building and there is now a community centre. This is used by local people for a range of adult education classes. Computers are also available for the community to use at specific times. The school's sporting facilities are let out for sporting activities and pupils have the use of some of them outside school hours when they are available. Last year the school worked closely with the local police, having a police officer based in school. The school found this to be useful as he gave support to victims of bullying, made home visits and helped with drug-related issues. Local businesses are represented on the governing body and have enhanced the resources of the school.
50. Links with local schools and colleges have extended curriculum opportunities for pupils, especially for work-related learning. In addition, the school sports co-ordinator programme is developing sporting links with primary schools. As part of Cantell's specialist school provision, an ICT teacher visits primary schools to support the teaching of this subject. A particularly exciting activity that resulted from good links with a local university was the Venus Project. The university brought in telescopes and other equipment so that pupils and members of the community could see Venus as it crossed the sun. Partnership with sixth form colleges also provides opportunities for teachers to extend their skills by teaching in the sixth form.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are poor. Since the last inspection, the school has gained specialist school status and taken over new buildings. The governors, although they have been very supportive, have not held the school to account for falling standards and governance is unsatisfactory overall. There are weaknesses in both senior and middle management and the school is not meeting its aims as a specialist school. Progress since the last inspection has been poor. The new headteacher has a clear vision for what needs to be done to improve the school and is taking decisive action.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Strategic planning, self-evaluation and monitoring have lacked rigour and consistency
- Some very capable school managers have taken action to address the problems in the school, whereas other senior and middle managers have not identified or focused on appropriate priorities for development
- The faculty structure is currently ineffective and school policies are not applied consistently
- The headteacher is beginning to build an ethos of working together for the future of the school
- Governors have not ensured the school's compliance with all statutory requirements

## Commentary

51. At the time of the inspection, the new headteacher had been in post for three weeks. It is therefore not appropriate to judge her leadership. However, she has a very good understanding of the issues confronting the school and already has a clear vision of what needs to be done to secure improvement. She is taking decisive action in key areas such as pupil behaviour, the structure of senior management and monitoring teaching and learning.
52. The governors worked hard to lead the recent complex building project. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are very supportive, but they have not acted on their knowledge of emerging problems. The school has not been held to account for the general deterioration in its performance. They recognise that creative leadership energy has been diverted into the building project and the bid for specialist school status, at the expense of fundamentals such as strategic planning, raising standards and improving pupils' attendance and behaviour. Governors have not challenged the school on various statutory breaches in key areas such as collective worship, religious education and ICT.
53. The current school improvement plan is over-complicated and often unrealistic. Objectives are not clearly defined or costed and there are no clear indicators to measure success. The key section on teaching and learning is little more than a list with no defined outcomes.
54. Overall, leadership has not created effective teams of staff moving towards common objectives. At both senior and middle management levels, leaders' ability to inspire and motivate has been poor. There has been a lack of innovation, notably in the key areas of mathematics and ICT. Some capable individual leaders have created effective teams and standards are getting better in some areas of the school. These give the school a good base on which to build improvement.
55. The school is committed to an inclusive ethos, where the needs of every pupil are addressed. It is meeting some success, notably in its work with minority ethnic communities and refugee pupils. There is good racial harmony in the school and cultural diversity is recognised and respected. The team working with ethnic minority pupils, although small for the number of pupils it has to support, is well organised and works as a cohesive unit. The team's development plan identifies appropriate targets, notably improving the use of data and providing professional development to the whole staff. Despite strengths in this area, the lack of response to behaviour issues and the mixed quality of support for pupils with special educational needs mean that the school is not yet meeting its target for inclusive education.
56. Management overall is poor. The school has not had a sufficiently consistent or rigorous approach to self-evaluation. Some senior managers are unaware of weaknesses. Insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place and the behaviour management policy has been inconsistently applied. Performance management systems are poor overall, though some departments have them in place. Staff professional development has been inadequate, which has contributed to the present unsatisfactory state of teaching and learning. Links with initial training are currently suspended. The school has had difficulties recruiting and retaining staff and deployment of support staff is not always effective. The induction programme for newly-qualified teachers is good.
57. The school collects and records a substantial amount of data on its pupils. The use of this by senior managers and governors in monitoring performance has not been successful. Middle managers are not asked to evaluate or account for performance indicated by the

data. The school does not use performance data effectively to determine future courses of action.

58. Leadership and management of special educational needs provision has been ineffective overall, despite considerable strengths in certain areas. The headteacher is in the process of establishing an action plan to bring coherence and integration to the three separately managed systems: for pupils with specific learning difficulties; those with behavioural difficulties; and those with other special needs. Each of the support systems has different procedures, recording and assessment arrangements and criteria for the deployment of staff. Consequently the current provision lacks coherence and is unsatisfactory.

59. The school is failing to meet its aims and its mission statement as a specialist school. Too little teaching is exciting or innovative and pupils are rarely encouraged to be independent learners. The climate in the school does not encourage or reward excellence, the self-esteem and sense of well-being of too many pupils are low and the declared aims in respect of technologically-based learning are still unfulfilled. The aim of being a caring, understanding, friendly community is met in respect of community relations, but not at the more basic level of pupils feeling safe and secure in school.
60. Financial procedures are good. The most recent auditors' report raised a few minor issues which were quickly corrected. However the school financial planning is not sufficiently tied into priorities in the school improvement plan. The principles of best value are not applied. The school gives poor value for money.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4667797	Balance from previous year	196104
Total expenditure	4781000	Balance carried forward to the next	82901
Expenditure per pupil	3765		

61. Since the last inspection, there has been a marked deterioration. The decline in GCSE results, the lack of support and systematic monitoring (including key areas such as special educational needs), the ineffectiveness of strategic planning and the failure to meet key aims are all symptomatic of leadership and management which have not driven the school forward successfully.

**OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

**Work-related learning**

Provision for work-related learning is satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Many pupils have the opportunity to experience work-related learning in a variety of ways in the school as well as the local college
- Pupils are encouraged to organise their own work experience placements and the outcomes of these are followed up on return to school
- No audit has been carried out of subjects' contribution to work-related learning or how this impacts on learning and achievement

**Commentary**

62. Many pupils in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity directly to experience work-related learning through, for example, the Year 10 work experience placement, opportunities to follow applied science and ICT courses, business studies, vocational college courses and careers work in citizenship lessons and tutorial time. Pupils are actively encouraged to organise their own work experience placement and to follow it up in citizenship lessons after their return. The quality of this provision is sound and is as a result of the school's commitment to providing wider curricular opportunities at 14+, good links with work providers and curriculum partnerships with the local college.
63. Two satisfactory lessons with work-related learning input were observed. In one, Year 10 pupils were starting to plan for their forthcoming work experience placement in a purposeful and structured way. In the other, pupils were developing their knowledge and understanding of what they would need in terms of personal protection equipment for their chosen vocational courses and work placements.

