

INSPECTION REPORT

Churchfields School

Swindon, Wiltshire

LEA area: Swindon

Unique reference number: 126453

Headteacher: Mr Steve Flavin

Lead inspector: Malcolm McGregor

Dates of inspection: 15th - 18th November 2004

Inspection number: 268368

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;	986
School address:	Salcombe Grove Swindon Wiltshire
Postcode:	SN3 1HQ
Telephone number:	01793 487286
Fax number:	01793 525466
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jane McDonald
Date of previous inspection:	November 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Churchfields School is a secondary school situated in Swindon. It is of an average size, with 986 students aged 11 to 16 years on the roll. The proportion of the students entitled to free school meals, 16 per cent, is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of the students who speak English as an additional language, 25 per cent, is higher than in most schools. Churchfields School has a higher proportion of students with special educational needs, 20 per cent, than that found nationally, although the percentage who have a Statement of Special Educational Need is similar to the national figure. The attainment of the students entering the school in Year 7 is well below that found nationally. Students' mobility is relatively low and the majority of students that enter the school in Year 7 stay until the end of Year 11. The school takes students from six local areas, some of which are areas of severe social deprivation. Over the past three years, the school has continued to experience significant difficulties in recruiting teachers. The staffing situation has improved and the school is currently fully staffed. Prior to this inspection, the school was placed in special measures following an inspection in January 2000. Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) removed it from special measures in November 2002 because of the improvements it had made. The school is part of an Excellence Cluster of schools and achieved Artsmark Gold status in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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20055	Sheila Entwistle	Team inspector	Mathematics
33391	Annie Keighley	Team inspector	English
31385	Neil Gillespie	Team inspector	Science
17349	Paula Askew	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
31688	Brian McGonagle	Team inspector	Art and design
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33015	Richard Winter	Team inspector	History
12110	Roger Bailess	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
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3162	Philip O'Neill	Team inspector	Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Churchfields School is a good school that has made significant improvements since its previous inspection. It is increasingly effective as a result of the strong leadership of the headteacher, who is very well supported by the governors and senior leadership team. Students enter the school with very low levels of attainment, particularly in reading and writing. However, standards are improving, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Students achieve well as a result of the improved quality of teaching, the very good support they get and the high expectations set for behaviour. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher and the very good support provided by the leadership team.
- The steps taken to improve teaching and learning have been very effective.
- The good achievement of all students and the rate of improvement of standards in mathematics, science and ICT.
- The standards in GCSE examinations are too low.
- Good-quality academic and pastoral support is provided for all students.
- Measures to promote good attendance and behaviour are very effective.
- The governors' involvement in the work of the school is very good.
- The use of assessment to help students understand how well they are doing and how they could improve is not yet consistent enough.
- There are effective links with the wider community, particularly other schools and colleges.
- A significant proportion of parents are not involved enough in their children's learning.
- The good quality and range of provision for students with special educational needs.

Overall, improvement since the previous inspection has been very good. The school has sustained very good improvement in the standards of behaviour. The quality of teaching and learning has improved as the school has secured a more stable staffing situation across most subject areas. These improvements are having the greatest effect on the raising of standards in Years 7 to 9.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 11 results

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

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

Achievement is good overall. Students enter the school in Year 7 with overall standards that are well below the national average, but as a result of the improved teaching achieve well. In tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003, standards in English, mathematics and science were well below average, although in comparison to similar schools, students achieved satisfactorily overall. In the most recent tests there has been good improvement in mathematics and science and some improvement in English. Overall, standards in GCSE examinations have been slow to improve and remain well below average. The E* grade in the table indicates that students did not achieve as well as they should have. A significant factor in this was the turnover in staff that disrupted learning for these students, coupled with some weak study skills. Staffing is now good and there is a positive ethos that supports learning well. In the work seen, students are achieving well and standards overall have improved, but are below average by the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. The use and quality of assessment of students' work is **satisfactory** overall. Teaching is good overall as a direct result of the improved staffing situation. **Learning is good overall** as a result of

improved planning and work that is well matched to students' individual learning needs. The use of assessment to help students understand how to improve is variable across the subjects of the curriculum. The curriculum is well developed for Years 10 and 11 and is **good** overall, although provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory. Care, guidance and welfare arrangements are **good** and have led to a significant improvement in attitudes, behaviour and levels of attendance that support better learning. Very good links with the local college support a wide range of vocational courses.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management of the school is **very good**. The headteacher provides **excellent** leadership, and the leadership of other key staff is **good**. The governance of the school is **very good**. The management of the school is **good**. Leadership and management have led to significant improvements in standards of behaviour and attendance and a much-improved ethos for learning. Subject teams are developing well and have a clear focus on improving the quality of learning and raising standards. Over the last four years, an unusually high turnover of staff and difficulties with recruitment account for differences in the quality of the management of subjects. This is clearly evident in the varying extent to which information from assessment is managed to support students' learning. However, overall, departments are managed well. Issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with.

The involvement of the governors in the life of the school is very good. They have a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This puts them in a very strong position to hold the school to account. They use their complementary skills to very good effect in promoting excellence through their close involvement in development planning. Governors are aware that the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is not fully met because of a lack of enough large spaces to hold assemblies, but ensure that spiritual development is supported through other activities and provision of religious education.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Students have very positive views about their school. A small number of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and very few attended the parents' meeting. The majority of parents have generally positive views of what the school provides and achieves. A small minority of these parents disagree that students behave well and do not feel that they can comfortably approach the school with questions or problems. The inspection evidence does not support the views of these parents. Despite the school's best efforts, a significant proportion of parents are not involved enough in their children's learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure standards, particularly in GCSE examinations, improve.
- Improve the consistency and use of assessment information across subjects to ensure that work is matched to students' needs and they are informed about their learning.
- Improve provision in design and technology.
- Continue to extend and monitor the use of ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Improve the provision for citizenship and personal, social and health education.
- Provide a daily act of collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The achievement of students is **good**, although standards overall by the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11 are **below average**. Significant staffing difficulties across many subject areas over the past three years have had an adverse effect upon achievement and standards and as a result, the school has not achieved all its targets. Results in GCSE examinations have remained below average overall with no significant improvement for the last two years.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good progress in raising standards in science and ICT.
- The improved standards and achievement in mathematics in Years 7 to 9.
- Standards overall by the end of Year 11 are too low.
- Improved attitudes are supporting good learning in all years.
- Achievement is good across the majority of subjects by the end of Year 9.
- The achievement and good standards in GCSE history and geography.
- The good standards on the vocational science and the advanced vocational ICT course.
- The good achievement of students with special educational needs.

Commentary

Years 7 – 9

1. Students enter the school in Year 7 with standards that are well below average overall. Standards of literacy are well below on entry and this impacts upon the achievement and rate of progress. Good support from teachers and the additional educational needs staff ensures students with very low reading ages make good progress. The achievement of students with special educational needs, known in the school as those with additional educational needs, is good overall. By the end of Year 9, most improve their reading and spelling standards by two years or more and improve their English attainment by one National Curriculum level. Achievement by students for whom English is not their first language is also good throughout the school. Good induction arrangements and very good support for students in the early stages of English acquisition help these students to make a good start. Students have a good attitude to work and appreciate the support that is available to them at breaks and lunchtimes. There are, however, too few specialist staff to provide in-class support for all of their lessons. As a result of significant improvements to staffing, the quality of teaching and learning has improved in the past year. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are improving, but remain below average across the majority of subjects. These standards, however, represent good achievement given the low starting point for many students when they enter the school in Year 7.
2. In tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003, standards overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were well below the national average for boys and girls. Based upon the standards they achieved at the end of Year 6, students made good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in English. Their progress in science was below what might have been expected. Standards are improving steadily in these core subjects in Years 7 to 9. Particularly good has been the improvement in test results in 2004. Unconfirmed results for the 2004 tests indicate mathematics is further improved, science significantly improved and English also improved.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.6 (32.3)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	32.5 (32.2)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	29.3 (29.1)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 199 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Years 10 - 11

- Improvement in Years 10 and 11 is more variable. Standards are still not high enough, although in work seen, achievement by boys and girls overall is good. Examination results in 2003 and unconfirmed results for 2004 indicate some underachievement, much of which the school attributes to disruption in the past that impacted adversely on standards and achievement in several subject areas. The impact of staffing difficulties is still evident, especially in English where there is no substantive leadership and some teachers are working outside their specialism. The school carries out rigorous analysis of performance data for all groups of students and acts on its findings. Achievement by students for whom English is an additional language is very good when they receive in-class support, and there is a trend of improvement for these students. The skills of self-evaluation are variable across departments, but are developing well across most subject teams and having a positive effect upon departmental planning and strategies to improve the standards and achievement of all groups of students. The school has, for example, identified some underachievement by girls in mathematics, where strategies are now in place to remedy this. In the great majority of lessons and work seen during the inspection, students are achieving well as a result of the improved quality of teaching. Standards are above average in geography and there has been a steady trend of improvement for the last two years. Similarly, new staff in history have had a significant impact upon raising standards with unconfirmed examination results for 2004 being above average. In boys' physical education in particular there are clear signs of improvement. Standards on the newly introduced GNVQ science course are above average with units completed to date indicating very good achievement by students in Year 10. Similarly, there is very good achievement on the newly introduced advanced vocational ICT course, where standards are in line with course expectations.

