

INSPECTION REPORT

CLIFTON : A COMMUNITY ARTS SCHOOL

Rotherham

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106947

Headteacher: Mr P Marshall

Lead inspector: Mr John Paddick

Dates of inspection: 24 – 27 January 2005

Inspection number: 268371

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: 1311

School address: Middle Lane
Rotherham
South Yorkshire
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Telephone number: 01709 515005
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Cllr Maurice Kirk

Date of previous inspection: 26 April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Clifton : A Community Arts School is a large-split site comprehensive catering for boys and girls in the age range 11-16. The two sites, to the east of the centre of Rotherham, are approximately one kilometre apart. The school is currently being rebuilt under the public finance initiative so that it can cater for all the pupils on the Middle Lane site. There are currently 1311 pupils on roll and numbers are steadily increasing due to the school's popularity. Recently the school has been awarded specialist status for performing arts.

Approximately a fifth of the pupils have first languages that are not English. However, there are only five pupils at an early stage of its acquisition. The most strongly represented ethnic minority group contains the pupils of Pakistani heritage. There are 28 pupils classed as asylum seekers or refugees and seven pupils in public care.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is very low but improving slightly. Numbers of pupils on the register of special educational needs are double the national average. Their special needs are mostly related to dyslexia, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and hearing impairment. Pupil mobility in and out of the school is considerable. The school attracts pupils from families that span the national range of social and economic circumstances but there are far more from socially and economically challenged backgrounds than normal.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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19056	Graham Leech	Team inspector	English
22985	Jackie Sparkes	Team inspector	Science
14841	Mike Duffey	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
32672	Steve Hammond-Evans	Team inspector	Art and design
32672	Geoff Edwards	Team inspector	Design and technology
31008	Pauline Rourke	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs
19452	Tony Pearson	Team inspector	History Religious education
32173	Barbara Brown	Team inspector	Modern languages English as an additional language
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Clifton : A Community Arts School is good and effective. It provides its pupils with a good standard of education and gives good value for money. Standards are rising and pupils are achieving well overall. GCSE results are improving quickly. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and there are harmonious relationships between all ethnic groups. The quality of leadership and management is good overall. The school has very many more strengths than weaknesses.

The school's **main strengths and weaknesses** are:

- Standards are rising because teaching and learning are good.
- Relationships between all groups of pupils are strong features.
- The leadership and management of the senior team are very good.
- Pupils' very low literacy skills on entry to the school slow progress in several subjects.
- There are particular strengths in the performing arts area.
- Provision for pupils' welfare and guidance is very good.
- The school's contribution to the development of the community is excellent.
- Statutory requirements are not met in religious education and citizenship.
- Pupils make slower progress in humanities, design and technology, science and Urdu than in other subjects.

The school's effectiveness has improved well since the previous inspection. Standards are now much better and there has been a satisfactory response to the weaknesses identified in 1999. However, shortcomings relating to religious education and collective worship still remain to be tackled.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

In the national tests taken in Year 9 in 2004, results were similar to those of 2003, when they were well below average compared to the country as a whole. Results in English, mathematics and science were also similar to those of 2003, which were well below average. National comparative figures for 2004 are not yet available. GCSE results in 2004 were the best in the school's history. They were below average overall but represented good achievement over five years. Although pupils' average point score was well below average, results in the range A*-G were above average. The rising trend in the school's national test and GCSE results has matched the national trend.

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
	E	E	E	A

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

Currently, achievement is good in all year groups. Boys and girls from all of the groups in the school achieve well, including those from ethnic minorities, those in public care, those with English as an additional language (EAL), and those with special educational needs (SEN). Standards are rising because teaching and learning are good. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with very low standards of literacy and number. However, by Years 9 and 11, teachers, support assistants and mentors have been successful in raising standards to well

below average and below average respectively. In Year 9, standards have risen to below average in English, mathematics and science in response to good teaching. Standards are average in music and information and communication technology (ICT). They are below average in all other subjects apart from religious education, history, geography, citizenship and design and technology, where they are well below average. In Year 11, standards are below average in all subjects apart from mathematics, ICT, history, music and physical education, where they are average, science, citizenship and geography, where they are well below average, and religious education, where they are very low.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Moral, social and cultural provision is good but spiritual provision is unsatisfactory. Attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is satisfactory. Relationships within the school between boys and girls and all ethnic groups are harmonious.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides education of good quality. Teaching and learning are good across the school. This is responsible for the improving standards and good achievement. Teaching and learning are good in the majority of subjects. They are weaker but satisfactory in the humanities area, design and technology, science and Urdu. The good teaching has many strong features, for example in the planning of lessons, the management of pupils, and the utilisation of a variety of interesting approaches. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and with English as an additional language (EAL) is good and enables them to make the same good progress as other pupils. The teaching of literacy is good in some subjects but it still requires further co-ordination and development across the school. Assessment is good. The curriculum has many good and very good features but it is unsatisfactory overall because it does not meet requirements for religious education, citizenship or collective worship. Extra-curricular provision is strong. Very good transfer arrangements with primary schools provide smooth transfer arrangements into Year 7. These ensure an effective start to pupils' secondary school career. Very good links with a local college enhance the school's strong provision of vocational courses. The school supports pupils' personal development and learning well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is good overall. The headteacher's leadership provides a very clear vision for the school and the very strong senior team supports him very well. The strength of this team is evident in the very purposeful and orderly move onto one school site whilst not allowing standards, behaviour or relationships to slip. Leadership and management at faculty and subject level are good overall. The school is well ordered, calm, lively, innovative and industrious. However, governance is unsatisfactory because requirements for citizenship, religious education and collective worship are not met, as was the case for the latter two at the time of the previous inspection.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils and parents are positive about the school. It has increased in size since the previous inspection because it has an improving reputation and parents are happy about the standard of education that it provides. Some parents have concerns about bullying and the behaviour of a minority of pupils. There is little evidence of either of these. Pupils confirm that if bullying or misconduct do occur the school is rapid and effective in its response.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Co-ordinate and develop further the teaching of literacy throughout the school.
- Improve teaching and learning in the humanities, design and technology, science and Urdu to match the good provision found in other subjects.

To meet statutory requirements:

- Improve provision in religious education in Years 10 and 11 so pupils can receive their entitlement in this subject.
- Improve provision in citizenship to meet statutory requirements, particularly in active citizenship and assessment.
- Provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Results are improving in national tests and at GCSE. Although GCSE results were below average in 2004, they represented good achievement. Current standards in Year 9 are **well below average** and in Year 11 they are **below average**. These standards represent **good achievement** because pupils join the school with very low attainment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All groups of pupils represented in the school achieve well.
- In 2004, GCSE results improved considerably compared to 2003.
- Pupils join the school with very low standards of literacy, which adversely affect progress.
- Pupils are not provided with enough opportunity to do well in religious education or citizenship.
- Good provision in work related learning (WRL) enables many pupils to achieve well.

Commentary

1. In 2004, the school's national test results for pupils in Year 9 were similar to those achieved between 2001 and 2003, when they were well below average. Overall, these results fell short of governors' targets. Subject results for English, mathematics and science were all similar to those of 2003, when they were well below average. These relatively weak figures for the last four years do not indicate lack of progress between Years 7 and 9 because pupils join the school in Year 7 with very poor skills in literacy and number. It is not possible to compare the 2004 results accurately with the national picture because the necessary figures are not yet available.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.5 (30.1)	n/a (33.4)
Mathematics	32.6 (31.1)	n/a (35.4)
Science	30.0 (29.0)	n/a (33.6)

There were 254 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Current standards in Year 9 are much better than might be expected from pupils who joined the school in Year 7 with such low standards in number and literacy. The weak standards on entry result in a slow start in several subjects when pupils first arrive in Year 7. Their effect diminishes as pupils get older but they still affect the quality of written work. Girls and boys from all ethnic groups, including those with SEN and EAL, pupils in public care, refugees and asylum seekers, and pupils with particular gifts and talents all make good progress. Current standards in Year 9 are well below average overall but represent good achievement, especially as attainment in some subjects is higher than that. In English, mathematics and science, standards are below average and rising due to good teaching. In other subjects, standards are average in information and communication technology (ICT) and music, and below average in physical education, art, French and Urdu. Standards are well below average in all other subjects. Weak literacy skills are a barrier to learning and rates of progress. They improve as pupils move from Year 7 to Year 11 but the teaching of them requires better co-ordination. Numerical competence and ICT capability improve well and support pupils' studies.

3. In 2004, GCSE results were below average overall. Although the point score was well below average, results in the range A*-G were above average. The results represented good achievement over five years from such a weak starting base in Year 7. Governors' targets were largely met. In 2004, the school gained its best ever results with 35 per cent of pupils having five or more A*-C grades, a great improvement from the 24 per cent of 2000. More pupils gained five results in the range A*-G than ever before. Figures in this category improved from 83 per cent of pupils to 92 per cent, exceeding the national average. Only one per cent of pupils failed to achieve a graded GCSE result in the range A*-G, which is much better than the national picture. The success of the large numbers of pupils with SEN and EAL is evident in these figures and shows that the school provides equally well for all groups of pupils. The school analyses GCSE results carefully by ethnicity. In 2004, pupils of Pakistani heritage did better at GCSE than other ethnic groups represented in the school. This is mainly due to some really strong results in the GNVQ intermediate course in ICT, which is a very popular option for these pupils.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2004

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	35 (32)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	92 (83)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (95)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	31.2 (30.7)	41.4 (40.6)

There were 257 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Current standards in Year 11 are below average overall but represent good achievement. Pupils start with very low standards in Year 7, improve to well below average by Year 9 and then improve further to below average by Year 11. This is because the school provides a good standard of education and effectively encourages all pupils, including those with EAL and SEN, to do their best. However, even by Year 11, somewhat weak standards of literacy affect pupils' work and their GCSE performance. In Year 11, standards are average in mathematics, ICT, history, physical education and music. They are below average in all other subjects except science,

citizenship and geography, where they are well below average and religious education, where they are very low.