64. The leadership and the management of work-related learning are sound and have provided a clear overview of the school's provision. Day-to-day leadership and management do not have a sharp enough focus. Subjects' contribution to work-related learning has not been audited and there is no formal development planning for provision. As a result, the school is unable to evaluate fully the effectiveness of work-related learning on pupils' achievements.



## 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

English throughout the school was inspected in detail and drama was sampled.

Provision in English is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership ensures a strong and effective drive for improvement
- Most pupils now achieve well as a result of highly structured teaching
- Very good use is made of data to set targets for individual pupils and groups of pupils
- Planning for pupils with special educational needs, when they join mainstream classes, is hampered by lack of information on their particular needs

##### Commentary

##### Examination results

65. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 9, results were well below the national average and well below those obtained by pupils in similar schools. In 2004, the percentage of pupils obtaining at least a level 5 was similar to 2003, but there was a significant increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels (6 and 7).
66. In the GCSE examinations in 2003, results were well below the national average in both English language and English literature. Contrary to the national pattern, pupils' English results were below those they gained in other subjects. In 2004, results in English language improved slightly, but those in English literature declined.
67. In both Year 9 and Year 11, girls' results were better than boys', as they were nationally. However, boys' results were closer to the national average for boys than girls' results were to their national average.

##### Standards and achievement

68. On entry to the school, pupils' standards in English are below average. As a result of a structured approach to teaching, pupils now achieve well. This improvement has yet to feed through into examination results. Standards in writing are lower than those in reading, speaking and listening. However, older, higher attaining pupils wrote extended, perceptive and grammatically accurate analyses of films. Although the writing of lower attaining pupils is shorter and less accurate, they do convey some insight into character in their study of literature. For example, they wrote convincingly about the central figures in "Jane Eyre".

69. Pupils with special educational needs do not immediately make good progress when they join mainstream classes because teachers do not receive prior information about their needs. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress because of the teachers' sensitivity to their needs. The interests of the higher attaining pupils are catered for by the introduction of a GCSE course combining English language, English literature and media studies.

## **Teaching and learning**

70. The overall standard of teaching is good. It is well supported by a comprehensive scheme of work, thorough planning of individual teachers and their good subject knowledge. Much teaching, especially in Years 7 to 9, is derived from the government's strategy for raising the attainment of younger secondary pupils (the Key Stage Three Strategy). The leadership of the English department is extremely knowledgeable about the Strategy and how to apply it. This has been fundamental in raising the level of pupils' achievement. Teachers' objectives in lessons are shared with pupils so that they can understand what they are expected to learn.
71. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, although poor behaviour does occur. Pupils co-operate constructively in groups and respond especially well to the pace and challenge of the best teaching. For example, in a very good Year 10 lesson, higher attaining pupils were able to explore complex issues of language, character and social attitude in "Pride and Prejudice."
72. Pupils do not have planned and systematic access to ICT. This limits their ability to present their work in a variety of ways and to undertake certain types of research.
73. The timetabling of English results in too many classes being shared between two teachers. In some instances, the distribution of English lessons is unhelpful.

## **Leadership and management**

74. Following a period during which there was a significant number of staffing changes, a stable team of teachers was in place at the time of the inspection. This team displays commitment and a sense of common purpose, deriving from very good leadership which has established clear objectives, very good organisation and a decisive, but sensitive, style. A strong feature of the leadership is the very good analysis of information about pupils' abilities and their progress, so that tightly defined and realistic, yet challenging, targets can be set for individuals and groups. This results in a very clear strategy for improving the level of pupils' attainment. For example, the department's improvement plan emphasises the need to develop pupils' writing skills. The quality of teaching is carefully monitored and teachers receive helpful guidance on how to improve. The attractive displays in classrooms create a vibrant subject atmosphere.
75. At the time of the last inspection, results in English were better than they are now and the department still has some way to go in order to regain that level of performance.

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

76. When pupils join the school, their standards of literacy are below average. Standards remain below average throughout pupils' time in the school. One reason for this lack of relative progress is that the school does not have an overall strategy for improving literacy across the range of subjects, which could be consistently applied and carefully monitored.
77. In some lessons, good examples were seen of teachers seeking to improve their pupils' literacy. In physical education, for example, teachers paid careful attention to the use and understanding of specialist terminology. In some other lessons, the inaccurate spelling of subject vocabulary went uncorrected. Some teachers miss opportunities to allow pupils to explain and explore their ideas orally so that they can clarify their thinking before they begin to write. In some subjects, pupils are not required to produce sufficient extended pieces of writing.
78. The school library is a good resource that is valued by many pupils. It is an attractive room with ICT facilities that are well used at lunch times. The book stock is generally up to date.

## **Drama**

79. Examination results in 2003 were below the national average, but only 30 pupils were entered. In 2004, the percentage of pupils obtaining at least a C grade improved significantly but the number of entries was smaller. Most teaching observed was at least satisfactory, although poor behaviour occurred in one lesson inspected. There is a clear, appropriately organised scheme of work and sound planning. The number of pupils following the GCSE course has risen. The facilities are good.

## Modern foreign languages

All pupils study French or Spanish in Years 7 to 9. A small number study Punjabi. German and Latin are offered as second languages from Year 8. GCSE courses are offered in all five languages. During the inspection, Spanish and French were focused on and German, Latin and Punjabi were sampled.

Provision in modern foreign languages is satisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall standards in languages are in line with national averages, but pupils' performance is not consistent and uptake in languages in Years 10 and 11 is low
- Teachers are committed, have good subject knowledge and build good relationships with pupils
- Pupils' learning is inhibited by lack of access to ICT facilities and work is not always matched to pupils' needs
- Pupils have positive attitudes to language study
- Pupils are able to study a good range of languages

## Commentary

### Examination results

80. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were in line with those reported nationally. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. In the 2003 GCSE examination, French results at grades A\* to C were well below the national average, as was the case in the previous three years. Spanish results were above average, as were German and Punjabi. Overall standards in all languages were in line with national figures at grades A\* to C and A\* to G. However, there is fluctuation between languages and years. In 2004, French, Latin and Punjabi results improved significantly, but Spanish and German fell.