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	27 (30)	52.0 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	75 (70)	91.0 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	90 (83)	96.0 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	24.0 (25.6)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 223 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Students with special educational needs have good attitudes to their learning due to the quality of support they receive from the school. There are marked improvements in their attendance and behaviour. Their levels of participation improve and they grow in confidence and self-esteem. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to improving the students' participation in the learning, and raising standards. At the end of Year 11, a significant proportion of students with special educational needs obtain at least five GCSE passes. Progress in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and geography, is good. The amount of in-class support for students for whom English is not their first language, whilst of a high quality, is, however, limited. Those at the early stages of

language acquisition make slower progress when it is not available, but overall their attitudes to learning are very good and many achieve well and at standards similar to other students.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is **good**, and the attitudes of the vast majority of students are **satisfactory**. Behaviour is **good**. Other aspects of students' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school successfully promotes good attendance.
- Opportunities for students to take responsibility have significantly improved.
- Very high expectations are set for students' conduct.
- The school successfully promotes very good relationships.
- The attitudes of a minority of students are unsatisfactory.
- Fixed term exclusions are high but are falling.

Commentary

5. An excellent monitoring system, managed by the attendance officer and with support from parents and carers, has dramatically improved attendance. During the last school year attendance was above the national average and for the current year so far, it is well above. Although unauthorised absence has increased, this is entirely due to the rigour with which the system is now applied. Most students arrive at school punctually and lessons begin on time.
6. Students' attitudes towards school are satisfactory and have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Most students participate enthusiastically in the life of the school, including the range of activities outside the classroom and within the local community. The opportunities for students to take responsibility within the school community and for their own learning have significantly improved. Good examples of the way this has been achieved are the establishment of the school council, the introduction of student planners, head boy and girl for each year and for the school, and Peer Mentors for Year 8. Students' views about what the school achieves and provides are substantially positive.
7. Overall, behaviour is good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Where teaching challenges students and engages them effectively, behaviour is often very good. The school's system of rewards is effective and is greatly valued by students. Relationships between students, as well as between students and adults, are very good and there was very little evidence of oppressive behaviour during the inspection. Fixed-term exclusions have been used rigorously over the past two years as a strategy for improving attitudes and behaviour of students. This strategy has resulted in a high number of fixed-term exclusions, but it has had a very positive impact on the improvement of behaviour and attitudes. During the last school year, there has been a significant reduction in the number of exclusions and there is evidence that the number has been reduced still further during the current year. Permanent exclusions are few.
8. Provision for students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Students' spiritual development is effectively provided through assemblies, the religious education curriculum and, to some extent, through the citizenship curriculum. However, opportunities to enhance students' spiritual awareness and to provide time for reflection in lessons involving other subjects are sometimes missed. The school council, educational visits and visitors, activities outside the classroom and the students' involvement in community projects and charitable fundraising encourage students to successfully develop social and moral awareness as well as positively contributing to their achievement and personal development. Students are able to gain a clear understanding of their own and other faiths and cultures through the curriculum provision and through the multicultural ethos embedded in the school

community. Tutor time is used effectively to cover many aspects of students' personal, social and health education. All of this activity has a beneficial impact on students' confidence and self-esteem.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2003-2004)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.6	School data:	1.1
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.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year (2003-2004)

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	679	517	
White – Irish	1		
White – any other White background	52	125	3
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8	38	
Mixed – White and Black African	4		
Mixed – White and Asian	0		
Mixed – any other mixed background	10	51	
Asian or Asian British – Indian	58	5	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	9	16	
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	38	16	
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	5	2	
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	41	
Black or Black British – African	15		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	25		
Chinese	9	4	
Any other ethnic group	14		
No ethnic group recorded	56	20	

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. The quality of assessment of students' work is **satisfactory**. Teaching is good overall as a direct result of the improved staffing situation. **Learning is good overall** as a result of improved planning and work that is well matched to students' individual learning needs. The use of assessment to help students understand how to improve is variable across the subjects of the curriculum. The curriculum is well developed for Years 10 and 11 and is **good** overall, although provision for

citizenship is unsatisfactory. Care, guidance and welfare arrangements are **good** and have led to significant improvement in attitudes, behaviour and levels of attendance that support better learning. Very good links with the local college support a wide range of vocational courses that motivate and very effectively engage students in their learning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. The assessment of students' work is **satisfactory** overall, but inconsistent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school places a high priority on the development of teaching and learning.
- Improved behaviour management has enabled teachers to raise achievement.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge in most lessons to plan activities that interest and motivate students.
- Assessment data is not used consistently across all departments to ensure that work is matched to students' needs and that they are informed about their learning.
- There are weaknesses in the teaching of design and technology and some weaknesses due to non-specialists in English.

Commentary

9. The development of teaching and learning is an important focus for the school. Most of the recent whole-school training that has taken place aims to improve learning for every student. All the issues relating to the quality of teaching and learning identified at the previous inspection have been dealt with. As a result, teaching has improved considerably with an increase in the proportion of good or better teaching and a reduction in the amount of unsatisfactory teaching.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 105 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (1%)	20 (19%)	45 (43%)	36 (34%)	3 (3%)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.

10. Recruitment problems of teachers with specialist knowledge have eased as a result of a successful campaign to raise the image of the school. The school has been rigorous in its efforts to improve teaching teams and there has been very high staff turnover since 2000, but this has diminished as teachers' morale has increased. A good feature of teaching in the school is the effective planning of lessons, which have clear learning objectives and teaching strategies that in the majority of lessons meet the needs of all learners, including those with special educational needs. Promotion for equality of opportunity is very good. Students for whom English is an additional language receive good support from a local authority advisory teacher and learn at the same rate as other students. The specialist advisory teacher works in partnership with staff to improve teaching and learning strategies in subject areas. This is essential to compensate for there only being one specialist support teacher and no learning support assistants dedicated to this group of students. Teachers understand how students learn. Hence they use imaginative methods to make lessons interesting and keep students working at or near their capacity. In a very small number of lessons in English and design and technology, teaching is unsatisfactory. The weaknesses in these lessons relate to some lack of specialist knowledge and experience in English and a lack of structure and challenge in some technology tasks so that students become bored and their learning is unsatisfactory.
11. Relationships between teachers and their students are good. There is very good expectation and challenge in teaching, particularly in relation to behaviour. Consequently, students work positively together in pairs and small groups, displaying good attitudes and behaviour in

lessons. Homework is set regularly and is marked carefully. Tasks set develop learning done in class or require students to research information prior to their next lesson. As a result, they come to lessons prepared to contribute and ready to learn.

12. Assessment of students' work is satisfactory. The picture across subjects of the curriculum is variable, but with some very good practice. Students in many subjects are aware of their potential grades and levels, which helps motivate them to improve. Arrangements for assessing and tracking progress have improved since the previous inspection. The school collates a large amount of relevant data about students' attainment that is used to place students in ability groups on entry to the school in Year 7. Data is analysed, shared with subject leaders, teachers, learning mentors and tutors, and used effectively to set annually reviewed whole-school targets. The skills of using this data and other assessment information are developing well, but are still variable in quality across subject teams. A few subjects do not use this data effectively along with subject assessments to plan for individual student's needs or to set them specific targets for improvement.
13. Teachers mark work regularly and in most departments give good guidance in lessons on how to improve. Assessment is used well and consistently in mathematics and is having a very positive effect on improving standards. In French, students' written exercises are marked in careful detail, which gives them good help in improving their work. In history, students are aware of the overall quality of their work because teachers provide a summary comment on each unit of work that clearly lays out their expectations of presentation, attainment and areas for improvement. This good practice has contributed to significant improvements in examination results.
14. In science, assessment of GCSE and GNVQ work is good and helps students to understand how to improve, but assessment of students' work in Years 7 to 9 is not so effective in informing students of the progress they make in each lesson. In design and technology, assessment practice is now well established across Years 7 to 9 and used effectively to monitor progress and improve standards. In Years 10 and 11, however, assessment is generally based on verbal discussion and written comments are not provided as guidance for improvement. In art and design, assessing still lacks rigour, written records lack detail, which is necessary if students are to be provided with clear objectives and targets that will help them to improve the quality of their work. In geography, results from assessments are not used sufficiently when planning future work. The school recognises that some variability in practice impacts upon the overall quality of support and guidance students receive and continues to provide support and training to improve the consistent use of assessment to support learning.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum in Years 7 to 11 is **good**. The opportunity for enrichment, including out-of-school activities, is **good**. The quality of the accommodation and resources to meet the needs of the curriculum is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision for students with learning difficulties.
- A good, inclusive academic and vocational curriculum in Years 10 and 11 meets the learning needs of all students.
- There are good opportunities for extra-curricular and enrichment activities.
- There is very effective monitoring of curriculum provision by managers to assess the quality of courses and to identify future needs.
- The overall quality of accommodation is good.
- Although citizenship and elements of personal, social and health education are covered in the curriculum, they are not effectively planned and monitored to meet full National Curriculum requirements.
- There are not adequate arrangements to provide a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