5. In religious education in Years 10 and 11, pupils are not provided with enough lessons to enable them to reach reasonable standards, whilst in citizenship in all years the school only provides part of pupils' National Curriculum entitlement. Non-specialist teaching affects standards in geography in Years 7 to 9 whilst insufficient attention to the quality of written work in science throughout the school reduces the potential for better results. Good provision for work related learning (WRL) provides extra opportunities that enable pupils to do well. The extended work placement programme enables all pupils to develop the skills and attributes sought by employers and the many vocational courses provide well for pupils who do not wish to follow a traditional academic course.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are both good. Relationships are a major strength. Attendance has improved and is now average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Moral, social and cultural development is good but spiritual development is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now average.
- Teachers do not always have a clear enough idea of where pupils are when they are absent from lessons.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils and among pupils themselves are very good, leading to a generally high level of racial harmony.
- Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school.
- The school has effective strategies for dealing with misconduct and rewarding good behaviour.
- Pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good but provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

6. Over the last four years, pupils' attendance has improved by over four per cent. It is now average compared to the country as a whole. This significant improvement has been achieved through hard work and the introduction of robust procedures. However, attendance levels in mainstream lessons during the inspection week were below those expected from the school's figures. This is predominately because of the wide range of withdrawal support strategies for pupils and alternative provision. However, the inspectors consider that the procedures to follow up on absence from lessons or withdrawal support are not clear enough. All teachers take lesson registers, but they are not always sure where the missing pupils are and sometimes do not make sufficient enquiry about them.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (91.7 %)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.9

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.4

National data	6.9
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National data	1.1
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The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

7. Pupils' attitudes are good and their levels of interest in school and subjects taught are high. Uptake of the wide range of extra-curricular activities is very good. Pupils have ample opportunity to give their views, for example, at the school and year councils. The school takes these seriously, involving pupils in several important policy and decision-making processes. Consequently, pupils have a sense of community. They appreciate the dedicated support of their teachers, who know them well and provide additional teaching after school for those who need it. Pupils are mostly quiet and attentive in lessons throughout the school and value the good teaching they receive.
8. Relationships are a major strength. Girls and boys and pupils from all ethnic minorities, including pupils with SEN, work happily together in pairs or in larger groups to complete practical activities set them by their teachers. However, some pupils with behavioural problems have less positive attitudes to learning and occasionally present challenging behaviour to teachers. Pupils help each other in lessons and also as participants in school initiatives like the paired reading scheme. Relationships with teachers are firmly based on mutual trust and respect. Some Year 11 pupils said that as they had gradually moved through the school they had come to regard their teachers as their friends. This undoubtedly fosters good behaviour and contributes to the pupils' good achievement.
9. Pupils behave well in and out of lessons and are courteous to visitors, meeting the teachers' high expectations of them. They show calm and control in moving about the school and between buildings within the clearly difficult context of the school's new building programme. In discussions, the pupils united in censuring the silly behaviour of a tiny minority in lessons, but indicated that they did not feel their learning suffers. They believe that incidents of bullying and racism are rare and are effectively dealt with by the school, which encourages the immediate reporting of any such incident. The school has a good system of rewards and sanctions of which pupils approve and with which they co-operate. The incidence of exclusions is low, having fallen since the previous inspection.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1017	45	1
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	223	9	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0

Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	25	0	0

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

10. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory, largely because the school fails to meet requirements for religious education and collective worship. Provision among the subjects is patchy and not all opportunities are seized upon as they naturally arise in lessons.
11. Provision for moral development is good and in contrast to the spiritual, most subjects take the opportunity to deal with relevant issues as they arise. Teachers are good role models and the code of conduct is well understood by pupils. The personal, social and health education programme deals with a range of moral and ethical issues relevant to pupils' lives.
12. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. There are opportunities for pupils to demonstrate initiative and take responsibility, for example through the school council. Peer mediation and support initiatives provide a useful contribution to the social development of both the mediators and pupils seeking their support. Relationships in the school are very good and there are many links with the community and partner institutions. The success of this is well reflected in the courteous relationships, which are evident throughout the school. Pupils respond well to opportunities to assist those less fortunate than themselves through charitable activity.
13. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. There is a wide range of extra-curricular opportunity, including annual large-scale productions, offering participation in and appreciation of cultural activity. The extensive programme of sporting activity, educational visits, field trips and language holidays, enhances the provision in this area. The school has made successful efforts to reach out to the community in the area, and pupils are able to value and appreciate the cultural diversity and history of their town.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides its pupils with education of good quality. Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The curriculum is unsatisfactory but it has many good and very good features. Resources are good. The programme of care, guidance and support is very good. The school has a very good partnership with parents and other institutions.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are good throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in English, mathematics and ICT.
- There are particular strengths in teaching in the performing arts area.
- Most lessons in the school are characterised by good planning and positive pupil attitudes.

- The teaching of literacy requires better co-ordination.
- Much of the teaching in the humanities, design and technology, Urdu, and science, although satisfactory, is weaker than in other subjects.
- The teaching of SEN and EAL pupils is good overall and results in them making the same good progress as other pupils.
- Assessment procedures are good overall but they do not meet requirements in religious education or citizenship.
- The marking of pupils' work, although satisfactory overall, has weaknesses in several subjects.

Commentary

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. It has improved since the previous inspection and is responsible for pupils' good achievement and the rising standards. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is good in all subjects apart from Urdu, religious education, history, geography and design and technology, where it is satisfactory. Teachers employ a wide range of approaches to maintain pupils' interest so lesson time is used well. Good use of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy has improved the structure of lessons. It is now quite common for them to begin with a starter activity and end with a plenary session. Pupils learn quickly because they have good attitudes and teachers plan carefully to ensure that they build securely on previous knowledge. Class management, planning and clarity of explanation are all good. Literacy skills receive good attention in some subjects but this aspect of teaching requires better co-ordination across the school if it is to result in even quicker pupil progress. Weaknesses in the teaching of some subjects relate to insufficiently imaginative approaches in Urdu, lack of attention to precision in writing in science and weaknesses in the development and co-ordination of drawing in design and technology. In the humanities area, the use of non-specialist teachers in religious education, history and geography limits the potential progress that pupils can make. One unsatisfactory and two poor lessons were observed during the inspection, all in the humanities area.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 133 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (3%)	25 (18.8%)	60 (45.1%)	41 (30.8%)	1 (0.8%)	2 (1.5%)	0 (0%)

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

15. The teaching of pupils with SEN and EAL is good. They are taught mainly in classes with other pupils. Teachers know their needs well and give them good individual help. However, there is sometimes not enough modification of tasks and materials to allow them to learn as well as they could. There are frequent examples of this in geography, history and religious education. A large team of learning support assistants offers effective support not just to pupils to whom they are nominally attached but to many others in the class. Large numbers of pupils, including those at an early stage in the acquisition of English, have very effective lessons in literacy in small withdrawal groups with teachers and learning support assistants.
16. Teaching and learning are good in all subjects in Years 10 and 11, except Urdu, science, geography, and design and technology, where they are satisfactory. There are particular strengths in the teaching of expressive arts. The good teaching is

responsible for the rising trend in GCSE results and the good progress that pupils make. All pupils are well prepared for GCSE and the vast majority of them do well. No unsatisfactory or poor lessons were observed during the inspection in Years 10 and 11. Weaknesses in teaching in Years 10 and 11 mainly relate to insufficiently imaginative approaches in Urdu, insufficient attention to the development of drawing and presentation skills in design and technology, and insufficient attention to the quality of pupils' writing in preparation for GCSE science.

17. Assessment is good and makes an important contribution to pupils' learning. It has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The school has established a comprehensive database detailing pupils' prior attainment, current performance and targets for improvement. Targets for individual pupils, groups and subjects are all monitored rigorously so that there is no doubt about actual amounts of progress being made. Action is always taken when there appears to be any underachievement. When pupils join the school in Year 7 they are all tested so that those needing extra support with their work are identified quickly. All aspects of the assessment of pupils with SEN meet requirements. Targets in their individual education plans are monitored effectively. Assessment procedures for pupils at an early stage of acquisition of English are also good. Only in religious education and citizenship is assessment unsatisfactory.
18. Pupils are increasingly aware of their own personal and academic targets. Teachers generally mark their work well so that they can see where they have made errors. Often there is a clear indication of what they need to do to improve. However, marking is still too variable in quality in mathematics, history, science and GCSE physical education.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum does not meet all statutory requirements so, though it has many good and very good features, it is unsatisfactory overall. The programme of extra-curricular activities is good. Staffing and resources are good overall. Accommodation in the current building phase is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been some innovative curriculum development but the school does not meet requirements for religious education, citizenship or collective worship.
- The school provides particularly good provision in expressive arts.
- Pupils benefit from strong provision in foreign languages.
- There is insufficient co-ordination of the teaching of literacy across the curriculum.
- There is good provision for pupils with EAL and SEN.
- Pupils benefit from strong provision for WRL.
- Deployment of staff to geography, history and religious education is unsatisfactory.
- There is very good provision of non-teaching staff to support the curriculum.