### Standards and achievement

81. In the current Year 9, higher attaining pupils reach above average standards in listening, reading and writing, though their speaking is average. The standards of other pupils are generally below average as they lack the skills to apply their knowledge in independent language use. In Year 11, pupils attain broadly average standards overall, and they write well. Given the relatively small number of pupils and the self-selecting nature of the groups in Years 10 and 11, standards could be higher.
82. Pupils' achievement in languages is broadly satisfactory. Their listening and speaking skills develop steadily. Writing is their strongest, with reading used effectively in combination with the others. Pupils in Year 7 Spanish listened attentively and spoke enthusiastically, as did a Year 8 French group, composed largely of pupils with special educational needs. Year 10 German pupils used all their skills in a lively lesson on pocket money and part-time jobs. A Year 11 Punjabi lesson featured fluent and articulate discussion; some of these were working towards AS level.

## Teaching and learning

83. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but generally better in Years 10 and 11. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Key strengths are teachers' very good personal expertise which they use well in conducting lessons, lively interaction which engages and motivates pupils and sympathetic management and encouragement of lower ability pupils. Teachers provide good strategies for learning, such as exploiting similarities between the taught language and English. Questioning and explanation are good and all lessons are run at a good pace with variety of tasks and skills. The instances of weakness in teaching relate to lessons which are not sufficiently focused on pupils' needs. This can include insufficient challenge for the more able, unnecessarily low expectation, and a tendency to teach a broad vocabulary with insufficient incentive for pupils to apply it for their own purposes. Generally, clear lesson objectives and increasing use of national performance levels provide a framework for progress in which pupils learn effectively. They are focused and attentive and maintain their concentration well through lessons. Good marking with constructive comment makes their learning goals clear. Pupils have positive attitudes to language study – a significant improvement since the last inspection.

## Leadership and management

84. Good leadership has built a cohesive team of teachers. Management is satisfactory, though there has been insufficient delegation of responsibilities. Results are analysed and some monitoring of teaching is in place. The development plan sets out achievable and appropriate targets. Curriculum provision is good in both the breadth of languages and the offer of AS courses in French and Punjabi. Able linguists can study a second language to GCSE in extra-curricular sessions. However, overall recruitment to language courses in Years 10 and 11 is low and there is currently little enrichment of the curriculum through links or exchanges. Access to ICT facilities is unsatisfactory and inhibits pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs receive no learning support. Library provision is unsatisfactory.
85. Since the last inspection, results have continued to fluctuate, but there have been improvements in teaching in Years 10 and 11, in the use of the languages taught and in pupils' attitudes. Improvement has been satisfactory.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching methods lack variety, so some pupils' learning needs are not met and misbehaviour is not always managed effectively
- Pupils in the top sets throughout the school achieve well, but pupils in middle and lower sets are not doing as well as they could

- Homework is not used effectively to help pupils reinforce their knowledge and understanding
- The development of basic number skills is unsatisfactory

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

86. Results in the 2003 Year 9 tests were below the national average overall, but the proportion of pupils attaining the highest levels was close to average. 2004 results showed improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level, and boys did significantly better than girls. GCSE results in 2003 were below the national average with pupils not doing as well in mathematics as many other subjects. In 2004, results showed a slight increase in the proportion of pupils gaining A\* to G grades.

## **Standards and achievement**

87. On entry to the school pupils' attainment is below average overall. Although current standards in Year 9 are also below average, pupils' achievement overall is unsatisfactory, because of the considerable variation between the sets. This reflects the way in which teachers match pupils' needs and manage their learning.
88. In all years from 7 to 11, pupils mainly understood the principles underlying new methods but, because they had insufficient practice in basic number operations, they were slow and inaccurate working out answers.
89. Overall in Years 10 and 11, standards are below average and achievement unsatisfactory. There is significant underachievement in some middle and lower sets. Pupils are not working at their level of capability and standards in these classes are well below average. This is partly a result of disruptive behaviour but is also linked to boring teaching that limits pupils' productivity in lessons and homework. The smaller number of higher attainers take GCSE early and, in Year 11, achieve success in AS level examinations in mathematics and also in 'critical thinking', an examination course taken at the local sixth form college. Standards achieved by these pupils are very good. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is broadly similar to most other pupils'. Classes that consisted entirely of special needs pupils mainly achieved well because of specific help given by class teachers and support staff.

## **Teaching and learning**

90. A significant proportion of the teaching was unsatisfactory and did not result in pupils learning as well as they should. Examples of good or very good teaching were seen in all year groups, more so in Years 7, 8 and 9, and also in top sets. The most effective teaching directed pupils' energy into interesting activities that involved everyone, provided challenge, and met individual needs. For example, Year 10 pupils showed impressive powers of analysis in a top set lesson on vectors. Enthusiastic teaching, high quality questioning and a variety of learning styles enabled pupils to feel proud of achieving their potential. Many teachers are effectively using interactive whiteboards.
91. Teaching was unsatisfactory when tasks did not motivate pupils or allow for different capabilities and lacked the variety and pace seen in the successful lessons. Strategies for dealing with misbehaviour are inconsistent and overall ineffective, especially when pupils are allowed to sit in gender groups. This is a significant problem in the department. Lessons are based on the three-part structure. The last part is the weakest because pupils are not given the chance to demonstrate what they have learnt.
92. In most classes, superficial marking, or sometimes no marking at all, gives pupils little guidance on how to improve. Pupils do not know how to achieve the targets set for them. Homework is not always set regularly or with clear purpose.
93. A notable positive aspect of teaching is the targeted support for some individuals in Year 9, which helps selected, below average attaining pupils raise their standard to that expected for the age group.

## **Leadership and management**

94. Within the newly established faculty of ICT and mathematics, the leadership of the mathematics department has not been finalised. Clear priorities have been decided. Morale is good and team spirit is growing, but areas of responsibility have yet to be defined. Schemes of work have been thoroughly reviewed and provide a good basis for lesson planning. The quality of teaching and learning is being monitored but there is not enough



sharing of good practice. An additional barrier to achievement is pupils' inconsistent experience of mathematics. Timetabling causes some classes to be taught by two different teachers during the week.

95. The ethos and practice of the department does not reflect specialist school status. Since the previous inspection, pupils' standards and the quality of teaching have declined, so progress has been unsatisfactory.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

96. The use of mathematical skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory because it is not well enough promoted or developed. Pupils' skills are below average. Within the school, responsibilities for developing mathematical competency across the curriculum are not clearly defined. Few examples were seen of pupils being asked to use their mathematical skills in the wider context. Good practice was seen in a Year 7 French lesson on counting where pupils practised mental mathematics, and in a Year 11 science lesson on energy where pupils used long multiplication to calculate answers.