15. There is a good curriculum in Years 7 to 9. The school provides a broad curriculum in Years 10 and 11 that has been planned well to meet the learning needs of all students. In Years 10 and 11, students select from a comprehensive range of academic and vocational courses to match their learning needs and interests. Students receive good guidance and advice when they select their courses of study. Vocational courses are provided through a well-planned partnership link with the local college. There is very good management liaison with the college, ensuring the maximum support and guidance for all the students involved with the vocational courses. Managers carefully monitor and review all curriculum provision to ensure it is inclusive and meeting the needs of all students, including those with learning difficulties.
16. The school has planned well to meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum including the provision for religious education in Years 7 to 11. However, although assemblies are of good quality, there are not adequate arrangements for a daily act of collective worship either through assemblies or during tutorial time. Although citizenship is being covered and there is a short course for some students in Years 10 and 11, monitoring is not rigorous enough to ensure that citizenship is effectively planned across subjects to meet the full requirements of the National Curriculum. Co-ordinators are in place for cross-curricular themes in numeracy and literacy and some subjects are making valuable contributions to the development of skills in these areas. However, this is a developing area of management and curriculum to improve provision.
17. There is very good provision for students with special educational needs through a combination of in-class support and withdrawal to meet the needs of individual students. The introduction of vocational courses is effectively helping to meet the learning needs of these students. This is evident through improved behaviour, attitude and motivation. Gifted and talented students are identified but extension work to meet their specific learning needs in lessons varies from subject to subject. However, there are extra-curricular and enrichment activities available for these students.
18. All students benefit from a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, and are well informed about what is available. There are an extensive number of activities for all students to take part in within the school, in the local area, courses at study centres and tours abroad. Twilight classes are provided for many courses after school hours to extend opportunities. There is also good support for learning outside the school day through extra-curricular study and revision opportunities in the majority of subjects including after-school homework provision.

Accommodation and resources

19. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are good. The school site is safe, secure and well maintained. Specialist teaching accommodation is good or very good. There are particular strengths in science and dance, contributing to good standards and achievement in these subjects. The medical room is used as a thoroughfare and this compromises the quality of provision as privacy is not always possible. Accommodation for physical education is barely adequate, in need of decoration and does not support the department's aspirations for improvement. The school library is spacious and well used. It provides attractive accommodation for students to develop the skills of working independently or in groups.
20. In recent years, the school has experienced a very high turnover of staff as it has worked to restructure and improve the quality of teaching teams. It has very effectively overcome this difficulty through the skilful use of a wide range of approaches to recruitment. As a result, vacancies have usually been filled with good specialist staff. Any unqualified staff are well supported in obtaining qualified teacher status. A wide range of support staff makes an effective contribution in key areas of the school. However, specialist help for students with English as an additional language is limited. The school maximises the resources available

to enable students who speak English as an additional language to have good access to a full curriculum. However, at times, these are insufficient to provide in-class support for the increasing number of bi-lingual students in the school. The school recognises this and is keen to develop this support by increasing the number of teachers and teaching assistants.

21. Resources are good and are well used. There are particular strengths in music and dance, where they help to provide a wide range of activities that interest and motivate students. Many subjects have good access to ICT and use it regularly to reinforce or extend students' learning. Use of ICT is less good in art and design, English and mathematics. The school has made very good progress in the last few years in improving its accommodation and resources and further enhancements are already planned.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for students' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Students are very well cared for and protected. The support, advice and guidance that students receive about their achievements and their personal development are **satisfactory**. The school involves students in its work and development very successfully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care and welfare, including very trusting relationships, are very well established.
- Students are very effectively involved in the life of the school through the school council.
- Monitoring of students' personal development is not good enough.

Commentary

22. Policies and procedures for child protection and for promoting the health, safety and general welfare of students are very good. The school's pastoral system, particularly the work of the heads of year and learning mentors, is well structured with committed staff and effective lines of communication.
23. The involvement of outside agencies, including the school nurse, contributes significantly to the overall care and support of students.
24. Teachers and support staff know students and their families well and cater for their needs effectively. All students have excellent and trusting relationships with one or more adults in the school.
25. The procedures for reviewing the statements and individual education plans for students with special educational needs comply fully with statutory requirements and the expectations in the Code of Practice. Teachers have a good awareness of the students' needs and the support for students from internal and external specialists is effective.
26. The advice, support and guidance that all students receive throughout their time at school are satisfactory overall. However, assessment and monitoring of their academic progress is variable and monitoring and recording of students' personal development are not yet formalised.
27. Arrangements for the induction of students into the school and for their transfer to the next phase of education are good. Information from primary schools is used well to ensure students' needs are known and are met.
28. The school effectively seeks and acts upon the views of students through the school council and questionnaires for the students.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has made significant efforts to involve parents in the work of the school, but many are not sufficiently involved in their children's education.
- The information that parents receive is very good.
- There are very effective partnerships with the wider community, including other schools and colleges.

Commentary

29. Few parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting. The majority of parents have positive views of what the school provides and achieves. A few parents do not feel that students behave well or that they can comfortably approach the school with questions or problems. The inspection evidence does not support the views of these parents.
30. The information that parents receive, particularly about their children's progress, is very good. There are good links with outside specialists concerning students with speech, language, and sensory and physical impairments. The prospectus and newsletters are very well presented. Students' reports give a very clear picture of students' academic and personal development. There are a number of opportunities throughout the school year for parents to discuss their children's progress and to express their views, including parent questionnaires.
31. The school makes considerable efforts to encourage parental involvement in the life of the school and in their children's education. The development of the school website, academic mentoring days, and the introduction of student planners as a means of two-way communication between home and school, are good examples of these efforts. The parents of students with special educational needs receive copies of the individual education plans and are invited to attend and contribute to review meetings of individual education plans and statements. Parents have been fully supportive of the school's determination to improve attendance and to encourage all students to wear school uniform. There is a supportive parent teacher association and a committed group of parent governors. However, the extent to which parents are involved in their children's education at home and at school does not yet meet the school's expectations.
32. The school's links with the local community are very good. Strong partnerships exist with, amongst other groups, the local residents, local businesses, the church, Connexions Universal and Swindon Borough Council. The school facilities are used by a number of community groups and a range of visitors from the community contribute effectively to assemblies and other school activities.
33. The school has very effective links with other schools and colleges. There are effective mechanisms for the transfer of students to the next phase of their education. The linked provision for work-related learning with Swindon College is well managed and valued by the school, the students and the college and has a very positive impact on the attitudes and learning of students.
34. All of these links have enhanced the school's standing in the community and its ability to provide a wide variety of resources and challenging opportunities for its students and staff.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management of the school is **very good**. The headteacher provides **excellent** leadership, and the leadership of other key staff is **good**. The governance of the school is **very good**. The management of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a very clear direction to the work of the school and is very well supported by a dynamic leadership team.
- Through astute and inspiring leadership the school has improved significantly over the last few years and is clearly set to improve further.
- The governors have a detailed knowledge of what the school does well and of where it needs to develop further.
- Very efficient financial management ensures that the funds available to the school are used to the advantage of the students.
- Not all departments manage well the data gathered from examination and test results to set realistic yet challenging targets for the students.

