

INSPECTION REPORT

FALINGE PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Rochdale

LEA area: Rochdale

Unique reference number: 105837

Headteacher: Mr R D Lonsdale

Lead inspector: Mr J Paddick

Dates of inspection: 20 – 23 September 2004

Inspection number: 268385

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: 1177

School address: Falinge Road
Rochdale
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs G Foster

Date of previous inspection: 15 March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Falinge Park High School is a comprehensive with 1177 pupils on roll, catering for boys and girls in the age range 11 to 16. It is larger than average and numbers of pupils are rising considerably as the school gains in popularity. Girls outnumber boys. The school is situated close to the centre of Rochdale and draws most of its pupils from surrounding wards. Approximately half of the pupils have first languages that are not English. However, there are only 35 pupils at an early stage of its acquisition. The most strongly represented ethnic minority groups are Asian-Pakistani and Asian-Bangladeshi. There are 26 pupils classed either as refugees or asylum seekers, seven pupils in public care and one traveller. The school has awards for Beacon Status, Investors in People, Artsmark Gold and Sportsmark.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is very low but improving. Numbers of pupils on the register of special educational needs are average, as are numbers with formal statements. These are mostly connected with dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural characteristics. 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 | Mr G Leech | Team inspector | English |
| 27984 | Mr J A Whitehall | Team inspector | Science |
| 27803 | Mr J Clarke | Team inspector | Information and communication technology |
| 10209 | Mr V Gormally | Team inspector | Art and design |
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| 31008 | Mrs P Rourke | Team inspector | Geography Special educational needs |
| 19452 | Mr A Pearson | Team inspector | History Religious education |
| 3793 | Mr J Ratcliffe | Team inspector | Modern Languages |
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Falinge Park High School is a good and effective school. 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. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and there are very harmonious relationships between all ethnic groups. Leadership is good. Management is satisfactory. 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 provision for pupils' welfare is very good.
- Leadership and management of the headteacher and senior team are good, but there are some weaknesses in middle management.
- In the majority of subjects, standards achieved are good but in art, religious education and GCSE physical education they are unsatisfactory.
- There is a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching and pupils are not provided with enough opportunity to use ICT in the full range of subjects.
- The assessment and marking of pupils' work are unsatisfactory.
- Accommodation and resources for design and technology are unsatisfactory.

The school's effectiveness has improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection. Standards have risen substantially and the school has made a satisfactory response to the key issues identified in 1999. However, improvements to assessment procedures are still not fully in place.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

In the national tests taken in Year 9 in 2003, results were well below average compared to the country as a whole. Results were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. However, between 2000 and 2003, results improved at a faster rate than they did nationally. The results of 2003 represented good progress for pupils between Years 7 and 9. Results in 2004 were broadly similar. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average but they represented good achievement over five years. Results in 2004 were much better, especially in the range A*-C.

| Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with: | All schools | | | Similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| | 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 represented by all of the groups in the school achieve well, including those from ethnic minorities, those with English as an additional language (EAL), and those with special educational needs (SEN). Standards are rising because teaching is good. Pupils join the school in Year 7, often with very low attainment, especially in literacy. However, by Years 9 and 11, teachers have been successful

in raising standards to below average compared to the country as a whole. In Year 9, standards are below average in all subjects apart from ICT, religious education, design and technology, geography and citizenship, where they are well below average, and Urdu and drama, where they are average. In Year 11, standards are below average in all subjects, apart from GCSE physical education, French, and art, where they are well below average, Urdu, where they are average, and drama, where they are above average. Standards are very low in religious education. In religious education, art, and GCSE physical education, standards are not high enough and pupils are currently underachieving.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Their attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is satisfactory. Relationships within the school between boys and girls and all ethnic groups are very harmonious.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides education of good quality. Teaching and learning are good in all year groups. This is responsible for the good achievement and rising standards. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory in nearly all subjects and good in the majority. However, in religious education throughout the school and in GCSE art, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory and pupils underachieve. There is also some underachievement in French caused by staff absence last year. The good teaching has many strengths, for example in the planning of lessons, pace, management of pupils and use of electronic whiteboards. Weaknesses in some lessons involve lack of challenge, insufficient use of ICT, and not fully catering for pupils at the top and bottom of the attainment spectrum. The teaching of pupils with SEN and EAL is good and enables them to make the same good progress as other pupils. Assessment practices and the marking of pupils' work in some subjects are unsatisfactory. The curriculum is of good quality. Very good links 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 significantly enhance the school's 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. He leads by example in the classroom and around school. The strong senior team supports him well. Management is satisfactory overall and ensures that the school is well ordered, calm and purposeful. However, there are weaknesses in the management of several subjects. This relates to assessment procedures and the monitoring of lessons. Governance is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has increased in size since the previous inspection, which is a measure of the level of satisfaction of the great majority of parents. Most parents are positive about its work but a small but significant number has concerns about the behaviour of a small minority of pupils but there is little evidence of this. Some also have justifiable concerns about the lack of a homework timetable. Pupils are positive about the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in art, religious education and GCSE physical education.
- Monitor teaching and learning more effectively and eliminate the small number of unsatisfactory lessons.
- Improve the use of ICT across the full range of subjects.
- Improve accommodation and resources in design and technology.
- Strengthen assessment procedures by eliminating the weak practice in some subjects.
- Fully comply with requirements for collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are rising. In 2003, results in National Curriculum tests and in GCSE were well below average but they represented good achievement. Current standards in Years 9 and 11 are **below average** but 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 between Years 7 and 11.
- In 2004, GCSE results improved considerably compared to 2003.
- Pupils' join the school with very low standards of literacy and this adversely affects progress.
- Key Stage 3 test results have improved faster than they have nationally.
- Pupils achieve very well in drama but they are underachieving in religious education and art.