## SCIENCE

All pupils follow an integrated science course in Years 7, 8 and 9. In Years 10 and 11, pupils take one of three courses: a double award modular science course covering the main areas of physics, chemistry and biology; a double award applied science course where aspects of chemistry, physics and biology are taught through various topics and themes relevant to the pupils' lives; or a triple award science course where the pupils are taught physics, chemistry and biology separately which results in three GCSE certificates. All these courses were inspected.

Provision in science is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Progress since last inspection	Poor	

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Too high a proportion of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory and pupils' attendance at lessons is poor
- Weaknesses in the way some pupils' behaviour is managed result in interrupted learning in lessons
- Some good and very good teaching enables pupils - more often in the higher ability groups - to enjoy science and achieve well
- The move to providing an applied science double award course in Years 10 and 11 has proved to be worthwhile and successful, although staffing and time-tabling problems of this and other courses restrict what the pupils achieve
- Teachers do not know enough about pupils' special educational needs
- Pupils' skills in using ICT in science are unsatisfactory

## Commentary

### Examination results

97. Standards in science in the 2003 Year 9 national tests were below average. The school results at level 7, a high level of attainment, were above national figures, but more pupils at Cantell attained level 3 or below. Compared with other schools that had a similar range of pupil ability on entry, results were well below average in 2003, indicating poor achievement. There has been a trend of improvement in these tests and this was maintained in 2004 when the results improved again, particularly at the higher levels. Boys' results have been much higher than those of girls for a number of years. The 2003 GCSE

results were in single, double and triple award science, with an overall A\*-C proportion of 39 per cent, an improvement on the 2002 results of 34 per cent, but nevertheless below the national proportion of 51 per cent. In 2004 the results fell slightly, to 37 per cent attaining A\*-C passes. Girls do much less well than boys at GCSE, particularly in the single science option.

### **Standards and achievement**

98. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory overall throughout the school, because teaching is not good enough in some lessons and pupils' behaviour is unacceptable at times. More able pupils in the higher band generally achieve much better, considering their capabilities, than the lower attaining and less well-motivated pupils in the middle and lower bands. Standards are below average overall at the end of Years 9 and 11. Pupils' skills in science investigation work are lower than expected, as is their knowledge and recall. Pupils in an upper set in Year 9, working on the theme of 'cloning', showed good understanding for their ages of the genetics involved, and a lower set, working on a similar theme, talked sensibly about inherited characteristics. Such knowledge was teacher dependent, however, and although the achievement of the pupils in these classes was good, in others it was unsatisfactory. Year 10 and 11 pupils find the applied science course reasonably interesting and many apply themselves well, but poor written work and high levels of absence result in unsatisfactory and at times poor achievement. The work carried out by Year 10 and 11 pupils in the upper band was usually at least satisfactory, with average or better standards, except where teaching was ineffective or pupils misbehaved. The poor behaviour of a small number of pupils, usually boys, often had a more distracting effect on the girls' learning than that of other boys.

### **Teaching and learning**

99. Some very effective teaching was observed, where pupils worked hard, learnt new ideas or consolidated their knowledge, and enjoyed their lessons. In these circumstances work was carefully matched to the pupils' needs, whatever their abilities, and their behaviour was successfully managed. Although attendance was very poor in a Year 11 lower attaining set, with just nine present out of the sixteen in the class, the clear expectations of the teacher of both work and behaviour resulted in good achievement for those pupils. Work was carefully matched to pupils' abilities and interests (saving money was a key reason for learning the physics!), the work was very well prepared and the class knew that the teacher would not countenance any misbehaviour. All pupils, some almost grudgingly, started to enjoy the lesson. In contrast a younger class of low attainers were presented with abstract ideas about elements, compounds and mixtures too quickly and with very little account taken of their prior knowledge or capability. The outcome was serious misbehaviour from a minority of boys, which was not dealt with satisfactorily, and little, if any, progress for most in the small group. Currently the range in the quality of teaching is unacceptable, with the result that pupils in some classes underachieve greatly.

### **Leadership and management**

100. Both leadership and management are judged to be unsatisfactory, principally because pupils are underachieving and a significant proportion of the teaching is unacceptable. Good curriculum innovations are in hand, with the dropping of single science and introduction of applied science in Years 10 and 11. This work is being managed well, with very good new schemes of work, but the scheme for Years 7 to 9 is weaker. Assessment data on individual pupils is known, but this is not being interpreted so that work builds on strengths and tackles weaknesses. When pupils' targets are worked out, too little account is taken of individuals' current knowledge and their capabilities. Teachers are not aware of

the individual needs of pupils with special educational needs and so work cannot be matched to them. Some good use is made of a class set of laptop computers and the suite of machines available in one laboratory, but the lack of data loggers means this aspect of experimental work is poorly understood. Too many classes are taught by more than one teacher where there is not a balance of subject expertise in the teaching team; timetabling is unsatisfactory. Some monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place and the procedures are good, but they are not being applied consistently across the department and have had insufficient impact. The new accommodation is generally good, as are resources, with the exception of data loggers, and the department is served well by a team of science technicians.

101. Pupils' achievements, the quality of teaching, assessment and the curriculum are not as good as stated in the last inspection report five years ago, and so progress since 1999 has been poor.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

  

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Poor

### Main weaknesses

- The planning of lessons, marking of pupils' work and feedback to pupils on progress is unsatisfactory
- Further development is required in other subjects to raise pupils' achievement in ICT, particularly in increasing access to computers
- Pupils' achievement is too low because issues identified in the previous inspection have not been fully resolved

### Commentary

#### Examination results

102. In 2003 GCSE results were below the national average and in 2004 results were lower.

#### Standards and achievement

103. Pupils begin Year 7 with a wide range of ICT experiences but overall standards are below national expectations. Current standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average. There are no significant variations in the standards attained by boys and girls or pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. In Years 7 to 9, ICT is now taught as a discrete subject. However, this is a new development and the achievement of pupils has been restricted by the late implementation of the nationally recommended strategy. In Year 9, pupils did not know basic concepts and vocabulary such as "digital". Year 11 pupils currently gain their National Curriculum entitlement through following a GCSE course or take the more limited CLAIT certificates. The situation is better in Year 10 where all pupils follow the applied GCSE course. Most pupils begin the applied GCSE in Year 9 and this is leading to improved standards. These improvements in provision have not yet had time to impact on achievement in the current Year 11 and standards remain below average; so pupils were being introduced to concepts such as normal data for the first time.