Commentary

35. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. His energy, enthusiasm and sense of moral purpose lie at the heart of the school's success. He has communicated to staff and students a desire for excellence in all that the school provides. This shows itself in the extent to which the school has improved under his leadership, particularly attendance, teaching and the quality and range of the curriculum. Real strengths are the very clear strategic thinking and planning that focus on the immediate, practical and particular things that need to be done. This management of change has entailed significant restructuring of staffing. A very effective team of senior leaders works together well to realise the school's aims. In most departments, leadership is good. Leaders create effective teams, driven by a shared purpose. Their energies are clearly focused on raising the achievement of all students and on transforming classrooms into effective places of learning. They provide very good role-models for their colleagues and for the students.
36. The school is managed well. Managers are confident and well informed and have ensured that all students are included fully in what the school provides. In this respect, the management of provision for students for whom English is an additional language is particularly good in that these students are supported well. The partnership between the advisory teacher for bi-lingual students and a deputy head, the line manager, is very effective. Leadership encourages a welcoming environment in which these students have confidence for learning. The school has adapted and developed the curriculum in a way that suits the talents and temperaments of all the students. Over the last four years, an unusually high turnover of staff and difficulties with recruitment account for differences in the quality of the management of subjects. This is clearly evident in the varying extent to which information from assessment is managed to support students' learning. However, overall, departments are managed well. A key element in the drive towards improvement is the rigorous evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and the steps taken to learn from them.
37. The school benefits from very good governance. The involvement of the governors in the life of the school is excellent. They have a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This puts them in a very strong position to hold the school to account for the quality of what it provides and this they do very well. They use their complementary skills to very good effect in promoting excellence through their close involvement in development planning. They monitor carefully the rigour with which senior managers work to maintain high standards of performance in all staff. They have ensured that statutory requirements are met, apart from those relating to elements of the provision for citizenship and a daily act of collective worship. They have been robustly involved in moving the school from significant difficulties to becoming a thriving community of learners. Their imaginative

approach to the school's difficulties in recruiting new staff has born fruit in significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in the justifiable self-assurance of the staff.

38. The financial affairs of the school are managed and controlled very well. The resources available to the school are clearly directed towards meeting the school's essential needs. Governors are closely involved in monitoring the budget and in ensuring that, in matters of significant expenditure, considerations of cost and value inform decisions. Resources are managed very well to support the students' learning. A very good administrative staff ensures that daily routines are established and maintained to a high standard. This is particularly true of the management of matters related to the students' health and safety.
39. The leadership and management of the school have improved significantly over the last four years. Innovation is embraced as a challenge and not as a threat. Through the commitment, imagination and dedication of the staff the school is set to improve further.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income (includes balance from previous year)	3,823,887	Balance from previous year	164,671
Total expenditure	3,664,390	Balance carried forward to the next	159,497
Expenditure per pupil	3,487		

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning

Provision for work-related learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good links with the local college support a wide range of vocational courses.
- Work-related learning is well led and managed to ensure that courses meet students' needs.
- Vocational courses at the local college are thoroughly monitored, assessed and evaluated.
- Students are achieving well on science and ICT vocational courses.
- Work-related learning experiences across the curriculum are not sufficiently monitored or evaluated.

Commentary

40. The school has made significant progress since the previous inspection, broadening opportunities for work-related learning through the development of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. These curriculum revisions now provide clear pathways and a good range of options for students to pursue vocational courses alongside their more academic studies both in school and at the local college.
41. The inspection team sampled college courses and found students were overwhelmingly positive about the quality of their courses. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Attendance is good and students are motivated to learn and achieve well.
42. School-based vocational courses in ICT and science, together with GCSE business studies, also enable students to develop specific skills and knowledge for the world of work. These are taught well. An advanced vocational qualification in ICT is providing a challenging

vocational course for higher-attaining students. Standards on these school-based courses are good.

43. A comprehensive programme of work-experience placements for all Year 10 students enables them to learn well about the world of work through direct experience. Preparation for these is thorough and they are given opportunities to reflect on and evaluate their experiences afterwards. Subjects such as English also provide tasks to develop students' skills of communication, such as letter writing for their work placement. An alternative curriculum provides significant motivation for those in danger of disaffection through extended work placements.
44. Students also learn about work through visiting speakers, careers advice and guidance and work-related learning days. Through the six citizenship days, students broaden their understanding of the world of work. Many subjects make contributions to students' learning, such as developing concepts of profit and loss in spreadsheet work in ICT. Visits to local businesses and organisations further extend their understanding of work. For example, as part of their science course they go to the local hospital to see practical applications of forensic science. Understanding in the lower years is satisfactory overall and further developed through such activities as a 'Take your child to work' day where children spend time at their parents' place of work, and 'The Real Game' in which students run small business simulations.
45. Good-quality careers advice is provided through the school-based Connexions service and students have access to a careers library of information.
46. Leadership and management of work-related learning are good and have ensured a very good range of provision. The courses now on offer at the local college and within the school motivate and engage students very effectively in their learning. Monitoring and evaluation of local college provision is very good. Although there has been some identification of the wider opportunities across the curriculum, there is not a full audit and monitoring of work-related learning for all students. Staff responsible for developing work-related learning have good links with the local network for Swindon, which offers the chance to see best practice and develop ideas and make improvements within the school.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Low attainers receive excellent challenge and support.
- Assessment is not used consistently to inform students about their learning.
- Leadership is unsatisfactory due to fragmentation of the department.
- There is good provision for improving literacy.
- Specialist accommodation creates a productive learning environment.

Commentary

47. When students enter the school, their standards in English are well below the national average. Many have low reading ages and for a significant minority of students their literacy skills are a barrier to learning. By the end of Year 9, students' performance in national tests in 2003 was well below the national average and below average in comparison to students in similar schools. There was some underachievement as a direct result of disruption to teaching caused by staff turnover. Students' performance in tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004 indicates that standards have risen and that students achieved satisfactorily based on their standards when they joined the school in Year 7. In Year 11, standards are well below the average expected nationally, with a lower proportion of students gaining higher grades. In 2003 GCSE English and English literature examinations, students achieved and performed well compared to their other subjects. Although 2004 provisional results suggest a downward trend, achievement was satisfactory and there have been improvements at the higher grades. Overall, boys perform below girls in line with national differences.
48. Overall, students' achievement in lessons is now satisfactory due to the deployment of specialist staff. Provision for additional educational needs is good. Students in the lowest band of ability make very good progress in Years 7-9 because teaching is targeted to their needs and teachers make very good use of individual education plans. Students with English as an additional language or additional educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants in mainstream classes, which helps them achieve.
49. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some evidence of very good to excellent practice. Schemes of work have recently been revised to address the needs of all attainers, and support from the local education authority has improved the quality of planning overall. Students make good progress in learning when teachers' lessons are well structured and build on prior knowledge. There is a large team of teachers, some of whom are not English specialists. Weaknesses occur where less-experienced teachers do not plan learning to meet the needs of their classes. When teachers provide challenging guidance in structuring writing, students respond confidently in a range of styles. Where computers are used, they help students to improve the quality of their written assessments. There is scope for the development of visual resources to complement the teaching of those students with English as an additional language. Most teachers make good use of prior attainment information, but there is room for improvement in assessment procedures. Good use of assessment books has led to an improved focus on writing and presentation skills. Year 7 and 8 students make very good progress when self-assessment and target setting are rigorous, but this practice is not yet consistent across the department.
50. Leadership is unsatisfactory overall, lacking clarity of how to move a large department forward. An acting head of department has only been in post since September and the department has suffered from fragmentation due to turnover in staffing, so that development of the English team has been difficult. The day-to-day management and running of the department are satisfactory. There has been a clear agenda for improving assessment, but policies and procedures have yet to be developed and used consistently across all teaching groups. Extra lessons targeted at improving coursework have been put in place to address standards in Year 11. Formal monitoring of teaching and learning is now a priority. The department has the capacity to improve by building on good practice.

51. Accommodation is very good with a suite of adjacent rooms, which enhance students' learning through supportive displays and well-used equipment. The intervention programme provides additional support through good small-group tutoring to improve basic skills of reading and writing. Students from Year 10 and the neighbouring college individually coach weaker readers and help them achieve.
52. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Although examination results have not improved, standards of work seen are generally in line with students' expected grades based on prior attainment.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Literacy skills are generally below average. Literacy provision is good and well monitored by senior management. Keywords are displayed prominently in departments and students are challenged to use subject-specific vocabulary effectively in the majority of subjects. In history, geography and English, good use is made of writing frames or prompts to structure longer writing tasks. Marking in science provides clear advice on how to improve written work. In art and design, religious education and English, weaker readers are well supported. A library reward scheme celebrates improvement in reading skills. In art and design and English, students are encouraged to use the Internet for research. The use of consistent spelling strategies is developing.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students do not have sufficient practise in speaking French or German.
- ICT is well used to support learning.
- There are too many passive activities in lessons, which do not sufficiently motivate students.
- Teachers mark work in helpful detail.
- The behaviour of some students in German is not well managed.
- Resources are carefully planned and prepared.