Commentary

19. The curriculum has suitable breadth and balance but it does not meet statutory requirements in all respects. Hence, it is unsatisfactory. All subjects in the National Curriculum are provided, as well as drama. There is some provision for religious education and citizenship but no daily act of collective worship. Pupils of all abilities

and backgrounds have equal access and can make progress and achieve well. Very good provision for pupils with SEN and EAL enables them to achieve as well as other pupils and gifted and talented pupils receive extra support and extension work to enable them to reach their potential. The programme of personal, social and health education provides effective support for pupils' personal development. This includes helpful sex, health and drugs education, and provides careers education and guidance, including an unusually long period of work experience. Provision for WRL is good and enables pupils to pursue vocational courses and link activities of a practical nature with a local college.

20. Pupils with SEN and EAL have access to the full curriculum. Their needs are carefully identified to ensure that they are well provided for. Their progress is regularly checked to ensure that appropriate provision continues. Individual education plans are all in place as required and are regularly and formally reviewed. There is much well organised and effective provision, mainly through withdrawal from mainstream lessons, to help pupils develop their basic skills of literacy and number.
21. Subject provision is good in English and mathematics. A particularly strong range of courses and options in expressive arts forms part of the plan relating to the recently acquired specialist performing arts status. In modern languages, good provision enables pupils to have the opportunity to study a combination of subjects from French, Spanish, German and Urdu. In all other subjects except religious education and citizenship curricular provision is satisfactory. In religious education, statutory requirements for pupils in Years 7 to 9 are met but pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not have an opportunity to cover the local Agreed Syllabus in anything like sufficient depth or breadth. In citizenship, the full requirements of the National Curriculum are not met. This is because there are no structured arrangements for all pupils to be involved in active citizenship. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of activities and opportunities to learn at lunchtimes and outside the normal school day. A generous level of teacher support for a comprehensive social, cultural and sporting programme offers pupils enjoyment and enrichment.
22. There has been a good response to some of the shortcomings identified in the previous inspection. Provision for ICT is much better, religious education is now separately timetabled in Years 7 to 9, there is a wide range of vocational options for pupils in Years 10 and 11, and lessons are now shorter. However, the requirements for religious education in Years 10 and 11 and a daily act of collective worship are still not met.
23. Staffing levels and expertise are good in most subjects but they are unsatisfactory in geography and history in Years 7 to 9 where non-specialist teaching is leading to slow progress. The numbers and quality of support staff are really strong features that have a very positive effect on pupils' achievement. Resources for learning are generally good with most of the issues raised at the previous inspection having been successfully resolved. The exception is in mathematics where there are still shortages of textbooks. ICT provision has substantially improved and is now very good. In GCSE classes in physical education, pupils do not have access to textbooks in their theory lessons. Accommodation is satisfactory. Subjects that have moved into new purpose built classrooms are witnessing a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers in those areas of the school which are still in transition are using temporary facilities well and generally ensuring that the move to a single site does not have a negative impact on achievement. Library provision is currently affected by the building work and only the upper school library is in use. It is managed well and available all day until after

school. It is a pleasant place for study and leisure reading, with an adjoining information suite for careers, and is well used.

Care, guidance and support

Care, support and guidance are very good. The school involves pupils effectively in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are very good. Health and safety procedures are good.
- Very good individual support and guidance have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Arrangements for helping pupils settle in to the school are very good.
- Pupils know that their views are listened to and valued.

Commentary

24. Parents are very pleased with the standards of care and guidance at the school. Relationships are very good and supportive. Induction procedures are very good because there are strong curriculum and teaching links with the primary schools. Pupils arriving mid term, including asylum seekers, are well supported. There is a smooth transition for pupils with SEN from their primary schools to Clifton.
25. Child protection procedures are very good. Teaching and non-teaching staff are well trained on the policies and provided with comprehensive written guidelines. Children at the school who are in public care are closely monitored; the school is ably supported in this by the external 'get real' team. Health and safety procedures are effective. The site is regularly inspected with the help of the governors. Appropriate risk assessments are in place and potential pitfalls connected with the construction of the new building are carefully eliminated.
26. Pupils receive high quality personal support. This is strengthened by an unusually wide range of external support agencies and by the employment of a high number of effective non-teaching support staff. A team of learning mentors at the school works effectively with those pupils whose behaviour or confidence is a barrier to their full participation in lessons. Support in class for pupils who have EAL and SEN is very good. Skilful intervention ensures that learners keep up with other pupils in the group. There is also good support for the school's gifted and talented pupils. A behaviour support team based at the school is helping challenging pupils to modify their behaviour. As part of The Clifton Project, a multi-agency support network is being located at the school; this promises to enhance and integrate welfare provision for pupils and families.
27. Pupils receive good academic guidance. They know the levels they are working at and have targets for improvement in most subjects. Form tutors have a good overview of their pupils' progress and have a specific weekly period in which to withdraw individual pupils from subject lessons for advice and support. Pupils identified as underachieving are mentored. For example, last year learning mentors worked successfully with pupils identified on the C/D borderline at GCSE. The Youth Service provided after-school mentoring for a targeted group of boys and helped to raise their achievement.
28. In the WRL programme, pupils are well prepared and guided for their three weeks of work experience in Year 11. They are very appreciative of the help given to them by

the school's own careers guidance team and by Connexions. The school is effective in guiding pupils to suitable options such as alternative curriculum, work experience, and college placements in Years 10 and 11 where appropriate. This provision is helping to improve many challenging pupils' motivation and attainment.

29. The School Council is effective but it does not have a very high profile. Pupils were recently consulted on the views about behaviour and the anti-bullying policy. In response to their views more lunch time clubs were provided. Pupils have been represented on local community groups. They are involved in self-assessment and the planning of their work. Most pupils feel that their views matter; this makes them feel valued and proud of their school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very effective relationship with parents. Links with other schools, colleges and the community are excellent. The major report on the community aspects of the school's work is to be found after the section on leadership and management.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very receptive to parents' views and has developed a very effective partnership with them.
- There are excellent links with primary schools, which prepare pupils very well for their transition to secondary education.
- Excellent links with colleges greatly enhance the curriculum.
- The links established with the community are excellent and mutually beneficial.

Commentary

30. Parents are pleased with the school. They find the teachers and management helpful and approachable and consider that their children are very well cared for, expected to work hard and are well taught. Some parents had reservations about behaviour and bullying but otherwise had no significant concerns. Inspection evidence confirms that the school is very effective in dealing with these on the relatively few occasions that they occur. Parents praised the quality of information they receive. The governors' report to parents is particularly informative about school life. Annual written reports on children's progress are good and meet statutory requirements, apart from detailing progress in citizenship. Parents of pupils with SEN are kept well informed of their children's progress. Pupils' parents show their good support for the school through high levels of attendance at the many performances and celebration events and at the review days to discuss their child's progress. The Friends of Clifton Association holds regular social events and helps with the funding of school resources. The school's active involvement in the community enables it to gain an independent perspective of parents' views. Such information is effectively taken into account in school planning and in the design and use of the new building. The school seeks out views from the local mosques as to the best ways to communicate with some sections of the parent body. Parents of Year 7 are consulted as to their views on the school and opinions are regularly sought on policies.
31. Excellent links have been established with the partner primary schools. These have been co-ordinated effectively through the local Education Action Zone. Teachers from the school discuss and exchange good practice with primary school teachers through

'learning teams' and they go to the primary schools to teach modules of subject lessons. This commitment ensures that pupils make a very smooth transition to the school. The school has very good links with other secondary schools through the Leadership Initiative Group arrangements, where the head teachers of the participating secondary schools regularly meet for professional development and some peer mentoring. Excellent links with local colleges enable pupils, especially those who are disaffected with traditional schooling, to pursue additional courses, usually in the field of WRL. Links with local universities are very well developed, particularly in computing and the performing arts. University visits and some joint projects do much to raise pupils' aspirations.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher's very strong leadership and ambition, together with effective support from senior staff, has resulted in substantial growth and development in this improving school. Management is good at all levels. However, governance is unsatisfactory because statutory requirements for the curriculum are not fully met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's vision and leadership are very good, and have been instrumental in the school's growth and development.
- Senior staff and those in other key positions work very well together and contribute to the effective leadership and management of the school.
- Strategic planning involves and motivates all staff.
- Arrangements for performance management and professional development of staff are effective and lead to improved standards.
- Financial planning and management are good.
- Provision for citizenship, religious education and collective worship is unsatisfactory.
- Very low literacy levels on entry to the school are barriers to improvement.

Commentary

32. The very good leadership provided by the headteacher is having a substantial impact on standards and achievement throughout the school. He and his strong team of senior managers share a very clear and ambitious vision for the school, at the heart of which is a relentless determination to raise the achievement and aspirations of pupils. As a result, there is a growing coherence and confidence that is shared by staff, pupils and parents, and is reflected in the school's improving performance. Very good strategic planning involves all staff through a collegiate approach to leadership and management. Current plans involve developing the newly acquired specialist status together with the privately financed initiative to move to a single site, whilst sustaining the extensive school engagement with the local community.
33. Governors are proud of the school and fully recognise the improvements that are being made. They understand many of the schools' strengths and weaknesses well and set ambitious but achievable targets for national tests and GCSE. They monitor curriculum areas and produce a very good annual report for parents. However, governance is unsatisfactory overall because the school fails to meet statutory requirements for citizenship, religious education or collective worship. The latter two weaknesses were identified at the previous inspection. The monitoring of school

policies requires greater rigour so that governors have a clearer idea about their effectiveness in the school.