#### Teaching and learning

104. During the inspection the quality of teaching and learning observed ranged from very good to poor but overall was unsatisfactory. Where teaching was most effective, teachers established good routines for classroom management. Data projectors were used well to illustrate and explain points and to develop pupils' understanding, for example through projecting websites so that the class could together identify characteristics of good sites. In these successful lessons, good relationships created a positive learning environment and lots of interactive, whole-class teaching was combined with opportunities for pupils to apply new learning to their individual computer-based work. Teachers in these lessons also gave good individual oral feedback and helpful annotation on pupils' written work, with levels and advice on how to improve.
105. Too often, teaching was less successful and significant groups of pupils underachieved during lessons. Routines were not followed consistently, marking was either non-existent or did not guide pupils on how to improve, there was a lack of challenge and the pace of learning was too slow. Pupil behaviour was often poor and inappropriately managed.



## Leadership and management

106. ICT is part of a faculty, recently formed, including ICT and mathematics. The leadership of the faculty has a very good strategic overview and has started to implement this. A coherent programme of study for Years 7 to 11 is now in place as is an effective monitoring regime. Good links with primary schools have begun this term. The strengths and weaknesses of the department have been identified. However, this is all too recent to have had an impact on standards. Leadership and management of ICT is unsatisfactory. Urgent action identified in the last inspection, such as ensuring that pupils receive their statutory entitlements, has only recently been addressed and improvement since the last inspection has been poor. Inconsistencies in marking and assessment limit pupils' achievement. Schemes of work are still being developed.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

107. The use of ICT across the curriculum is insufficiently developed for a maths and computing specialist college. The monitoring and fostering of the use of computers to raise standards in all subjects is embryonic. Pupils' ICT skills are below what would be expected for their ages.
108. In art, digital cameras are used and images are manipulated using the one computer in each room. Music also makes good use of ICT to develop pupils' skills in composition. However, in several key subjects, such as science and design and technology, the ICT-related statutory requirements of the programme of study are not being delivered. Other subjects, such as modern languages, report a lack of access to computers as a barrier to learning, and a similar rationale is given in geography. Yet opportunities that do exist, such as Internet research, are not seized. In mathematics interactive whiteboards are used but the effectiveness is inconsistent.

## HUMANITIES

Geography and history were inspected. Judgements were also made in religious education, where possible, both for the GCSE course and on provision for pupils' statutory entitlement according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

### Geography

Provision in geography is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' behaviour and poor attendance in some lessons in Years 10 and 11 restricts their progress
- Some teaching is good or very good in Years 7 to 9
- The assessment of pupils' work is not providing the appropriate information to inform them of their progress
- There are too few opportunities to apply and practise ICT skills

### Commentary

### **Examination results**

109. Teacher assessments in 2004 at the end of Year 9 indicate that attainment is average, an improvement on the previous year. GCSE results in 2003 were below average. There was an improvement in 2004 and pupils' results were as good or better in geography than in their other subjects.

### **Standards and achievement**

110. Standards are broadly average by Year 9. This is satisfactory achievement. Most pupils have a sound use and understanding of subject-specific vocabulary. Most have developed some skills of analysis and can interpret data, graphs and diagrams to make appropriate judgements.
111. By the end of Year 11 the skills learned in Year 9 have developed, but achievement is lower because of poor attendance and behaviour, and standards are below average. For many pupils, their skills of analysis are now more sophisticated. For example, many are able to use these skills effectively to describe urban land use in Southampton.

### **Teaching and learning**

112. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and was good or very good in some lessons. Teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 as too little is done to prevent the poor behaviour of a significant minority of pupils disrupting learning for others.
113. Teachers are well informed and knowledgeable. The good lessons are well planned, use a wide range of teaching methods and very good question and answer sessions. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. In a very good Year 7 lesson, pupils developed their knowledge and understanding of maps because the class teacher used a wide range of activities, ensured that pupils were responsible for their own work and had clear targets.
114. In the unsatisfactory lessons, teachers did not have the strategies for dealing with a significant minority of disruptive pupils. The learning of all pupils was weakened and most underachieved.
115. Generally, opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning are too few and homework is not being constructively used. Higher attaining pupils in several lessons were not sufficiently challenged. Marking of GCSE work is not providing enough information for pupils to improve their performance. Progress is not monitored and targets are not used effectively.
116. In many lessons, key words are emphasised and good question and answer sessions are effective in developing speaking and listening skills. Marking of work is not identifying areas for development in pupils' writing, however, and the development of literacy skills is unsatisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills are restricted. The development of numeracy skills is satisfactory as many pupils analyse and interpret graphs and basic statistics.
117. Specific information on the needs of those pupils with special educational needs was not available to all teachers. Although teaching assistants provided support for these pupils in some lessons, often it was not planned for and pupils did not make appropriate progress.

### **Leadership and management**

118. Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. Assessment and marking and classroom teaching are not being effectively monitored. The management of behaviour in lessons, especially in Years 10 and 11, is inconsistent. Managers have



developed an informative handbook and thorough schemes of work. The department development plan identifies appropriate areas for improvement but does not provide enough information on how this will be achieved. Pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory and the attitudes and behaviour of a minority of pupils have deteriorated, so improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

### History

Provision in history is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Poor attendance limits the achievement of approximately one third of all pupils in Years 10 and 11
- Enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching raises pupils' interest and application
- Good pupil management results in good behaviour in almost all lessons
- Teachers and assistants provide effective support for those with particular needs
- Marking is of a variable quality and does not inform pupils how to improve their work

### Commentary

#### Examination results

119. In 2003, the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were in line with the national expectation, boys outperforming girls. GCSE results were close to the national average with girls outperforming boys. Results for 2004 show a fall in the proportions of pupils achieving both A\* to C grades and A\* to G.

#### Standards and achievements

120. Year 9 pupils can interrogate sources, higher attaining pupils evaluating their reliability and utility. All understand chronology, can describe events and actions and are beginning to appreciate that events can be subject to different interpretations.
121. Current standards in Year 11 are below average. Only approximately one third of pupils can explain events or make inferences from source material. Higher attaining pupils can write well-structured answers to practice questions. Pupils should be doing better and achievement is unsatisfactory, despite sound teaching. Poor pupil attendance results in a discontinuity of learning, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

#### Teaching and learning

122. In half of all lessons teaching was good. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of the pupils in terms of learning and behaviour but are not always successful at applying these. Teachers used their subject knowledge to deliver well-planned lessons. These were good when starter activities engaged the pupils' interest, for example as Year 7 pupils identified and categorised historical sources. Effective use was made of the time available. Lessons ended with a summary and pupils consolidated what had been learned. Lower attaining pupils made progress as a result of the teacher's awareness of their needs and also when learning assistants were in the classroom.