Commentary

54. Standards at the end of Year 9 are well below the expected National Curriculum levels in French and German. Reasons for this include changes in teaching staff and the limited amount of time allocated to some groups. However, in lessons seen and work analysed during the inspection, students' achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. They enter the school with very low levels of the skills required to study a foreign language, but learn an extended range of new vocabulary and phrases. Their progress in speaking and developing accurate pronunciation is not as good. Students of average and below average ability are hesitant and lack confidence as a result of limited practice.
55. Standards at the end of Year 11 are below average. In 2003, GCSE results were well below the national average in both languages. Girls' results were significantly better in French than boys, whose learning was affected by lower levels of motivation. The unconfirmed results for 2004 show good improvements in the pass rates for both languages and particularly for German. In both Years 10 and 11, achievement overall is satisfactory. Most students continue to extend the range of vocabulary used in their written work. As in Years 7 to 9, their progress in speaking French and German is limited. They achieve significantly less well in these important skills.
56. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory across all years. Teachers regularly use easily accessible ICT resources to practise and extend students' learning. In French, students' written exercises are marked in careful detail. This gives them good help in

improving their work. Lessons start promptly and pace is good. Well-prepared resources are already distributed and waiting for students, which immediately focus their attention at the beginning of lessons. In some lessons, however, there is too much emphasis on reading and writing and the use of worksheets. This means that learning is passive rather than involving all students actively. Students do not practise their speaking enough and there is insufficient emphasis on oral skills. The range of activities is too narrow and students lack motivation resulting in some unsatisfactory behaviour, which is not well managed. This is particularly true in German.

57. There is no overall head of languages. Separate subject leaders provide satisfactory leadership in the languages for which they are responsible. They are keen to improve standards and achievement. Management is also satisfactory with day-to-day work well coordinated. There has been satisfactory progress in the department in the last few years, but teaching approaches are still not consistent. A key factor in improvement has been the reorganisation of the languages curriculum through the support of the headteacher and senior management team.

MATHEMATICS

The quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership has resulted in a positive ethos and a shared commitment to raising standards.
- Good teaching helps students achieve well in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Thorough and regular assessment leads to an understanding of students' needs and assists in future planning.
- Standards in the subject are improving.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support students' learning.
- There is no whole-school policy for mathematics across the curriculum.

Commentary

58. Students enter the school with attainment levels well below the national average. In national tests in 2003 at the end of Year 9, students' results showed good improvement in relation to prior attainment, although standards were below the national average. In 2004, the improvement was very good. The trend over the past three years has been for boys to do better than girls. Standards have fluctuated over time due to many changes in staffing, but in the past two years the trend has been upwards.
59. GCSE results for 2003 show that the proportion of students attaining grades A* to C was well below the national average. Boys' performance was much better than that of the girls because some girls underachieved. The number of passes at grades A* to G was also below national norms. The performance of boys and girls in this category was similar. Results in 2004 have improved slightly at grades A* to C and the number of students gaining grades A* to G is now close to the national average. There was significant improvement in this category by students for whom English is an additional language. From work seen during the inspection, standards of attainment are improving.
60. By the end of Year 9, all groups of students make very good progress in relation to prior attainment and achieve very well. Several factors have brought about this impressive improvement. Students' level of attainment is identified on entry and all follow a curriculum matched to their individual needs. This is supported by the good quality of teaching and learning with uniformly applied assessment systems.
61. By the end of Year 11, overall achievement is satisfactory. Students with special educational needs achieve very well. They receive in-class support in order to reach the targets set for

them. Gifted and talented students also achieve very well. Extension work in lessons and attendance at revision classes are proving to be effective in ensuring that this group attains the highest standards of which they are capable. Students for whom English is an additional language make very good progress and achieve very well. They receive very good support in the early stages of English acquisition. They have a very good attitude to their studies and appreciate the educational opportunities the school offers. Overall, achievement is not consistent across all groups in Years 10 and 11. It is diminished by the underachievement of a significant minority of students of average ability, especially girls. This lack of achievement is a reflection of the students' low expectations. These disaffected students have a poor attitude to work and this affects their progress. To remedy this situation, learning mentors encourage and support students in their studies. Staff ensure that students are involved in assessment procedures, so that they understand what they have to do to reach their targets. In a further effort to improve achievement in this group, the department is making strenuous efforts to increase attendance at booster classes. These measures are beginning to prove effective.

62. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good, and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. This improvement since the previous inspection is the result of better planning and match of work to students' needs, which is addressing the underachievement of the past. Lesson planning, based on the National Numeracy Strategy, is very good in Years 7 to 9. Short starter sessions provide opportunities for students to consolidate previous learning. In the main activity, teaching resources are used effectively to sustain interest and concentration for learning. Teachers' use of targeted questions matched to students' level of ability makes sure that all students participate in lessons and achieve well. Teachers have high expectations of good standards of work and behaviour. Students respond well to the tasks set for them and behaviour is good. Relationships are very good and lessons are mostly conducted in a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere.
63. The development of literacy skills is fully supported by the emphasis on key words and learning objectives. Teachers improve students' speaking skills by asking them to give reasons for their answers. Students have opportunities to work independently. They also demonstrate the ability to work co-operatively in pairs. Teachers use ICT extensively for presentation and explanation. However, students have insufficient opportunities to use ICT to support their learning. A rigorous programme of homework has been introduced. Assessment procedures are good and consistently used. Collection and recording of assessment data for tracking students' progress are thorough. Marking is consistent with specific comments designed to help students improve the standard of their work. Students understand which level they are working at and how to improve their performance.
64. Leadership and management are very good. The head of faculty has a clear vision for the subject with a focus on raising standards of attainment. He has created a team that is also committed to raising achievement, which works collaboratively towards this objective. ICT is effectively used in the efficient organisation of the subject. The head of faculty monitors teaching regularly. He uses data well to evaluate the subject and to take corrective action, for example, by putting effective systems in place to improve the standards of underachieving students in Years 10 and 11. Accommodation is good and book resources are sufficient for the needs of the curriculum. ICT resources have recently been purchased and are gradually being introduced into the curriculum to support learning.
65. Since the previous inspection, there has been good improvement. High-quality teaching has reached a level, which has resulted in an improvement in standards of attainment and achievement, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Consistent practice among teachers in the mathematics department in the development of students' numerical skills enables students to cope effectively with the demands made in other subjects. Students transfer numerical skills learned in mathematics lessons

competently to use them in other subjects when given opportunities to do so. For example, in a geography lesson, students calculated accurately the depth of river valleys using given data, and in ICT, used transposition of formulae and calculations confidently in the preparation of spreadsheets. There is, however, no whole-school policy for mathematics across the curriculum. The result is that students may miss opportunities to practise or consolidate mathematical skills across the curriculum. The numeracy co-ordinator is developing a clear policy for mathematics across the curriculum to increase students' opportunities for practising numerical skills in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The team of motivated, highly knowledgeable teachers is very well led.
- Standards are rapidly improving in Years 10 and 11 as a result of the introduction of GNVQ courses.
- Students achieve well because their attitudes to learning are good.
- Assessment of students' work in Years 7 to 9 does not inform them enough of the progress they make in lessons.

Commentary

67. In 2003 in national tests at the end of Year 9, standards were well below average, having declined from the previous year. Standards improved significantly in 2004, reversing this decline. GCSE results in 2003 were below average and showed no improvement in 2004. The department moved to a GNVQ science course for most students from September 2004. Gifted and talented students follow triple science and there are opportunities for students to study double science and single science. Students are highly motivated by the course. Standards seen in lessons are above expectations and achievement is good, given that students enter school with skills in science that are well below average. Students who speak English as a second language and students with special educational needs make good progress due to the good support they receive from teachers and classroom assistants. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
68. The standard of teaching, which was criticised in the previous inspection, is now good across the age range and results in good learning. Students acquire practical skills well and make good progress with their learning, particularly when doing investigation work in small groups. Support for students with English as an additional language is developing, with materials such as worksheets translated from the Internet enabling them to engage in lessons and make similar progress to other students. Recently recruited specialist teachers have helped raise standards by introducing new, effective teaching techniques. All teachers have good subject knowledge, set high expectations and insist on high standards of behaviour in lessons, leading to very good student attitudes. There is now good classroom management and good utilisation of teaching assistants when they are available and this ensures all students make good progress. Good use of homework reinforces learning. Worksheets are very well designed so all students progress well, including more able students. Assessment of GCSE and GNVQ work is good, but assessment of students' work in Years 7 to 9 only views standards at the end of each topic rather than informing students of the progress they make in each lesson.
69. Leadership and management are both very good. The newly appointed head of department has spearheaded the drive to improve standards and in a short period of time has transformed the department. Very good team spirit has lifted morale and the team works collaboratively to share good practice and further improve the quality of teaching. Areas for improvement are identified and acted upon, resulting in a very good range of courses for all students. The head of department is a very good role-model for teachers in his team. He

works hard to evaluate and review ways they can improve teaching and learning in science. Recently revised lesson plans include good teaching methods and different pathways for students with differing needs. The science department is leading the way in pioneering innovative ideas within the school.