34. The senior team has a strong approachable presence around the school and makes explicit practical and strategic contributions to its development. The school runs efficiently, coping well with the challenges emerging during the current extensive building programme. Opportunities for leadership are widespread and the contribution made by staff at all levels is good. Management is imaginative and is successfully translating vision into reality. A particularly strong and effective feature of the management structure is the way that younger, energetic and enthusiastic members of staff are given real responsibilities for important aspects of the school's work. This is clearly seen in the effective research and development groups that are constituted to guide the school's response to its identified priorities for improvement. Management of the progress of gifted and talented pupils, and those with EAL and SEN, is particularly good. All statutory requirements for these pupils are met. Leadership and management of the school's WRL programme are also good.
35. The staff development programme is very well directed towards school improvement, and particularly so in teaching, learning and assessment. Professional development is strongly linked to performance management and is valued by staff. Particularly good attention has been given to the training needs of staff relating to the use and development of new technology in their work. The induction of staff is a strong feature, both for new and recently qualified teachers, and there is an effective programme of mentoring, support and guidance.
36. Curriculum managers are held to account for their subject's performance at GCSE. Good use is made of pupils' prior attainment data to predict attainment and to track progress towards targets. Regular reviews of results are enhanced by robust systems for checking that teaching and learning are good enough. This rigorous approach, together with good support and training, is leading to a widespread accountability in most subjects.
37. Financial planning and management are good. The principles of best value are applied carefully and to good effect. The budget is kept under regular and close review, and financial management is very secure. The school has been very active and successful in attracting additional funding, which it uses well. However, very low levels of literacy when pupils join the school in Year 7 represent major barriers to the improvement of standards. Unit costs are slightly higher than usual, but pupils are achieving well, and the school is providing good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	5,064,040	Balance from previous year	-69,691
Total expenditure	4,906,518	Balance carried forward to the next	87,831
Expenditure per pupil	3,743		

COMMUNITY LINKS

The school's community links are extremely effective. The school's contribution to the life and development of the local community is excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Successful initiatives are really improving the quality of life for local families.
- The Clifton Project is a model for Rotherham's response to the Government paper entitled Every Child Matters.
- Local businesses give immense support for work-related learning.
- Several projects are very successful in promoting racial harmony.

Commentary

38. The school's contribution to the development of the local community is excellent. It is extremely outward looking and proactive in this respect. Inspectors received an impressive number of letters from local schools, community regeneration agencies and children's support services, which unanimously praised the quality of the schools' partnership with them.
39. Through the Education Action Zone, the school very actively participates in a number of initiatives to improve the quality of the curriculum. These initiatives cover continuity of the curriculum from primary to secondary school and broaden opportunities for pupils and their families, especially through sport, music and performance. There are close links with two local community regeneration schemes. The head teacher is on the management board of one of these. These schemes are really helping to improve the quality of life for children and families in the local area through, for example, projects dealing with literacy, numerical skills, drugs education and the co-ordination of school and community strategies to support one another.
40. The school and the head teacher are at the forefront of The Clifton Project, which is a model for Rotherham's response to the Government paper entitled Every Child Matters. The project entails the integrated delivery of children and young people's services including education, health, social services, the police, the voluntary sector, and neighbourhood regeneration agencies within the local community. Workers from these services are being co-located at the school. It is too early to evaluate the impact of The Clifton project, but it is very well-placed to have a strong long term impact on improving the well being of the local community and raising aspirations.
41. Local businesses are very supportive of Year 11 pupils' three-week work experience placements. Excellent links with the community help to re-motivate pupils at the school, who might otherwise become disaffected. A group of Year 10 boys is working with the local rugby club for one day a week in the Tuesday Titans. Here, they enjoy team building exercises and computerised literacy and number packages in the company of successful, sporting role models. This project has helped some pupils to succeed at GCSE and some others to find suitable employment through work placements. Links with local industries and business are very effective in expressive arts. The Music Factory Entertainment Group has worked closely with Year 10 pupils engaged on activities such as interviews, meetings and presentations. Some pupils worked alongside the professionals in planning, marketing and producing an event. This gave them a valuable insight into working in the field of performing arts.
42. The learning mentors at the school have established some excellent community links, which have helped to motivate some pupils and build their confidence. For example, groups of pupils are looking after local allotments, recycling scrap materials to make bicycles and enjoying outside activities at a local 'forest school'.

43. There are very close links with the Youth Centre, which is located at the school. Pupils use the social facilities regularly and it provides a very valuable and effective link between the school and the community. The youth workers co-operate closely with the school on a number of extremely worthwhile projects, including after school mentoring sessions to help to raise the attainment of boys. Many of the projects have a significant impact on promoting social and racial harmony within school and in the locality. For example, last year a small group of British white and Asian girls visited Malta together and previously a similar group of boys visited Pakistan to experience the differences in culture together.
44. The local regeneration groups have recently funded the appointment of a community tutor, whose role is to ensure that the new school premises and resources are used to best effect for the community. Currently the tutor is establishing links with local groups to develop adult dance, music, drama and sports coaching.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

The school's provision for work-related learning (WRL) is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good range of vocational courses for Years 10 and 11.
 - Arrangements for careers education are good.
 - Good links with a local college provide further vocational courses.
 - The WRL provision enables many pupils to achieve well.
 - There is still more scope to integrate WRL provision into the teaching of other subjects.
45. The school provides WRL in accordance with all statutory requirements. The provision is carefully planned. Pupils firstly have good guidance on possible future careers as they move towards choosing their Year 10 and 11 courses through the option system. This enables them to make a properly informed decision about whether to follow vocational courses or not. Pupils have the opportunity to follow a traditional academic course or to spend a good proportion of their time on vocational studies. All pupils benefit from a three-week work placement at the beginning of Year 11. This is very well organised and gives pupils a clear insight into the expectations of employers.
46. The school provides a good range of vocational courses, especially but not exclusively in the expressive arts area. Business studies, leisure and tourism and ICT also feature strongly. Link courses with Rotherham College of Art and Technology enable pupils to work alongside fully qualified lecturers in the trades to cover subjects such as construction and food preparation. Pupils value the school's provision of vocational courses because they see them as providing a clear pathway to higher qualifications and employment. On these courses, pupils are normally fully engaged, genuinely interested and achieving well.
47. Although there are many opportunities to discuss and research the world of work in pupils' personal and social education course, its connections with other subjects that pupils study are not fully explored. Most teachers do not yet plan to explain fully how the world of work interfaces with the subjects that they teach. For example, jobs and professions connected with mathematics, science and history do not feature strongly in the teaching of these subjects.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving now that the effects of previous staff absence have been eliminated.
- The quality of teaching is good so pupils learn well.
- Relationships are good and help to encourage pupils to work hard.
- Assessment practice is good, helping pupils understand how to improve.

Commentary

48. Year 9 national test results in 2004 were similar to those of 2003, when they were well below average. They represented satisfactory achievement. Girls did better than boys, but only as they do nationally. GCSE English results were below average overall in 2004 but represented good achievement. At grades A* to G and A*-C, results were average and well below average respectively. Results in GCSE English literature were well below average overall. Girls did better than boys, as they do nationally. Results in the national tests in Year 9 have declined in recent years whereas GCSE English results have improved a little.
49. By Years 9 and 11, standards have risen to below average and achievement is good. Standards of attainment on entry to the school are very low. Many pupils have literacy difficulties and some are at an early stage of the acquisition of English. A range of strategies including good additional specialist support in the classroom, withdrawal for small group teaching and entry for appropriate examinations in Year 11 enables pupils with SEN and EAL to achieve as well as their classmates. Very few pupils leave without a qualification in English. Standards are rising as a result of successful intervention strategies and far less dependence on supply teachers than previously.
50. By Year 9, pupils generally listen well, though younger pupils have some difficulty maintaining concentration. They share ideas sensibly, generally respond clearly to questions and often contribute ideas enthusiastically. Only pupils of higher ability, however, are able to contribute at length. Pupils can find information in and respond to a good variety of texts, though responses are often limited and many pupils are dependent upon guidance and support. A good range of writing is produced and increasingly extended pieces are undertaken. Writing is generally well presented, though often affected by lack of vocabulary and uncertain grammar, punctuation and spelling. By Year 11, pupils listen well. Contributions to discussion in class, however, though articulate, can be brief and not readily volunteered. Pupils respond well to their reading and produce a good volume of well-planned extended writing, with some use of word processing to improve the quality of presentation. The process of drafting and revising improves the quality of expression, though only higher attaining pupils are

able to express themselves fluently and with a good range of vocabulary without teacher support. Pupils write conscientiously but many have difficulty in sustaining writing unaided, which affects their performance in examinations.

51. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a good range of experience. Good relationships in the classroom encourage pupils to contribute. Pupils are managed firmly but pleasantly. Lessons are well planned to engage pupils and stimulate them to work at a good pace. Teachers are well aware of pupils' different needs and work is matched accordingly. Assessment is good, detailed and helpful, giving targets for improvement, and pupils are given good opportunities for self-assessment. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 consolidates pupils' knowledge and understanding of language, in accordance with the national strategy, and in Years 10 and 11 pays close attention to GCSE requirements. ICT is used well to enhance and extend learning.
52. Leadership and management are good. The difficulties of coping with the demands of past staff absence, a split site, significant building alterations and a predominantly new and comparatively youthful team of teachers have been well managed. There is clear vision and a commitment to raising standards shared effectively with the department through regular meetings. There is good teamwork, appropriate delegation of responsibilities and the sharing of ideas. Teaching and learning are carefully and supportively monitored to ensure consistency and to promote improvement. There is good support for new staff and concern for professional development. Pupils' progress is well monitored. Progress since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Good standards of teaching have been maintained and the quality and provision of resources has improved. Several strategies, including some setting, have been put in place to raise standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Standards of literacy are very low on entry to the school and a significant number of pupils have EAL. Poor literacy skills affect pupils' progress in subjects across the curriculum. There has been focus on literacy development led by English and the SEN department and the national strategy for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is established in general teaching practice. There is, however, no whole school literacy policy, nor has there been an audit of practice across the curriculum. Consequently, there is inconsistent practice across subjects, though there are some good elements. Literacy development is integral to the work in English and good use has been made of the school library to develop reading skills, though the programme has been interrupted by the building work and the current loss of a lower school library. There is some good practice in the development of the skills of speaking and listening in most subjects. There is reading for information in all subjects, but opportunities are taken in geography, history, and science for reading aloud. Emphasis on writing varies between subjects, but limited opportunities for extended writing are offered. Lack of a school policy and, in many cases, of policies in subject departments prevents consistency in the promotion and sharing of good practice.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The focus areas for the inspection of modern languages were Urdu and French. Spanish and German were both sampled. Teaching and learning in a Year 11 German lesson and in a Year 8 Spanish lesson were good and satisfactory respectively. GCSE results in Spanish in 2004 were below average. In German they were broadly average. The difference is due

to the fact that the pupils who opt for German are mainly gifted and talented learners who study it as a second foreign language.