This good practice was not apparent in all lessons. In the few weaker lessons, less experienced teachers failed to counter disruptive behaviour. Pupils can work collaboratively but fail to develop the skills necessary for independence because opportunities for enquiry work are too few. The practice of pairing those at an early stage of learning English with another pupil worked well so that they made good progress. Though pupils have too few opportunities to practise ICT and number skills, teaching makes a sound contribution to the development of pupils' literacy. The good resources in the library are used frequently.

123. The revised assessment policy has not yet had an impact on the variable quality of marking and the lack of advice to pupils as to how they might improve their work. The analysis of assessment information and the monitoring of pupils' learning are underdeveloped. The teaching makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and their understanding of citizenship.

#### **Leadership and management**

124. The department has a clear direction. Teachers work closely with colleagues and give very good mutual support. Much has been achieved in reviewing the schemes of work. The departmental development plan lacks detail and recently introduced systems have yet to effect an improvement in standards. Insufficient priority is given to the monitoring of teaching and learning. Whilst leadership is satisfactory, management is unsatisfactory. Standards have not improved since the last report in which teaching and learning were stronger and pupils' behaviour and attitudes more positive.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Very low (GCSE well below average)
Achievement	Good	Unsatisfactory (GCSE satisfactory)
Teaching and Learning	Good	No judgement (GCSE satisfactory)

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- As at the time of the previous report, the school does not provide a suitable course for all pupils in Years 10 and 11, so is not complying with statutory requirements
- Poor attendance has adversely affected GCSE examination results
- Temporary arrangements for leadership and management are unsatisfactory
- Pupils respond to good teaching with interest and make good progress
- In lessons, pupils feel supported, their views are valued and so they contribute confidently
- The subject makes a very good contribution to the personal development of pupils in Years 7 to 9

## Commentary

### Examination results

125. In 2003, the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were below the national average; results in 2004 were higher. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average. Poor attendance was the reason for the relatively high proportion of candidates who did not achieve a grade. The few boys outperformed the girls. Unconfirmed figures for 2004 show an improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining grades in the range A\* to G, though the gap between boys' and girls' attainment has widened.

### Standards and achievement

126. By the end of Year 9, pupils' standards are average and they make good progress in investigating world religions and exploring and responding to human experiences. For example, in a lesson on decision making, Year 9 pupils reflected on the way in which the Ten Commandments could impact on their lives. They are encouraged to give balanced consideration to a range of issues, including controversial and sensitive topics. Higher attaining pupils understand differences between major religions and can empathise with ideas and viewpoints at variance from their own, as in Year 7 work on Islam and Muhammad. All have an increasing understanding of factual information relating to selected faith groups. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English make good progress. The amount of religious education taught in Years 10 and 11, for pupils not taking GCSE, is too little and results in unsatisfactory achievement and very low standards.
127. Pupils who follow the examination course achieve broadly as expected given their starting points, which are generally well below average. They have a sound understanding of different religions. Their work on 'Social Harmony' showed a developing ability to understand the different response of faith groups to issues that will affect their own lives, for example the changing roles of men and women. In work on 'The Holocaust' and 'Religion and the Environment' pupils were able to review

moral and social issues with reference to religious teachings. Standards however remain well below average as reflected in examination performance.

### Teaching and learning

128. In Years 7 to 9, pupils learned well when lessons had been planned carefully to include a range of learning activities and teaching strategies. Resources were well chosen and stirred pupils' interest, such as when Year 7 pupils explored the idea of vision and what would make a perfect world. Learning objectives are shared at the beginning of lessons and evaluated at the end. A scrutiny of written work showed that tasks generally meet the needs of pupils. A strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' literacy skills, with a variety of writing tasks. Paired activities and group work involve discussion and develop pupils' speaking and listening. In all lessons, trust and supportive relationships gave pupils of different faiths the confidence to learn from each other and to express their views. Attitudes and behaviour are generally good. In a few lessons, however, the poor behaviour of a minority had a significant impact on the learning of others.
129. Teaching of the GCSE course is satisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and understanding of course requirements. Year 11 pupils responded positively to clear explanations, when they addressed the question "Can there be a Just War?" Where teaching was not as good, pupils lost interest as the range of activities and tasks was limited and time was wasted. Much is done to encourage the active involvement of pupils and a respect for the views of others. They work well in collaboration but all except the small number of higher attainers lack the confidence to show initiative when required to work independently. Teachers know the needs of individual pupils and have appropriate expectations of them. More capable pupils produce well-structured pieces of extended writing that show their ability to see issues from different perspectives. Lower attaining pupils made reasonable progress, benefiting from teacher support. Homework is used effectively to prepare for class discussions and to extend and consolidate learning.
130. No teaching of non-GCSE religious education was observed in Years 10 and 11.

### Leadership and management

131. Permanent arrangements for the leadership and management of the department have not been established. The temporary arrangements in Years 7 to 9 provide very good support to ameliorate the impact of the use of non-specialist teachers on standards. The day-to-day management of the GCSE course is satisfactory. Leadership is unsatisfactory as there is no head of department to provide the vision and direction that might result in improvement. Standards, teaching and learning have declined since the last report and provision does not meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus in Years 10 and 11. Therefore leadership, management and improvement since the last inspection are unsatisfactory.

### DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is unsatisfactory because not all the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met and the schemes of work do not extend more able pupils

- Designing skills are underdeveloped, particularly in Years 7 to 9, because too much time is spent on making skills
- Standards in textiles are very high because of the outstanding teaching pupils receive

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

132. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were below average. Girls performed better than boys overall. Results in the 2004 examinations fell; pupils did worse in design and technology overall than in most of their other subjects, although textiles results were very good.

### **Standards and achievement**

133. By the end of Year 9, pupils' designing and making skills are average; this represents satisfactory achievement given pupils' ability on entry to the school. They use a variety of tools and equipment competently and with confidence in all material areas. Pupils have good making skills but their designing skills are less effective because too little opportunity is provided for pupils to develop skills of analysis and evaluation. By the end of Year 11, standards of designing and making are below average, indicating too little progress since Year 9 and unsatisfactory achievement overall. The exception to this is in textiles, where pupils' work is thorough, very well presented and packed with careful analysis and evaluation.