70. Accommodation is very good. The recently rebuilt laboratories are light, spacious and suitable for scientific investigations to be carried out safely. There is sufficient equipment to enable teachers to use interesting and varied practical activities and these good resources are managed well by the team of competent, highly valued technicians. There are not enough data projectors or interactive whiteboards, but where they are available, they are used very effectively.
71. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. Science investigations and the use of ICT are now clearly identified in teachers' lessons plans. The appointment of well-qualified teachers has also helped to raise standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good leadership and management of the ICT department that is raising standards.
- Significant improvement has been made in ICT provision since the last inspection.
- Innovative curriculum development is supporting good learning and meeting students' needs well in Years 10 and 11.
- The use of ICT for teaching and learning across the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- The lack of specialist ICT teachers in Years 7-9 does not allow some students to achieve as well as they might.

Commentary

72. The results of teachers' assessments at Year 9 were well below average in 2003. Results for 2004 show an improvement, but are still below average. Progress, however, is satisfactory in view of the students' starting points and the variable provision for the subject in previous years. Work seen during the inspection in Years 7-9 is of a higher standard, but still below average.
73. The school did not enter students for examinations in 2004. ICT is now a compulsory subject for all students in Years 10 and 11. A range of courses are now offered, which gives all students challenges in their learning and improvement in their overall ICT capability. Examination work seen in all courses at Years 10 and 11 is average, reflecting good achievement and a rise in standards in the department.
74. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Specialist teaching is good in all years, challenges students and leads to good achievement. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is more variable because of the need to use non-specialist teachers to cover classes. These teachers are experienced and are well prepared and supported by the specialist teachers in relation to planning and resources, but their ICT subject knowledge is variable, resulting in slower progress made in learning. Where specialist classroom support is provided for students with English as an additional language, they make good progress in line with other students. In Years 10 to 11, all teaching is by ICT specialists and is consistently good. Teachers' wide subject knowledge is used to provide good illustrative examples and adapted resources that aid learning and also challenge and support individuals. Students' attitudes to the subject are very positive and their motivation and engagement in lessons is high with students' independent learning skills evident.

75. Since the previous inspection there has been a complete change of staff, with the appointment in 2003 of a director for information and communication technology with responsibility for both the subject and information and communication technology across the curriculum. Leadership and management are now very good and are driving up standards. In a very short time, the director of ICT has identified the main areas for improvement and taken action that has resulted in significant improvement. Resources have been substantially improved and the school now meets government guidelines with one computer for every five students. Improvement has been made in both teaching and the curriculum on offer, which has resulted in higher attainment in the subject for all students. In addition, an information and communication technology teacher and a network manager were appointed this year, which has given the school the basis of a strong team for the delivery of ICT courses for all students and support for developing ICT across the curriculum. The small team shows vision, commitment and high aspirations, which puts it in a strong position to improve further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. Provision for ICT across the curriculum is good. Most subjects now have good access to computers with most faculties having a dedicated suite of computers. This shows significant improvement since the last inspection. The use of ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum is still in the early stages of development. The ICT team supports subject departments in reviewing their schemes of work to include ICT, and a number of departments use the facilities effectively to support students in their learning. Good use is made in science in the vocational course followed in Years 10 and 11 and in music and the performing arts resources are used effectively to improve performance in these areas. There is no effective system for monitoring and evaluating the use of ICT across the curriculum and to drive developments forward.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- New leadership has resulted in much higher standards at GCSE.
- Teachers make good use of visual resources to enthuse students.
- Higher-attaining students are not always given scope to make greater progress.
- Learning is reviewed effectively through the use of well-prepared resources.

Commentary

77. Standards in GCSE examinations in 2003 were well below the national average. Students' performance was relatively weak compared with results obtained in their other school subjects. Girls performed much better than boys. This was because there were a significant number of weaker boys in the history group. However, standards have improved significantly in 2004 and unconfirmed results indicate standards were well above national averages. Half of the students entered for GCSE in 2004 achieved grades that were better than expected. The unsatisfactory achievement of students in the past has been addressed through improvements to teaching and learning and a sharper focus on the examination requirements.
78. Teacher assessments show that standards at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below national averages. Standards have improved, but remain below average in work seen in Years 7 to 9. Standards are average in Years 10 and 11 and overall achievement is good. Achievement has improved and is good for both boys and girls across the age range because of improved teaching and learning, which has resulted from new subject leadership.

79. Teaching and learning are good across the age range. Teachers explain very clearly how to extract information from historical sources and record information. The learning environment in classrooms is very good, particularly for visual learners because teachers make good use of visual props, prompts and wall displays, which help to reinforce key points and specialist terminology. Teachers provide effective lesson starter activities using summary and flash cards in order to review learning. Students achieve well when given the opportunity to work on their own projects. In Years 10 and 11 they are expected to write in more detail, but teachers do not always provide extension tasks for higher-attaining students by, for example, giving them more complex sources to respond to and this limits their progress. Occasionally, teachers do not challenge less-vocal students to answer questions.
80. Students with special educational needs achieve well in most lessons because tasks are carefully structured to meet their needs. However, in some lessons, lower-attaining students are not always given tasks that match their needs. Students who speak English as an additional language have work clearly explained to them and often get extra help through effective in-class support that ensures they make similar progress to other students. Teachers plan exercises to enable them to handle unfamiliar vocabulary. In most lessons, students have a positive attitude and work at a good pace. When some students lose concentration, teachers manage their behaviour very well. Homework booklets containing clearly structured tasks are completed well. Students are aware of the overall quality of their work because teachers provide a summary comment on each unit of work that clearly lays out their expectations of presentation, attainment and areas for improvement. In Years 7 to 9, assessments are being developed so students get a more regular understanding of how they can improve. In Years 10 and 11, students use very well-designed exam preparation booklets. These are completed well and enable students to get regular and quality practice at past exam questions.
81. Leadership is good. A change in leadership has brought more rigour to planning by using, for example, more stimulating resources to improve learning. Good contributions to numeracy are made. Students' literacy skills are improved because teachers ensure that key terminology is used correctly. Use of information and communication technology is developing well. Management is satisfactory because, although the department has begun to evaluate its development and has made some significant changes, further adjustments in the schemes of work, assessment in Years 7 to 9 and the analysis of performance data at GCSE are still being developed. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The subject has been transformed from one of the least effective to one of the most effective subjects at GCSE.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE examinations in 2003 are above the national average and have improved further in 2004.
- Lessons are challenging and well structured so students achieve well.
- The needs of the higher attainers are not always met.
- The department is well organised and teachers work well collaboratively to produce a range of resources.

Commentary

82. GCSE results were above average in 2003 and continued to improve in 2004. Overall, students attained better results in geography than in many subjects they took at the same time. These results represent very good achievement for the students concerned, compared with their attainment when they started the course. At the end of Year 9, results in teachers'

assessments are below the national average, but from work seen this represents good achievement compared to standards on entry to the school.

83. All students achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subject, and plan and structure their lessons well. They make good use of ICT to create and display a wide range of attractive resources. For example, Year 9 students responded very well to using computers when researching earthquakes, which enabled them to considerably improve their understanding. Classroom display is stimulating, the marking of work helps students to improve and homework is used to extend the learning of the lesson. In some lessons, the pace and tasks set do not meet the needs of the higher attainers.
84. Good leadership and management of the department ensure students' progress is tracked carefully. Teachers give clear feedback so students know how well they are doing and how to improve. The work is well planned and updated regularly by a united team of teachers that work well together to improve their teaching and the way they assess the students' work. Results from assessments are not used sufficiently when planning future work. There are clear priorities for further development.
85. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, and results have continued to rise. The department has both the capacity and commitment to improve further.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students build well on their earlier attainment and achieve well.
- As a result of much good teaching and encouragement, students are eager to succeed.
- The leadership and management of the department are clearly focused on students' learning and on continually improving the quality of teaching.
- The school has recruited a strong team of teachers.
- There are occasional missed opportunities to encourage students to develop their own ideas.