French

Provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average but rising.
- Teaching, learning and achievement are good throughout the school.
- Progress slows when the pace of lessons and expectation of pupils reduces.
- There is too much use of English in some lessons.
- The new management structure is effective in promoting higher standards.
- Marking does not give pupils enough information about how to improve their work.
- A range of activities makes learning enjoyable but there is not enough use of ICT.

Commentary

54. There has been a rising trend in GCSE performance. In 2004, results were below average overall but represented good achievement over five years. Results in the ranges A*-G and A*-C were average and well below average respectively.
55. By Years 9 and 11, standards are below average but represent good achievement for all pupils, including those with SEN and EAL. Pupils' competence in reading, writing, listening and understanding, and speaking in French are all below average. The improvement in achievement compared to the previous inspection has resulted from the elimination of unsatisfactory teaching.
56. Teaching and learning are good overall. All teaching is at least satisfactory and there are frequent examples of very good practice. Teachers have very good knowledge of French and some use it very well in the classroom. However, in some lessons there is too much English used; this reduces opportunities for listening and understanding. Teachers plan and structure lessons well to enable learners to move from basic tasks through to more complex and difficult activities with clear pathways for progress. The beginnings of lessons interest and motivate pupils, and good relationships and classroom management encourage them to participate and enjoy their own success. Teachers provide clear aims and good models of practice so pupils know exactly what is expected of them. This enables pupils to produce their own responses to a similar pattern. However, progress is slower when the balance of teacher and pupil activity is wrong and there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to practise. Progress also slows, compared to the best lessons, when pace and expectation dip and allow pupils to get away with less than their best, and where the needs of different groups of pupils within the lessons are not fully met.
57. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The benefits of a new structure are beginning to be evident and are demonstrated in rising standards and an improved profile of the subject in school. There is a strong sense of teamwork and a shared desire for improvement, which is clearly transmitted to learners in lessons. Assessment is well structured and regular and enables pupils to be fully aware of their targets and levels of performance. However, the marking of their work is not clear enough about what they need to do to improve. Teachers use and share a good range

of interesting techniques but the use of ICT requires much development. Pupils have realistic contact with speakers of French in sessions with foreign language assistants and trips to Paris, which enables them to develop their own language on a wider basis. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, particularly in terms of stronger leadership and management, rising standards and higher expectations. The subject is well placed for further improvement.

Urdu

Provision in Urdu is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are below average but rising.
- Pupils have good attitudes and work hard.
- Spoken Urdu is not used enough in Years 7 to 9.
- Teaching is satisfactory but lacks imagination.
- Pupils are not sufficiently clear about how to improve their work.

Commentary

58. GCSE results in 2004 were better than in 2003 and represent satisfactory achievement. They were below average overall but have been improving over recent years. Results in the range A*-G and A*-C were above average and below average respectively.
59. By Years 9 and 11, standards are also below average but achievement is satisfactory. All aspects of pupils' work in Urdu are below average but listening for comprehension and speaking are stronger than reading and writing. Pupils with SEN make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils.
60. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils are guided through the course with patience and an understanding of their individual needs. They respond well by working hard and they are generally keen to learn. Pupils who present more of a challenge are managed with patience so that others are not put at a disadvantage. However, there is a very limited range of tasks and activities employed, which results in a rather slow pace to lessons and some subsequent restlessness. The individual support given to pupils is good but sometimes this leads to other learners wasting time, especially when work does not take into account the wide range of ability within groups. Teachers use excellent subject knowledge to good effect in GCSE classes but there is not enough use of the spoken language in Years 7 to 9 for pupils to have maximum exposure to it and listening practice fully developed. The lessons begin with tasks, which direct the pupils into the main focus for the session, but conclusions are insufficiently productive and sometimes leave the learners without a sense of what they have achieved. Pupils are aware of their estimated grades at GCSE but less clear about their National Curriculum levels. At neither stage are they very clear about how to improve their work.
61. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed but teaching needs to incorporate more imaginative approaches. Standards are rising and improvement since the previous

inspection has been satisfactory. Developments in the use of ICT are poised to support further improvement in the future.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Learning and achievement in Year 7 are not so good as in the rest of the school.
- Leadership and management are very good, leading to improving standards and provision.
- Pupil's weak comprehension skills have an adverse effect on learning and examination performance.
- Assessment and recording of attainment are very good and are used to improve the curriculum.
- The curriculum is extended well to give all pupils greater opportunities to improve.

Commentary

62. Pupils join the school with very low standards in mathematics. In 2004, results in the national tests in Year 9 were similar to those of 2003, when they were well below average. GCSE results in 2004 were better than in 2003. They were below average overall but represented good achievement. Results in the ranges A*-G and A*-C were average and well below average respectively. All pupils did well, including the gifted and talented and those with SEN and EAL. However, due to pupils' weak comprehension skills, their actual standards in mathematics are not fully reflected in examinations. There is a steadily improving examination trend, similar to that seen nationally.
63. Current standards in Year 9 are below average and represent good achievement. Standards are well below average in mental arithmetic and problem solving that requires pupils to use comprehension skills. They are below average in written calculations, algebra, data handling, shape, space and measure where tasks are straightforward and require few English comprehension skills. Drawing and construction skills are not developed sufficiently across the school and therefore diagrams are not presented with sufficient accuracy. In Year 11, standards are broadly average and represent good achievement. However, pupils' weaker literacy skills continue to have a negative effect on learning and on their ability to interpret problems. Nevertheless, focused teaching has enabled pupils to present coursework well and to use specific skills associated with pattern in number. Learning and achievement are not as good in Year 7 as in the rest of the school, particularly for pupils with average and above average attainment. This is because work is not sufficiently matched to levels of prior attainment. Nevertheless, there has been an improvement in this area since the previous inspection.
64. Teaching and learning are good, and have also improved since the previous inspection. In over a third of lessons, teaching is very good. Lessons are well planned and structured so they run smoothly. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and lessons start promptly so little time is wasted. Explanations are clear and work well presented to set a good example to pupils. Resources are used effectively.

Where teaching is least effective, planning is sketchy and pupils are not sufficiently challenged or motivated by the teacher. More general weaker aspects of teaching are mainly linked to the planned development and use of literacy skills in lessons and the inconsistent quality and use of marking to help pupils improve. Other aspects of assessment and recording are excellent and are used well to identify areas for development and to track the progress of individuals and different groups of pupils. The use of ICT has improved, but it is restricted as there is insufficient readily available up to date equipment in classrooms to support learning.

65. Leadership and management are both very good and together with the strong commitment of a united team of teachers have led to rising standards, improved provision and very good improvement since the previous inspection. Performance at GCSE has risen from poor to one of the strongest in the school over the last six years. Weaknesses in any area are identified systematically and addressed. The extended mathematics curriculum is very good. Many support systems are in place to improve the achievement of different groups of pupils. These include gifted and talented, those with SEN, and those preparing for examinations, homework, clubs and competitions.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. The co-ordination and development of the use of mathematics in other subjects is in the early stages of development. However, pupils' numerical skills are sufficient to support their learning in different contexts across the curriculum. Numerical skills are developed in some planning and schemes, but there are inconsistencies across subjects. In science pupils can use data handling to generate graphs to represent practical results. They use algebraic skills confidently in calculations relating to speed, electricity and pressure. Pupils' skills in measurement and the calculation of proportion are sufficient to support their work in art, and in design and technology. In geography, however, pupils have less opportunity than normal to use and develop their skills in data handling.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well below average but they represent satisfactory achievement.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with many good features.
- There is insufficient emphasis on the improvement of pupils' writing.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good.
- Assessment of pupils' progress is good.
- ICT is not used enough in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

67. National test results in Year 9 in 2004 were better than in 2003, when they were well below average. They represent satisfactory achievement. GCSE results in 2004 were well below average and similar to those of 2003. They too represent satisfactory achievement. Results in the ranges A*-G and A*-C were below average and well below average respectively. Boys did not perform as well as girls.