### **Teaching and learning**

134. In Years 7 to 9, lessons are usually well paced and have clear learning objectives. Pupils experience a good range of practical activities, and design and make interesting products. However, some of the teaching is poor because teachers do not have the skills to control pupils' behaviour. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is satisfactory in the areas covered. When challenged and engaged by teachers, pupils' attitudes are very positive; they are interested and take pride in their work.
135. Teachers have developed good strategies such as coursework guides and support packs to assist pupils. In textiles, teaching is outstanding because of the very high expectations of the teacher and the way that the needs of all pupils are met. However, with the exception of textiles, analysis and evaluation skills of the most able pupils are not as good as they should be and too little emphasis is given to designing skills. Pupils use ICT well for the presentation of their coursework and, in Year 10, resistant materials pupils use a laser cutter to produce very accurate clocks. However, pupils are not using CAD software for designing purposes.

### **Leadership and management**

136. The department has experienced staffing and recruitment problems since the last inspection and this has militated against the continuity of teaching and the development of the subject as a whole. During this time the quality of teaching has declined, standards have fallen and progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The department has developed a range of systems for recording attainment and monitoring teaching and learning. The curriculum is unsatisfactory because pupils are not given the opportunity to learn about structures and systems and control technology. Limited provision for ICT, in particular CAD/CAM, means that pupils are not achieving as much as they could. The management of the department as a whole is unsatisfactory because of the decline in standards and weaknesses in the curriculum. The department has benefited greatly from the new building and has very good accommodation. Leadership is now satisfactory and able to respond more positively to these opportunities.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

## Art and design

Provision in art and design is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

  

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Art is a popular and successful subject with many pupils choosing it as an option in Years 10 and 11
- The art department provides a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, a very caring environment for pupils of all abilities
- Extra-curricular activities encourage pupils to extend their learning
- Some art lessons are taught by non-subject specialists, which restricts what pupils achieve

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

137. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were average. Boys' and girls' performance was similar. Results in 2004 were lower. Boys did not perform as well as girls. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 showed that standards were about average.

#### **Standards and achievement**

138. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with attainment that is below average in art. They achieve well during Years 7 to 9, so that by the end of Year 9 standards are higher. Pupils make good progress in learning new skills, which are built on from year to year. They study the work of a wide range of different artists and cultures. In Years 10 and 11, pupils also make good progress, and benefit from a variety of projects and individual guidance in meeting examination requirements. Standards of work seen in the current Years 10 and 11 are average. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported in lessons and achieve well.

#### **Teaching and learning**

139. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and expertise, and overall good teaching is enabling pupils to do well, particularly in Years 7 to 9. A small proportion of lessons are taught by non-specialist teachers, however, leading to unacceptable variations in the quality of teaching and learning. Most lessons are well structured and relevant to the interests of pupils. In Year 9, some projects cover social and cultural issues, such as the effects of loneliness, social exclusion and graffiti. This helps pupils to have a positive attitude towards their work. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are given the opportunity to experiment with a variety of materials and extend their drawing skills. ICT is used to manipulate images and research projects. Pupils learn how to analyse their work and make valuable connections between their own work and that of other artists. In a sculpture project, Year 11 pupils worked well independently on research tasks, using a variety of imaginative resources provided by the teacher. In an art textiles lesson, two teachers team-taught the class, giving pupils a wide experience of new skills through their expert demonstrations in batik, fabric painting and decoration. Pupils were clearly inspired and motivated, and worked very productively. Pupils relate very well to each other and there are strong pupil/teacher relationships. Marking and assessment are informative, enabling pupils to understand how to improve. In Years 7 to 9, homework is not used effectively to reinforce the learning that takes place in class. Pupils are able to work in the department in a daily after-school drop-in session.

#### **Leadership and management**

140. The department is well led and managed. There is a very good grasp of what works well and what does not. The different examination courses offered at GCSE cater for the full range of pupil needs. Departmental planning is thorough and identifies ways of moving forward. The department is well resourced. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Assessment now informs planning and data is used to set targets. Provision of ICT

has increased and more three-dimensional work takes place. GCSE results have improved since the last inspection.



## Music

Provision in music is good.

	Years 7,8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

  

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE pupils achieve particularly well in performing and composing
- Teachers have very good expertise, particularly in composition and music technology
- Relationships are very good and pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour contribute significantly to their learning
- Accommodation is very good in terms of space but the lack of effective soundproofing has a detrimental impact on standards

### Commentary

#### Examination results

141. GCSE results in music were above average in 2003 in the proportion of pupils attaining A\* to C grades. All pupils entered gained a pass or better. In 2004 although the number of entries for GCSE fell, the results were much higher.

#### Standards and achievement

142. In Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils work well, especially when performing and composing. They use musical vocabulary in a limited way but produce little written work to help them recall their learning. Standards overall are average and achievement is good. Standards are above average in the GCSE courses, with particular strengths in performing and composing. Pupils show good understanding when listening and appraising but again have limited written work to provide evidence of their ability to analyse and describe the music they are hearing. Pupils' attitudes are good, especially in Years 10 and 11. This contributes significantly to their progress, willingness to learn and their musical achievements.

#### Teaching and learning

143. Teachers have very good subject skills. Planning is sound and lessons are well balanced. The emphasis in lessons on practical music-making ensures that all pupils are able to contribute to the best of their ability. They handle equipment carefully and help each other in group activities. Homework is set but tends to be research based and there is no formal means of ensuring that homework tasks have been completed.

#### Leadership and management

144. Leadership of the department is good and there has been good improvement since the last inspection, especially in standards in Years 10 and 11. Curriculum time, however, remains relatively low for music in Years 7 to 9. Assessment occurs at the end of each unit of work and pupils are given individual targets for the next unit. However the records kept by staff are inconsistent. Levels of attainment are communicated to parents on school reports. There is a good number of extra-curricular opportunities and GCSE pupils are able to visit the department during lunchtime and after school to work on practical tasks. Around 130

pupils take instrumental lessons, which are subsidised by the school, on woodwind instruments, guitar and drums. This is very good practice. The department has very good resources but the absence of soundproofing leads to serious noise interference between classes and from neighbouring instrumental lessons. The benching is also inadequate for the appropriate storage and use of equipment.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The core programme for Years 7 to 11 and GCSE physical education were inspected in detail. Dance was sampled.

Provision in physical education is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average (GCSE below average)
Achievement	Good	Good (GCSE good )
Teaching and learning	Good	Good (GCSE good)

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning result in good progress for all groups of pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs
- The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils result in a very positive atmosphere in lessons and extra-curricular activities
- Good leadership provides a purposeful focus, ethos and direction for the subject
- The current state of outdoor facilities is restricting pupils' progress
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning in the examination course

### Commentary

#### Results and achievement: GCSE PE

145. The proportion of pupils attaining A\* to C grade passes in the GCSE course has fallen since 2002. It was below average in 2003 and 2004 provisional results show a further decline. The higher numbers of boys taking the course does not make it possible to comment on gender differences. Pupils are currently achieving well for their capabilities, particularly in their practical lessons. In a badminton lesson, for example, they were developing well their knowledge and understanding of the importance of tactical awareness in games.