Commentary

86. Overall, standards are below average. Given the very low levels of attainment students bring to the school, this represents good achievement. Students fall well below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 9. They come to Year 7 with very limited understanding and knowledge and poor skills in reading and writing. They build well on their earlier attainment, though they do not do justice to their understanding in their written work.
87. GCSE results in 2004 were well below average for students gaining A*-C grades, though standards in the current examination group's work are better. Students in Year 10 reach standards that are below average for this stage of their course. This represents good achievement in relation to the well below average attainment with which they started the course. Though standards of writing are generally weak, higher-attaining students write well for a good range of purposes and readers. Most other students do not write fluently about religious beliefs and practices as they have difficulties with spelling and sentence formation.
88. Teaching and learning are good across the years, with some particularly effective teaching in Year 10. The teachers have done much to give students pride in their work and confidence in their capacity to succeed. The students, in turn, are eager to do well. They know the extent to which they are succeeding and how they might improve their work. The teachers work hard to relate what the students learn about religious faith to their own inner thoughts, concerns and destinies. Not all teachers work effectively at encouraging students to develop

their own ideas and defend them. This occasionally encourages students to settle for opinions that are not justified adequately.

89. The subject is well led and managed by the head of department, who has brought about significant improvements over the last few years. A particular strength is in the excellent documentation developed to support teaching and learning. Given the extreme difficulties experienced in recruiting the right calibre of staff, the school has done well to provide good-quality religious education. The department has improved well over the last few years, particularly in bringing the curriculum into line with statutory requirements. It is clearly set to improve further through its strong focus on teaching and learning.

Sociology was sampled.

90. Teaching was good overall and students achieve well. Standards are broadly average and knowledge and understanding are successfully developed. Students enjoy their lessons and develop skills of thinking and analysis. In a lesson on the nature of work, students made good progress defining different concepts of work. Higher attainers demonstrated a refined grasp of the subject. In the second lesson, students made satisfactory progress developing their knowledge and understanding of pressure groups and how they work in a democracy, but written tasks were less challenging. In both lessons, good use was made of questioning to get students thinking for themselves.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The results in GCSE courses remain well below national expectations.
- In Years 7 to 9, students do not gain a good understanding of design and the use of practical skills as a foundation for courses in Years 10 and 11.
- In Years 7 to 9, good use is made of data to monitor students' progress and assessment is well established.
- There is good use of facilities for computer-aided design and manufacture.
- Although the general management of the department is satisfactory, important issues have not been considered to raise standards in Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11.
- The department does not make effective use of its accommodation.

Commentary

91. The standards achieved by students at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were similar to the national averages for design and technology. In lessons, standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. However, students do not have a good understanding of designing and their practical skills are not developed well across the different material areas. Because there is no planned approach to the teaching of graphical skills, the quality of presentation and the ability to communicate ideas effectively are both limited. Students also gain little experience in using control systems. However, there is increasing use of ICT for simple designing and for manufacturing processes.
92. GCSE results in 2003 were well below the national averages. Although results improved in 2004, they still remain well below national averages with students underachieving in relation to their predicted capability. In Year 10 electronic lessons, the overall standard is satisfactory and achievement is satisfactory. In Year 11 resistant material lessons, the overall standard is unsatisfactory and achievement is unsatisfactory. Research, particularly in resistant materials, is not providing students with the design information required to support the development of well thought-out design ideas. Students in resistant materials also lack the

practical skills and technical knowledge expected at the start of a GCSE course. However, they do make good use of ICT in coursework folios for presentation and basic research.

93. The overall quality of teaching and learning in lessons is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. Where lessons are satisfactory or better, the planning is effective, the work is challenging and learning is reviewed well with students. In lessons that are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 there is often a lack of challenge in the tasks set and students lack an understanding of what needs to be done. Teachers work well with students to support their learning and progress in lessons. Students with learning difficulties are supported well in lessons and make satisfactory progress. Specialist support staff help students with English as an additional language to achieve through individual support and materials such as translated support sheets.
94. The leadership of the department is satisfactory, but there is no clear vision for the development of the department. Although there has been a trend towards improvement, a number of issues have not been addressed, particularly the lack of technological challenge in the work. Management is satisfactory and the head of department effectively monitors teaching. Although teaching has improved, in Years 7 to 9 students do not gain a good understanding of designing and making as a foundation for Years 10 and 11. This situation has not been considered in the department development plan. Assessment practice is now well established across Years 7 to 9 and used effectively to monitor progress. In Years 10 and 11, assessment is unsatisfactory because it is generally based on verbal discussion and written comments are not provided as guidance for improvement. Schemes of work in Years 7 to 9, although well structured, do not contain the planning detail to ensure good subject knowledge and understanding as a foundation for Years 10 and 11.
95. The accommodation for design and technology is satisfactory, but there is the opportunity to make better use of the spare rooms available for teaching or to develop as learning resource areas. More facilities have been provided for ICT activities and are being used well.
96. Improvement has been slow. Assessment practice is becoming well established in Years 7 to 9 and the overall quality of teaching is now satisfactory. The provision for computer-aided design and manufacture has improved. Results at the end of Year 9 are now in line with national averages. However, standards at GCSE remain well below expectations with a lack of effective research and creativity. There is a lack of technological challenge in the work for Years 7 to 9, including experience of systems and control. There continues to be poor display in most areas of the department and examples of good practice are not shared. The reduction in numbers of students taking design and technology courses in Years 10 and 11 is a serious issue for the future development of the department.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make good progress from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 9.
- Students' attainment in the 2003 GCSE examination was higher than in their other school subjects.
- Teachers are well informed and possess good subject knowledge.
- Procedures for assessing, tracking and recording students' achievement lack rigour.
- Students have very limited access to computers and digital cameras within the art area.

Commentary

97. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is well below national expectations as students have very weak drawing, painting and craft skills. By Year 9, most have gained greater control over a range of media and materials, which has led to improvement in their technical skills. The standard of work produced by students is just below the national average. Achievement is good.
98. In the 2003 GCSE examination, the number of students who attained the highest grades of A*-C was well below the national average. However, their performance in the art and design examination was higher than in many of their other school subjects. In the 2004 GCSE examination, there was a significant decline in the number of students achieving grades A*-C. This can largely be attributed to disruption in staffing over the past four years and to a reduction in staffing in the department from three teachers to two. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language are well integrated into teaching groups and given good support by their teachers. Achievement from the start of Year 10 to the end of Year 11 is good. The standard of work that is currently being produced by students in Years 10 and 11 is in line with expectations.
99. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features. Teachers are well informed and possess good subject knowledge. Organisation during lessons is usually good, but management of students' behaviour is an area for improvement. On occasions there is too much tolerance of idle chatter that is unrelated to the task in hand. Teachers have high expectations of students, who are encouraged to work to the best of their ability. At present, schemes of work are satisfactory and are kept under review by the recently appointed head of department. Homework is set and marked on a regular basis, but there is a need for greater consistency in marking by the members of the department. Students' planners show that homework is not always recorded. Teachers provide good support for students with special educational needs and for those students for whom English is not their first language.
100. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The present head of department has only been in post for a little over one year, but she has already made some positive changes. She has a very clear vision of how she wants the department to develop and has established very good relationships with other members of the department. An effective team has brought greater stability to the department after many changes of staffing over the past four years. However, assessing still lacks rigour. The more formal, written records lack detail, which is necessary if students are to be provided with clear objectives and targets that will help them improve the quality of their work.
101. Accommodation is good. There are three large multi-purpose studios, one of which is used almost exclusively by students to produce artwork in their own time. The display of work in these studios is good. In the context of a traditional model of the curriculum, resources are just satisfactory, but students have very little access to photographic equipment or computers and digital cameras. In spite of the decline in the GCSE examination results in 2004, this is an improving department. The head of department is determined that each student should be given ample opportunity to develop his or her potential to the full through art, craft and design activities.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Criteria for assessing students' progress in Years 7-9 are not developed well enough to ensure consistency between teachers.
- The very good music technology resources support students' composing and performing well in Years 10 and 11, but their use is less well developed in Years 7-9.

- The music curriculum in Years 7-9 does not include enough singing or learning about music of different cultures.