68. Current standards in Year 9 are below average but better than the previous results would suggest. This represents good achievement over three years from pupils' very low starting points in Year 7. Good teaching is improving pupils' knowledge and understanding of science but weak literacy skills still limit the quality of written work. Knowledge and understanding of scientific processes and phenomena is frequently average, as are practical skills, but very many pupils are unable to express themselves with sufficient clarity and precision on paper. Pupils with SEN and EAL make good progress because they receive effective support when they need it.
69. Standards in Year 11 are well below average but they represent satisfactory achievement over five years. Although pupils' knowledge and practical skills are average, writing skills are weak. Much of the work produced by average pupils is characterised by brevity and imprecision. Hence, although pupils have received good teaching in the principles of science, there has been insufficient emphasis on the quality of written work to lift standards at GCSE. Most pupils handle apparatus and chemicals with care and share ideas and co-operate with each other in a mature and sensible manner. The highest attaining pupils are producing work consistent with GCSE grades A and B. For example they can explain the properties of groups of elements in the periodic table.
70. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with many good features. They are good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. There are very good relationships between pupils and teachers so pupils feel confident to ask for help if they need it. Lessons are well prepared and a variety of teaching styles is employed. This maintains pupils' interest. Numerical skills are developed through the drawing of graphs and use of algebraic formulae. However, there is insufficient emphasis on the development of writing so pupils are often unable to express their knowledge sufficiently well on paper. This becomes a very significant weakness in Years 10 and 11 when pupils are preparing for GCSE. Teachers make satisfactory use of ICT in lessons in Years 7 to 9, but its use by pupils for presentation of work, calculation of results, and data-logging in Years 10 and 11 is limited. Homework is set regularly but it is sometimes trivial or insufficiently challenging. Work is carefully matched to the needs of the lower attaining pupils, and extension work is usually provided for those with particular gifts and talents.
71. Leadership and management in science are satisfactory. There is a clear focus on direction and some innovative ideas are being introduced. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Recent problems with staffing have now been resolved and the department is benefiting from external help as part of an intervention strategy designed to lift standards further. There is very good monitoring of teaching and learning, with good assessment and tracking of pupils' progress. Links with feeder primary schools are very good and the department works hard to ease the transition between Years 6 and 7. Resources are good in Years 7 to 9, but some of the larger equipment needed for Years 10 and 11 is becoming dated and will soon need to be replaced. The department receives good quality technical support but there is not enough of it.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in ICT because teaching and learning are good.
 - Pupils are keen to learn and they display good attitudes and behaviour.
 - Technical support and resources for ICT are good and they enhance learning.
 - Provision for pupils on the GNVQ course is very good.
 - The presentation, organisation and storage of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 require attention.
 - The monitoring of pupils' progress in ICT across subjects is underdeveloped.
72. GNVQ Intermediate results in ICT were broadly average in 2004. Three quarters of pupils passed the course, which is equivalent to four GCSE subjects at grades A*-C.
73. Pupils join Year 7 having had varying experiences of ICT in their primary schools but overall competence is below average at this stage. Standards rise to average by Year 9 because teaching is good and pupils' attitudes are very positive. Competence with desktop publishing, spreadsheets, databases and control technology is average for age. This represents good achievement.
74. Current standards in Year 11 are average overall and represent good achievement over five years. Standards on the GNVQ course are above average and represent very good achievement. Despite the fact that these pupils had limited time allocated to ICT when they were in Years 7 to 9, very good teaching has lifted standards on this course quickly. Pupils taking other ICT qualifications demonstrate very variable competence in the subject. Standards in business and communication studies are above average and represent very good achievement but in key skills, the European Driving Licence and Asdan courses, standards are average. On these latter courses, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils can generally choose and use appropriate software effectively. Pupils with SEN and EAL make good progress because they are well motivated and enjoy using computers.
75. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are good. Teachers plan thoroughly and set appropriate work across all strands of ICT including control technology. There is a good balance of content and skills, which enables less able pupils in particular to make good progress. Pupils demonstrate very good attitudes and behaviour because they are keen to learn. They listen well and respond positively when work is challenging. The new resources for ICT, coupled with very good technical support, help teachers to present the subject to pupils in an interesting and up to date manner. Pupils learn quickly from good demonstrations of techniques presented visually to the whole class on electronic whiteboards. Teachers and support assistants assess pupils' understanding well and respond effectively to their needs. However, the presentation and storage of pupils' work requires attention so that it can be more effectively assessed, learning consolidated and progress monitored.
76. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are good overall. In GNVQ classes it is very good. Teachers are knowledgeable, supportive, and focus upon examination requirements. Excellent teaching seen in one Year 11 class ensured that work was challenging and expectations high. This resulted in quite exceptional pupil motivation and commitment across the ability range. Work in Years 10 and 11 is very well organised and monitored. However, the intermittent absences of a few pupils cause some underachievement.
77. The leadership of the department is very good. There is vision and endeavour and this has resulted in good improvements since the previous inspection, particularly rising

standards, the provision of very good resources and technical support, and the creation of an effective team. Management is good. Pupils' work is monitored and the evaluation of teaching is being formalised.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. Pupils have average levels of competence with ICT. They use and develop them with confidence in the other subjects that they study. For example, in English pupils carry out research work for projects using the laptops in the library. They make good use of graphical calculators in mathematics. In physical education, pupils are using digital technology well to analyse performance and in music they make use of excellent ICT facilities to make good progress with composition. Specialist provision for pupils with SEN is also good and enables them to make good progress with numerical and literacy skills. There has been good improvement in the use of ICT to support learning across subjects since the previous inspection. However, co-ordination of the assessment of pupils' progress in ICT across subjects is still weak. This results in insufficient checking on pupils' overall competence and progress in the subject.

HUMANITIES

The main focus of the inspection was on geography, history and religious education but the GCSE course in humanities was sampled. GCSE results in 2004 were very similar to those in 2003. Results in the range A*-G were above average but in the range A*-C they were well below average. A Year 11 lesson and a scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 10 and 11 indicated that current standards are well below average. Learning is satisfactory but restricted by non-specialist teaching.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.
- Assessment practice is very good and helps pupils to improve their work.
- The current temporary leadership and management are good.
- Non-specialist teaching is restricting achievement.
- Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory, as virtually all the previous weaknesses remain.

Commentary

79. GCSE results in 2004 were well below average overall and similar to those of 2003. Results in the range A*-G were below average but in the range A*-C they were well below average. There was no significant difference between the standards of boys and girls but pupils did not do as well in geography as in their other subjects.
80. Current standards in Year 9 are well below average but they represent satisfactory achievement overall because pupils enter the school with very low attainment in geography and in literacy. Pupils' standards and achievement vary. Standards in classes taught by geography specialists are below average but represent good achievement because pupils are progressing quickly. Classes taken by non-specialist teachers make slower progress. Pupils use a good subject specific vocabulary in their

written work but many cannot use it well orally. Their use of a range of geographical skills, including the use of ICT, is relatively limited. Gifted and talented pupils taught by geography specialists can identify, describe and explain a range of geographical features and processes well and their achievement is good.

81. By Year 11, standards are well below average. This is largely because teachers on the GCSE course are attempting to build on the relatively weak standards achieved by many pupils by Year 9. Most pupils' background knowledge and understanding of geography are not secure. This results in written work that is not sufficiently accurate or detailed. Some higher attaining pupils use a good geographical vocabulary confidently and well in their explanations of a range of physical and human processes, they complete competent first hand investigations, and attain high standards. Pupils with SEN often complete work carefully but do not always understand what they have written.
82. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils usually behave well and their attitudes to learning are good. Hence, geography lessons are normally characterised by a good atmosphere and pupils who are keen to learn. Specialists teach half the lessons in Years 7 to 9 and all the GCSE work in Years 10 and 11. This teaching is good overall. Much of it is lively with imaginative strategies that engage pupils' interest and encourage them to learn well. Assessment practice is very good so pupils know how to improve. A small amount of teaching by non-specialists is unsatisfactory. As a result, in a few lessons, pupils are inadequately challenged and stimulated, and are sometimes set inappropriate tasks. These pupils do not have a secure knowledge and understanding of geography to use in their studies in Years 10 and 11.
83. The temporary arrangements for leadership and management are good. There is a commitment to improving standards through a good focus on monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils' work. The subject has benefited from external expertise and support but staffing is unsatisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory because most of the weaknesses remain to be tackled. For example, GCSE results are still lower than in most other subjects, there is insufficient fieldwork and the use of ICT is insufficiently developed.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are improving.
- Standards in Year 11 are average and pupils achieve well.
- The subject lacks specialist leadership and management, which was also the case at the time of the previous inspection.
- In Years 7 to 9, the reliance on non-specialist teachers means that some groups of pupils are not stretched sufficiently.
- Weak literacy skills hamper the progress of many pupils.
- Relationships are harmonious and pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Marking is not rigorous enough and in Years 10 and 11 it is not linked closely enough to GCSE criteria.

Commentary

84. GCSE results in 2004 were below average overall but better than in 2003. They represent satisfactory achievement. Results in the range A*-G were average but in the range A*-C they were well below average. There was no difference in the performance of boys and girls.
85. Current standards in Year 9 are well below average and represent satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' very low starting points on entry to the school. Knowledge and understanding of the reasons for and results of historical change, such as the agricultural revolution, is better developed than the pupils' capacity to select, use and analyse sources of information. The progress of many pupils is hampered by weak literacy skills. Pupils tend to use a relatively restricted range of means of presenting their ideas and results of their investigations and seldom do so by writing at length. Spelling and sentence construction are weak. Effective support from classroom assistants ensures that pupils with SEN have full access to the work and make satisfactory progress.
86. Current standards in Year 11 are average and better than the previous GCSE results might suggest. This is because teachers have carefully analysed the performance of previous pupils and have adjusted their teaching accordingly. These pupils are achieving well in relation to below average starting points in Year 10. In coursework assignments, most pupils analyse sources of information well and make good use of their background knowledge. However, they are not as adept at drawing conclusions when writing essays, for example in evaluating the relative success of the League of Nations.
87. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are good in Years 10 and 11 where the teachers have a specialist qualification in the subject, and satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Classroom relationships are good and teachers capitalise on pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Teachers use starter activities particularly well to engage interest and prepare pupils for new learning. However, much of the teaching is aimed at the middle ability level in the class and does not fully cater for gifted and talented pupils and those with SEN. A key feature of the best lessons is the way in which the learning is planned to meet the needs of all the different groups, for example by simplifying or adapting written tasks for pupils with SEN. Over half the teachers required to teach the subject are non-specialists in history. Despite conscientious and innovative co-operative efforts in lesson planning in the absence of a specialist subject leader, they sometimes lack the detailed knowledge and understanding needed to enable pupils to develop all the key historical skills appropriately. Marking though regular is not rigorous enough and in Years 10 and 11 is not linked closely enough to examination criteria. Consequently, some errors remain uncorrected and pupils do not get frequent indications of performance in relation to GCSE grades.
88. In the absence of a specialist subject leader and in the context of some good temporary leadership at faculty level, the leadership and management of history is satisfactory and has benefited from recent external support. Initiatives aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning and the introduction of more effective assessment procedures have not been in place long enough to raise standards in Years 7 to 9. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory, largely because standards in Year 11 have risen.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is poor because the school provides insufficient time to teach the local Agreed Syllabus.
- The school's management of religious education is poor because weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection have not been tackled.
- Good numbers of pupils have chosen to follow the GCSE course in religious studies.
- Learning is restricted because non-specialists teach most of the lessons.