#### Standards and achievement: core

146. Standards in Year 9 are average. The majority of boys achieve well in relation to their below average capabilities on entry. In football, for example, boys are developing individual skills well and applying them appropriately in small-sided games. It is not possible to comment on the standards of girls as insufficient numbers were observed. Standards in the Year 11 compulsory course are average. The majority of both boys and girls achieve well and have continued to build on the skills and techniques learned in Years 7 to 9. Across all years, pupils have developed a good understanding of the principles and procedures for warm-up. Pupils identified as having special educational needs achieve well and, where appropriate, are very effectively supported by learning support assistants.

### Teaching and learning

147. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a good command of the activities being taught and have a consistent approach to conduct and discipline, resulting in very good pupil attitudes and behaviour. Pupils work very well together in pairs and small groups and respect the capabilities of one another. The ethos within which the subject is taught enhances the quality of learning and promotes a very good atmosphere in lessons. Lessons are well structured, purposeful and provide good progression and challenge. In a Year 9 football lesson and a Year 11 tag rugby lesson, for example, well planned and structured activities ensured that pupils were all actively involved and improving their skills and techniques well.

148. Learning objectives are made clear at the start of lessons so pupils know what is expected of them. Demonstrations and breakdown of skills are indicative of teachers' expertise and also help pupils understand further what they have to do to make progress. Effective use of questioning by teachers improves pupils' speaking and listening skills and enables teachers to gauge their level of understanding. Teachers circulate very well in lessons and their effective use of praise and constructive criticism makes pupils well aware of their capabilities. There are, though, occasions when there could be more formal pupil evaluation of their peers – this would help them refine and develop their own practice and deepen their knowledge and understanding even further.
149. A good structured programme for the teaching of GCSE theory work allows teachers to check carefully the progress made by pupils in the completion of their work. However, there is insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning, particularly in the GCSE course. Assessment procedures for the compulsory course are sound and good quality marking of pupils' GCSE theory work ensures they know what they have to do to make further improvements. Sometimes, though, it is unclear if comments, for example about missing work, are being followed up.

### **Leadership and management**

150. Good leadership provides a purposeful focus and direction for the subject in order to improve standards. There is a strong team ethos and a shared commitment to improve provision. Management is sound. Development planning has recognised clear areas for improvement but, as yet, there is no clear focus on improving standards of achievement in Years 7 to 9. The present range of accommodation is satisfactory. Although newly built, two-thirds of outdoor facilities could not be used during the inspection. This limits the breadth of curriculum that can be offered and restricts the progress pupils can make. Improvement since the previous inspection has been sound. Good extra-curricular provision throughout the year extends pupils' learning; these include both recreational and competitive fixtures. As a result, a number of talented pupils have achieved representative honours at city, district and county levels in a range of activities.

### **Comment on general sporting provision in the school**

151. All pupils receive approximately two hours of quality physical activity per week, thus reaching the government's public service agreement target. Further opportunities are provided for pupils in Years 10 and 11 by the provision of the GCSE physical education course and planned provision of the junior sports leaders award course (JSLA). The good range of extra-curricular activities provides further opportunities for quality physical activity. The department is involved in the local schools' sports co-ordinator (SSCo) scheme and pupils benefit from good links with local community sporting organisations and professional clubs.

### **Dance**

152. All pupils are taught dance in Years 7 to 9 in the arts faculty and are assessed in line with the physical education National Curriculum levels. Dance continues to be a popular GCSE option with the vast majority of candidates being girls. Since 2001, the proportion of pupils attaining A\* to C grade passes has been rising and in 2003 was broadly in line with the national average. Provisional results in 2004 show a significant reverse in this trend. Target grades for the current Year 11 group indicate an improved pass rate in the coming year.
153. Only two lessons were observed. In both, the teaching and learning were very good. Pupils achieved very well and, as a result, made very good progress. In a Year 9 lesson, all pupils in the group were able to produce a set of complex movements; they were confident, clearly enjoyed the lesson and demonstrated good cooperation skills. In a Year 11 GCSE lesson, pupils worked very hard and developed well their use of choreographic devices in the planning of a short routine on the

theme of 'contact'. Dance contributes well to pupils' learning experiences in the school. Accommodation is very good.

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

Personal, social and health education is provided through the programmes in citizenship education in Years 10 and 11 and the humanities provision in Years 7, 8 and 9. In addition, the tutor or registration session is used partly to deliver this programme. For one lesson each fortnight, the tutor period is extended to provide time for the programme. During the tutor periods observed, no reference was made to aspects of PSHE although the time was often used constructively. Currently PSHE provision is unsatisfactory.

### **Citizenship**

Citizenship is currently taught as specific lessons and within a range of other subjects. Provision was sampled, as it was not possible to see enough teaching or work to make overall judgements.

### **Commentary**

154. This year the school has started teaching specific citizenship lessons as part of the humanities department timetable. A detailed programme of study had already been produced which enables teachers to plan their citizenship work.
155. It was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 7 to 9 but analysis of a small sample of pupils' work showed that they are starting to develop knowledge and understanding of what it is to be informed citizens, as well as developing their skills of enquiry and communication. In Years 10 and 11, a few lessons were observed, which were sound. Assessment procedures are in place, including pupil self-assessment. However, assessment levels at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were not collated or reported to parents – this had been done in 2002.
156. Some aspects of pupils' citizenship are developed through the broader curriculum of school life. The school council provides opportunities for pupils to participate in a democratic process and the opportunity for some to actively represent their peers. Different year groups support a range of charities and pupils have the opportunity to decide which. A number of Year 10 pupils are involved in the peer mentoring of younger pupils and, on the school open evening during the inspection, older pupils were actively involved in showing visitors around. Some good display of pupils' citizenship work was seen in and around the humanities department.
157. New leadership has improved the quality of provision, ensuring that the statutory requirement for the teaching of citizenship is met. Though an audit was carried out to identify where subjects were teaching aspects of citizenship, currently there is no formal monitoring to check provision in this respect. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in citizenship is planned for as part of the humanities department procedures. As yet, there is no formal development planning for the provision of citizenship. Citizenship was not reported on at the time of the previous inspection.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>6</b>
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	6
Value for money provided by the school	6
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	5
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>6</b>
Attendance	6
Attitudes	6
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	6
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	5
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>5</b>
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	<b>5</b>
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	5
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	5
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>6</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the Headteacher	0
The leadership of other key staff	6
The effectiveness of management	6

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