Commentary

102. Standards in music are below average overall, but students achieve well because teaching and learning are good. There has been some instability in staffing during the last two years, which has affected standards and achievement, particularly in Years 10 and 11, but the recently appointed acting head of department, who is also a newly qualified teacher, is already making a significant difference to students' learning.
103. Teacher assessments for 2003 show students attaining standards in line with the national average by the end of Year 9. Results for 2004 are likely to show a decline in standards when national figures become available. This is because of staffing issues. In lessons seen during the inspection, standards in Year 9 were below national expectations. Students enter the school in Year 7 with well below average musical skills and they achieve well by the end of Year 9 as a result of good teaching. Students with special educational needs, those whose mother tongues are not English and the more musically able achieve as well as other students.
104. GCSE results for 2003 were well below the national average for grades A* - C and below average for grades A* - G. Results for 2004 are similar, but national figures are provisional. Students did not attain as well as they should because of the instability in staffing. Standards seen in Year 11 are below national expectations. Performing is the strongest area of students' work. Their knowledge and understanding of theoretical aspects and of technical terms are weak. Achievement has improved and is satisfactory by the end of Year 11 because, although there are currently staffing issues, students are taught by music specialists, lessons are organised to target specific areas of musical learning and teaching is good. Another music teacher has been appointed to start at the beginning of next term.
105. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is some very good teaching and learning in Years 7-9. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Lesson planning for students following different learning pathways is good. Where teaching and learning are very good, students are fully engaged in their learning and develop their musical understanding and learning very effectively because of very effective teaching methods. Questioning is used very effectively to assess students' knowledge and understanding, to challenge them further and to help them to think for themselves. Consequently, students improve their knowledge and understanding of the key musical elements and vocabulary very well. Students gain a better understanding of what they have to do and how, as a result of the teacher modelling the task. Assessment is used effectively as part of everyday teaching to help students improve. However, homework is not set regularly enough to reinforce and extend learning. Students show good attitudes in lessons as a result of effective teaching and the good relationships that are being established.
106. The leadership of the department is satisfactory. The acting head of department has a very clear vision for the future development of the department and high aspirations. There are clear signs of improvement. However, the full impact is not yet seen because of the short time in which the head of department has been in post. Management is good. Day-to-day management of the department is good and a good start has been made to department self-evaluation. There are aspects of assessment, which are developing well, such as assessment for learning in lessons. However, in Years 7-9, criteria for assessing students' work are not developed in enough detail for students to understand what is expected and how to achieve at a higher level, and to ensure consistency between teachers. The planned curriculum for Years 7-9 is not sufficiently well balanced and does not include enough singing and music of other cultures. The range of extra-curricular music activities, including instrumental tuition and performance opportunities, is satisfactory overall. However, it is not broad enough to cater well for the interests and abilities of all students to develop further

their musical learning and personal development. The music accommodation is good and is in great demand at lunchtimes and after school. The very good music technology resources are used well to support students' performing and composing skills in Years 10 and 11, but their use by students in Years 7-9 is less well developed. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory because the quality of teaching and learning has improved.

Dance was sampled during the inspection.

107. In the lessons seen and in the after-school dance club, teaching was very good. Lessons have a clear structure, expectations are high and good links are made to earlier learning. As a result, the students respond and learn very well. Levels of co-operation and collaborative working by older students are good. Standards are below the national average, but there is evidence that standards are improving for students at the end of Year 9. Overall, progress is good as students arrive in Year 7 with little or no experience of dance. The schemes of work are comprehensive and the very good after-school dance club enables students to develop their capacity to manage their own learning without close supervision. A skilled and knowledgeable head of department is leading and managing the department effectively. There are clear plans to track students' progress in more detail, address literacy difficulties to raise standards and increase the participation of boys in the GCSE course.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in practical lessons are good.
- The curriculum has been improved, especially for boys, and extra-curricular opportunities are now good.
- Students do not have sufficient opportunities to evaluate performance.
- Accommodation does not support the department's aspirations and desired developments.
- The analysis and use of assessment to raise standards are underdeveloped.
- Good leadership of the subject is bringing about improvement.
- Staffing difficulties in the past have had an adverse effect upon standards and achievement over the longer term.

Commentary

108. Standards by the end of Year 11 are below the national average. Although over the past two years all those studying physical education have obtained a GCSE pass, only a little over a quarter have achieved a grade C or above. Lack of curriculum time and the staffing difficulties have had an adverse effect upon standards and achievement, particularly that of boys. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below national expectations.
109. Many students enter the school in Year 7 with skill levels well below the expectations for their age. However, as a result of the quality of the teaching, they improve their performance and standards across a range of sports. The achievement of students, particularly in practical lessons, is now good throughout the school. Because of the deficiencies in the curriculum that have now been rectified, students in Years 10 and 11 have previously had insufficient opportunities to develop their expertise, however, they are now making good progress, particularly with their practical skills. Girls achieve as well as boys, and students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also make good progress.
110. Physical education makes a good contribution to the development of the students' personal qualities. They are enthusiastic, work well together, support and encourage one another and accept refereeing decisions well.

111. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching and learning are consistently good in practical lessons across all year groups. Teachers plan well and the structure of the lessons ensures that there is clear progression in skill development. The methods used are effective and the management of behaviour is very good. There is, however, scope to share lesson objectives explicitly and use them more to assess students' performance. All teachers encourage and engage the students very well and as a result, students achieve well overall. In a Year 8 gymnastics lesson, for example, this encouragement enabled all students to increase their confidence to vault onto and dismount from a box. Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop the students' capacities to evaluate their own performance and that of others. Teaching is weaker in theory sessions in Years 10 and 11 because the range of methods is not always suited to the students' learning styles. Students are formally assessed at the end of each module, enabling the department to track their progress through the curriculum and set targets to be achieved by the end of each year.
112. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met and the provision for boys, particularly in Years 7-9, which was an issue at the previous inspection, has been significantly improved. The recently introduced Junior Sports Leader Award is a very good development that enables Year 10 students to improve their coaching skills and demonstrate very high levels of responsibility. The range of extra-curricular activities and teams has been improved and is now good for boys and girls.
113. The comparatively new head of physical education is providing good leadership. She is clear about her vision for the department and has led many important developments, including improvements to the curriculum, schemes of work, lesson plans and the fact that all students now wear the appropriate kit. The staff are now working more collaboratively as a team. Management of the department is satisfactory. Assessment data is underused to analyse the weaknesses in students' performance and implement effective actions to raise standards further. The accommodation is barely satisfactory. The gymnasiums are depressing, tired-looking and in need of re-decoration. The hall used for badminton is restrictive, being only large enough for one court. The changing facilities are unwelcoming and hardly adequate for their purpose. Resources have recently been improved due to a one-off injection of funds from the school.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies was sampled.

114. In the Year 11 lesson seen, the teaching and learning were good. Questioning was used well by the teacher to challenge students and check their understanding. The lesson built effectively on students' prior learning. Standards in this lesson were good, but staffing difficulties in the past have clearly had an adverse effect upon the quality of students' coursework seen in folders from Year 10. In the presence of well-organised and more challenging teaching, students are now achieving well.

Vocational courses provided in school

115. The school provides vocational courses within science and ICT. These are of good quality and are reported in their respective subject areas. Standards on these courses are in line with course expectations and students achieve well. An advanced vocational ICT course is challenging higher attainers, who are achieving well and working to above average standards.

Vocational courses provided off site

116. Vocational courses in carpentry and health and social care at the local college were sampled. Very good liaison between the school and the college ensures students are well informed about course content and demands prior to applying for their college placements.

In total there are 12 courses to which students have access, four of which lead to a GCSE qualification. Almost 80 students from Years 10 and 11 benefit from this very good provision. This alternative curriculum provision is very well organised and monitored and complements their curriculum in school. Students are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of their courses. They like the challenge and appreciate working in an adult environment. Attendance is good and students are motivated to learn, work to good standards and achieve well. They are provided with progress and attendance reports and information in their school report twice a year.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

117. During the inspection there was not enough teaching of citizenship or personal, social and health education to be able to make an overall judgement about provision in either area. Discussions were also held with the co-ordinator and a scrutiny of planning and documentation was made.
118. A short GCSE course in citizenship is offered to students and there is a small group in each of Years 10 and 11. Teaching and learning in the lesson seen were good. Students made good progress in their understanding of issues about fair trade and ethical trading through lively discussions during which they expressed and justified their opinions well.
119. This year, the school has made changes to the way in which citizenship is taught to provide more effective teaching and learning of citizenship through subject areas and 'collapsed days'. These changes, which were based on the school's evaluations, have yet to be fully implemented in terms of systems to ensure experiences are assessed and monitored. There are good contributions to citizenship through the planned citizenship days, visiting speakers, and work in subjects such as drama and religious education and through activities such as 'Operation Christmas Child'. Although tutor time is limited, this also makes an effective and regular contribution to students' personal and social development. The school council also makes a positive contribution to citizenship because it involves all students in the process of making some key decisions and develops skills of working together and expressing opinions and ideas in a well-structured forum.
120. The taught course in Years 10 and 11 is well led and managed. Management of the whole-school programme is unsatisfactory in that there is no planned programme clearly showing when and how citizenship and personal, social and health education are to be covered explicitly. The time allocation is unclear and does not ensure sufficient depth of coverage that links the three strands. The department action plan clearly identifies targets for development. However, monitoring is not yet rigorous enough in ensuring that the National Curriculum requirements for citizenship are being planned and covered effectively in subjects. Procedures for assessing and recording students' progress are not fully in place and it is not sufficiently clear how subjects will contribute to this process.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	5
Students' achievement	3
Students' attitudes, values and personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well students learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets students needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Students' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for students	4
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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