Commentary

89. The school has introduced an optional GCSE in religious studies for the current Year 10 following a period when there were no examination courses available. Here, although standards are below average, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their starting points on entry to the course. Pupils can explain difficult concepts such as the classic proofs for the existence of God. Written work tends to be brief, though well organised, because of effective guidance from the teacher.
90. The time provided for the compulsory courses followed by all pupils in Years 10 and 11 is only a fraction of that required to cover the local Agreed Syllabus in sufficient breadth and depth. Although the schemes of work do provide for the study of different faith responses to moral issues, this was not evident in pupils' work, which was generally of poor quality. These poor curricular arrangements for the subject restrict teaching, learning and standards. Hence, pupils' achievement is poor.
91. Current standards in Year 9 are well below average. This represents broadly satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' very low starting points on entry to the school. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the key features of belief and worship in the faiths studied is better than their capacity to make a personal response to religious issues. This is because not all teachers yet provide the same amount of opportunity for pupils to do so. Higher attaining pupils reach average standards, for example by being able to explain Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom in relation to Old Testament beliefs. However, weak literacy skills have an adverse effect on the length and quality of most pupils' written work.
92. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory. Learning and achievement are restricted because eleven teachers, mostly non-specialists, provide lessons in the subject. However, teachers work conscientiously to share ideas for lessons and evaluate their experiences, helped by newly implemented well-written schemes of work. Unfortunately, they do not have the subject expertise to enable pupils to make more than satisfactory progress in lessons. In some lessons, the work is not sufficiently well adapted to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils and those with SEN. In Year 10 GCSE classes, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers use specialist knowledge and understanding to ensure that pupils understand difficult technical vocabulary such as 'sacrament' within the context of discussions about marriage.
93. The school's leadership and management of religious education are poor. Most of the weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection have not been tackled and pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not receive their full entitlement of the subject.

However, in Years 7 to 9 resources and the quality of the curriculum have improved, and initiatives aimed at improving teaching and learning are beginning to have a positive effect on standards. Improvement since the previous inspection is poor.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well below average but represent satisfactory achievement.
 - Teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils' individual needs.
 - Pupils' behaviour in class and relationships with teachers are good.
 - The impact of ICT is beginning to show in standards of work in Years 10 and 11.
 - Pupils' design, drawing, literacy and presentation skills need more systematic development.
 - There is insufficient co-ordination of the teaching of design skills across the department.
94. GCSE results in 2003 and 2004 were similar and represented satisfactory achievement. They were well below average overall. Results in the ranges A*-G and A*-C were below and well below average respectively. In food technology and resistant materials, results have dipped compared to graphic products, where they have improved steadily.
95. Pupils' experience of the subject prior to Year 7 is very limited. Practical skills are very weak and pupils have little appreciation of the principles of design. By Year 9, standards rise slightly to well below average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils can generate ideas for a design brief but their work is hindered by unrefined graphical and analytical skills. Creative and thinking skills are weak. In practical work, pupils are confident with a broad range of hand and machine tools and equipment. They use safe working routines but the quality of their finishing is weak. Rates of progress are slowed because pupils do not remember earlier work. They are often unable to use previously acquired skills to inform more demanding design and production activities in new situations. Key skills need more systematic development. For example, in Years 7 to 9 there is insufficient use of ICT as a tool for designing and manufacturing. Opportunities to extend numerical and literacy skills are limited.
96. In Year 11, standards are below average but represent satisfactory achievement over time. Pupils have developed a satisfactory understanding of the design process but drawing and illustration are often weak. Hence, the quality of design portfolios is well below average overall. Making skills are average. The high level of individual support and guidance together with opportunities to continue work beyond lessons are all helping to improve the quality of pupils' work. There are some good examples of pupils using ICT to support their learning, for example in Year 11 resistant materials. Here pupils are beginning to use the recently acquired CAD and CAM equipment to produce work of a professional standard. However, the erratic attendance of a significant minority of pupils results in unfinished work and ultimately to some underachievement.

97. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and occasionally good. They enable boys and girls, including those with SEN and EAL to make satisfactory progress. The management of pupils in class is good and there is a safe working atmosphere in practical sessions. Pupils are keen to do well and enjoy the subject, particularly the making aspect of it. They receive plenty of attention. However, in some instances teachers are too prescriptive. Frequently, the focus of the lesson is directed towards the task at the expense of developing learning in more depth and breadth. To promote higher standards, more emphasis and consistency across the department needs to be placed on the teaching of design principles, including sketching and illustration, so that pupils become more fluent in their design work.
98. Leadership is good and educational direction is clear and focused. Management is satisfactory. However, there are weaknesses in the co-ordination of policies and practices across all areas, for example methods of marking and assessment. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Better provision of ICT is beginning to show in standards of work and teaching time is now similar to the national average. The department now has a good mix of experienced and newly qualified teachers but co-ordination is often hampered because several have considerable teaching and other responsibilities outside the department. The subject area, pending transfer to the new accommodation and much improved resources, is well placed to improve further.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

The main focus of the inspection was on art and design, music and GNVQ performing arts, which is reported in the vocational section. Expressive arts and drama were sampled. The GCSE course in expressive arts is a very popular option in Years 10 and 11. In 2004, results were close to average and compared very favourably with pupils' other subjects. Lessons in Years 10 and 11 and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicate pupils make good progress and that teaching and learning are good. Drama is taught in Years 7 to 9 and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' development. In the two lessons sampled, teaching was very good in one and excellent in the other. Pupils worked in small groups with total absorption and much enthusiasm.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- The provision for gifted and talented pupils and those with SEN is good.
- Assessment is good and helps pupils to know how to improve.
- Mature attitudes and good behaviour enhance learning.
- Opportunities to work in three dimensions are insufficiently developed.

Commentary

99. GCSE results were below average overall in 2004, representing a decline compared to 2003. Results were above average in the range A*-G but well below average at A*-C. Nevertheless, they represented good achievement.

100. Current standards in Year 9 are below average but represent good achievement as pupils join Year 7 with very limited experience in art and design. By Year 9, pupils' competence in drawing, painting and the development of personal ideas have improved to below average. Teacher assessments are accurate and correctly indicate these standards. Current work in Year 11 is below average but also represents good achievement over five years. Here, all aspects of pupils' competence in art and design are below average and there is less evidence of work representing GCSE grades A*-C than normal. However, gifted and talented pupils benefit from extension and enrichment opportunities and achieve as well as other pupils. The school identifies pupils with SEN quickly and they achieve well because they benefit from good quality support from classroom assistants and highly individualised work set by the teacher.
101. Teaching and learning are good in all years. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and an atmosphere of challenge, inspiration and success exists. This atmosphere for learning is maintained by focused individual advice, which encourages pupils to think further and explore ideas for themselves, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Teachers use assessment well and, as a consequence, pupils know when they have been successful and how to develop approaches to lead to improvement. Pupils have confidence in their teachers and this enables them to take risks in a supportive atmosphere. This promotes personal development and the extension of skills through the development of project work. Pupils try hard in their art and design lessons and their positive, articulate and good attitudes are a major strength of the department. Strong links are made in all years between the work of artists, art movements and the developing ideas of pupils. A range of wet and dry media is used throughout the teaching and this enables pupils to explore ways of working that best suit them and maximises success. However, more opportunity for work in three-dimensions would improve the curriculum and provide pupils with an extended range of opportunity to do well at GCSE.
102. Leadership and management are good. Good systems are in place for monitoring GCSE results and the progress of pupils. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have been maintained and assessment is now making an impact on learning. All weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been addressed. The subject is well placed for future development and success.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and achievement are all good.
- Computer work and the promotion of literacy are raising standards.
- Teachers are very aware of the attainment, targets and progress of all pupils.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their musical talents in extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

103. There are no GCSE results in music because the course has only recently been introduced into Year 10.

104. Current standards in Year 9 are average. This represents good achievement when compared with attainment in music on entry to the school, which is below average. By Year 9, all pupils use electronic keyboards and computers well for performance and for composition. Listening and appraising skills are less developed but improving. This is because teachers put much effort into developing these skills by placing a strong emphasis on literacy to enable pupils to learn to use a suitable vocabulary when describing music.
105. Performing standards in Year 10 are sometimes high. In a Year 10 lesson, two pupils' performances were much better than average and consistent with higher grades at GCSE. Overall standards are near average and pupils' work reflects the full range of GCSE grades. The department identifies pupils' musical and general literacy as a focus area and gives emphasis to key words and technical terms. This has a positive effect on raising aural attainment. Overall, achievement in Year 10 is good.
106. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils benefit from excellent accommodation and ICT resources in the main building, have interesting lessons and enjoy teaching with good pace. In a Year 8 ICT lesson, supported by four staff, pupils were able to make rapid progress in developing their performance and composition work. Lesson planning is very detailed with tasks well related to previous learning. Lessons often have a range of tasks to help to consolidate pupils' learning and maintain their interest. Achievement by pupils with SEN and EAL is in line with the general good progress of other pupils because the music support staff make a valuable contribution to their learning. Teaching embodies detailed preparation, a range of teaching styles and good organisation. Instrumental teaching is good. Most visiting teachers keep careful records and set targets for the pupils. This helps to improve focus and achievement. The number of pupils taking lessons in school is near average in relation to its size. Tuition is available on most standard instruments but as yet there is no singing teacher. The faculty does not yet record pupils' grade examination successes in music.
107. Leadership and management of music are good. The department promotes literacy in lessons well. This assists significantly with pupils' musical and general development. There is regular assessment of pupils' work and attainment is analysed in detail. The thorough use of targets and assessment data helps to promote pupils' progress. Improvement since the last inspection has been good against a background of considerable curriculum change. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular musical activities and in annual school and joint productions. This promotes opportunities for the social, cultural and musical development of pupils and is a major factor in the positive ethos of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because they are well taught and have positive attitudes.
- GCSE results are average, and represent good achievement.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Strong provision for learning outside lessons is helping to raise standards.

- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 and the marking of boys' GCSE theory work require more rigour.

Commentary

108. GCSE results in 2004 were average. All candidates successfully completed the course, and half gained A*-C grades. Although slightly lower than the previous year, these results nevertheless represented good achievement. The course is popular, especially with boys; many pupils did better than expected and achieved higher results in physical education than in their other GCSE subjects.
109. When pupils join the school in Year 7 they have a wide range of capability and experience in physical education, and standards overall are much lower than average. Throughout Years 7 to 9, pupils of all backgrounds, including the higher than usual proportion having SEN and EAL, achieve well. They make good progress because enthusiastic teaching stimulates their positive attitudes towards the subject. At this stage, progress is notable for girls in dance. Boys make satisfactory progress in developing their basic games skills, for example, in football and badminton. By Year 9, the overall standards are closer to, although still below average. Teachers' own assessments confirm these standards but with boys ahead of girls. Inspection evidence suggests their standards are similar and there is need for some moderation of assessments.
110. In Years 10 and 11, standards in National Curriculum physical education are average and pupils are achieving well. Games activities dominate the boys' programme at this stage, whilst dance is a key component for girls. A key feature is pupils' positive response to opportunities to play, coach and referee. This maintains their interest and enthusiasm. Commendably, all pupils have the chance to gain accreditation through the Junior Sports Leader award scheme, and three-quarters are successful. Participation rates by boys and girls are good, support their progress and provide continuity in learning. Standards in current GCSE physical education are average overall, although stronger in practical work. Pupils show good commitment to their studies and, given their below average starting points, are achieving well, particularly girls and higher attaining boys.
111. Teaching and learning are good overall throughout the school. Teachers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic, plan their work very well, and have clear expectations of their pupils. Relationships are generally strong and both boys and girls respond positively to the manner in which they are taught. In the most successful lessons, teachers ensure that pupils take responsibility for their learning, share clear learning goals so that they understand what they are learning and why, and regularly question them to check their progress. Pupils of all abilities learn quickly and achieve well when the pace is purposeful and when challenging tasks extend them fully. This was certainly the case in an effective GCSE revision lesson where Year 11 girls consolidated their knowledge and understanding of the national structure and administration of sport. However, not all lessons are as effective. Scrutiny of GCSE theory work indicates inconsistent expectation and support for boys particularly, where written work is poor. Checking and marking lacks rigour, and provides too little guidance for improvement.
112. The subject is well led and managed, and there is a strong focus on improvement. The successful faculty bid for specialist expressive and performing arts status is adding great impetus to this, as is the exciting and much needed improvement to facilities

currently taking place. Documentation and planning are good, and there is a strong system for monitoring and evaluating performance. Learning and achievement are enriched by the growing range of experiences being offered in class, and by the good range of extra-curricular activities provided by the strong commitment of the department. Developing links with the community and with visiting coaches are popular and are helping to raise standards. Progress since the last inspection has been good and standards have been sustained well.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The focus of the inspection was the BTEC and GNVQ performing arts course. GCSE leisure and tourism, business and communication studies, and the skills for working life levels 1 to 3 link course in construction were all sampled. Pupils were making good progress in all of these lessons because teaching and learning were good. The course in construction is one of the school's very successful link courses with Rotherham College of Art and Technology. Pupils were fully absorbed in joinery work after successfully completing their work on bricklaying. These courses are part of the school's WRL provision and offer some potentially disaffected pupils the opportunity to achieve well in traditional trades, leading to the possibility of further study and employment.

BTEC and GNVQ Performing arts

Provision in Vocational performing arts courses is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and achievement are good.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards their studies.
- There are good link arrangements with Rotherham College of Art and Technology.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

113. In 2004, five out of nine pupils passed foundation level GNVQ in performing arts. This was a joint course with Rotherham College of Arts and Technology. The small number of candidates invalidates comparison with national statistics but results were as expected.

114. Currently, Year 11 performing arts students are working on a joint course, again with Rotherham College of Arts and Technology, towards intermediate GNVQ. Standards are broadly average for the course. Pupils who attend regularly are all on course to pass with the equivalent of four GCSE subjects at grades A*-C. In Year 10, a group of pupils is working towards BTEC Level 2, which is delivered entirely within the school. Most are on course to pass. In addition there is a joint group of lower attaining pupils, partially taught at Rotherham College of Arts and Technology, working towards BTEC Level 1. Here projected results are more mixed but again broadly average.

115. On the Year 10 BTEC Level 2 course, pupils use appropriate vocabulary for performance analysis to describe what they see. They experience energetic group work and their performance memory is often quite good. They are able to develop characters well and there is some strong use of telling gestures. Regular emphasis on the 'improvise-rehearse-perform' process enables pupils to frequently produce subtle

inflections and gestures. Just occasionally physical elements are stronger than dialogue. Achievement is good.

116. Overall, teaching, learning and achievement are good. Teachers effectively use a wide variety of teaching and learning techniques. In a Year 11 GNVQ lesson, pupils evaluated information drawn from stage directions very thoroughly and made good progress in learning about the impact of stage directions on characterisation. Higher attaining pupils could almost completely memorise the script extract chosen at a first reading. There is a wide range of attainment in the group but some acting is of a high quality. Teaching and learning in the lesson were good and as a result all pupils achieved well.
117. Leadership and management of the vocational courses are good. This includes the management of the valuable links with Rotherham College of Art and Technology. Extensive records are kept and teachers are aware of the attainment, targets and progress of each pupil. Accommodation and resources in the upper school are currently not as good as the excellent resources for drama found in the main building but students make good use of what is a broadly adequate space.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The school provides programmes in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. Citizenship was inspected in depth. Four PSHE lessons in ethics, parenting and personal banking were seen during the inspection, of which two were satisfactory and two were well taught. These and other inspection evidence, including an examination of the work of pupils in Years 7 to 11, indicate that the school's PSHE programme is a sound one with real strengths in sex and careers education.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not receive their full National Curriculum entitlement for citizenship.
- Standards are well below those expected, and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' work is not properly assessed so their attainment and progress cannot be measured.
- The school's wider citizenship culture is rich in potential opportunities for active citizenship.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because the subject is not effectively co-ordinated or monitored.

Commentary

118. The school has planned to teach citizenship partly in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and partly in other subjects. However, throughout the school, the time allocated for this National Curriculum subject is insufficient. Coverage of knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens and developing skills of communication and enquiry, are therefore patchy and incomplete. In subjects other than PSHE, with the exception of the expressive arts, delivery is still largely implicit. There is no planned programme to ensure that all pupils develop their skills of

participation and responsible action within school and the wider community. Pupils' lack of knowledge, for example, of political processes and leading politicians, the small amount of work available for scrutiny and lack of extended writing further confirmed that standards are well below those expected and pupils are underachieving throughout the school.

119. The school's long-standing tradition of community service, however, includes impressive work for charity, such as the distribution of hampers and the organisation of a meal for the elderly at Christmas. Recently, the school council oversaw a non-uniform day for the Tsunami Appeal, raising over a thousand pounds. Pupils are involved in the Town Council Project, take part in their regional Youth Parliament, and field teams for the annual Magistrates' Court Mock Trial Competition. Within school, pupils have been involved in a range of decision and policy-making processes. All these are useful opportunities for selected numbers of pupils to exercise responsibility. The school has already marked these opportunities out for development when it devises its active citizenship programme for all pupils, along with a suitable scheme of assessment and recording. At present, there is no such scheme and pupils' annual progress and their attainment at the end of Year 9 cannot be reported to parents.
120. Judgements cannot be made about teaching and learning, since so little teaching in citizenship could be seen. Nevertheless, one well taught Year 10 lesson was seen in which pupils were using laptop computers for Internet research. By the end of the lesson, they had effectively increased their knowledge and understanding of the European Union and Britain's place within it. Their ICT and independent learning skills had also clearly benefited.
121. Leadership and management of citizenship are unsatisfactory. Planning is inadequate, and although the current leadership is committed to its full implementation and is aware of the steps needing to be taken to do this, insufficient time has been given to teaching and co-ordinating it. There is no monitoring of what is taught and standards attained.

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	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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