Commentary

1. In 2003, national test results for pupils in Year 9 were well below average overall compared to the country as a whole but exceeded governors' targets. Pupils did well because they joined the school in Year 7 with very low attainment, particularly in literacy. Results were below average in English and well below average in science and mathematics but they have risen faster than they have nationally over a period of three years. English results represented very good achievement over three years whereas results in mathematics and science represented satisfactory achievement. Girls did better than boys in English as they did nationally, and slightly better in mathematics. However, girls' results overall were further behind their national average than were those of the boys. Results in 2004 were broadly similar to those of 2003 in English and science but they were better in mathematics. Governors' targets were exceeded in English and mathematics but they were not met in science. Results gained by pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language (EAL) indicated that most had achieved well. However, a very small number of pupils either hardly improved or regressed.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 32.5 (29.6) | 33.4 (33.3) |
| Mathematics | 32.4 (33.2) | 35.4 (34.7) |
| Science | 30.7 (30.9) | 33.6 (33.3) |

There were 205 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Current standards in Year 9 are better than might be expected considering the attainment of the school's annual intake of pupils. Girls and boys from all ethnic groups represented in the school, including those with SEN and EAL, pupils in public care, and those with

particular gifts and talents, make good progress as they move through the school. Current standards in Year 9 are below average but represent good achievement. In English, mathematics and science, standards are below average. In all other subjects, standards are also below average except for religious education, design and technology, ICT, and citizenship, where they are well below average, and Urdu and drama, where they are average. Weak literacy skills are a barrier to learning but are tackled effectively, enabling the vast majority of pupils to have some success. Pupils' numerical competence and capability with ICT are sufficient to support study in most subjects.

3. Pupils with EAL range from those who have little or no English to those who are fluent. They achieve well in school generally due to the very good progress that almost all of them make in learning English. While at the very early stages of English, pupils make rapid progress when supported by EAL staff, but they make less progress when there is insufficient assistance for them. Many pupils at the advanced stages of English have developed high levels of competence in the language. However, in spite of this competence, some pupils, especially Asian boys, still require opportunities to continue developing writing and reading skills to the higher levels needed for some GCSE papers. There is no consistent difference over time in the achievement of any of the groups represented within the school. However, boys of Asian-Pakistani heritage usually gain weaker results at GCSE than all other groups. The reason for this is that, although they achieve well over five years, their very low literacy skills on entry to the school act as a brake on progress in many subjects.

4. In 2003, GCSE results were well below average overall. However, they represented very good achievement because pupils did much better than others in England who started their GCSE course with similar national test results in English, mathematics and science in 2001. The upward trend in the school's GCSE results matches the national trend. In 2003, 25 per cent of pupils gained five results in the range A*-C, missing the governors' target of 31 per cent. However, targets were exceeded in the 1+A*-C and point score ranges. Girls did better than boys by the same amount as they did nationally. Results improved considerably in 2004 and governors' targets were exceeded. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more results in the range A*-C rose to 38 per cent. GCSE results for pupils with SEN and EAL showed a significant improvement from 2003 to 2004.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003

| | School results | National results |
|---|----------------|------------------|
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades | 25 (31) | 52 (50) |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades | 82 (85) | 91 (91) |
| Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades | 93 (93) | 96 (96) |
| Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects) | 27.0 (28.8) | 34.7 (34.8) |

There were 193 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Current standards in Year 11 are below average overall but represent good achievement over five years. However, very low standards of literacy on entry act as a barrier because they result in a slow start in many subjects, and prevent more pupils reaching the higher grades at GCSE. Standards in Year 11 are below average in English, mathematics, science and ICT. They are below average in all other subjects apart from drama, where they are above average, Urdu, where they are average, art, French, and GCSE physical

education, where they are well below average, and religious education, where they are very low. In French, there is some underachievement due to previous staff absence. However, in art, religious education and GCSE physical education, the well below average or very low standards represent significant underachievement and result from teaching that is not good enough. Very good work related learning (WRL) provision provides excellent opportunities for pupils to achieve well. In Year 11, the very well organised work placement programme enables all pupils to develop the skills sought by employers. In Year 10, standards on the NVQ food preparation course are average and pupils are achieving very well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Attitudes are good. Exclusions are above average but behaviour is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance has improved and is now average for the country as a whole.
- Pupils behave well both in and out of lessons.
- Relationships are good and there is a high level of racial harmony.
- The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and monitors it carefully.
- Incidents of bullying, racism and other forms of harassment are rare.

Commentary

6. Pupils' attendance has improved in the last year to 91.6% from 90.3% in 2003 and is now broadly average for a secondary school. Strategies such as telephone contact with parents on the first day of absence and the efforts of outreach and key workers have improved matters. Some absence is caused by extended holidays but this is reducing. Most pupils arrive on time for the start of the school day but unreliable bus services do cause some lateness. The long narrow corridors slow movement between classrooms and this causes some lateness to lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | |
|--------------------|------|
| School data | 90.3 |
| National data | 91.7 |

| Unauthorised absence | |
|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 1.9 |
| National data | 1.1 |

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

7. Pupils' attitudes are mostly good. They show respect, are mostly quiet and attentive in lessons and respond well to good teaching. Relationships are good. Pupils mix happily across gender and ethnic groupings and there is a high level of racial harmony. The friendliness and helpfulness of many pupils impressed inspectors. Many pupils show a sensitive understanding of the linguistic and cultural needs of others. The work of the ethnic minority achievement grant (EMAG) faculty is central in providing personal, social and learning security to pupils learning English, including asylum seekers, through the extra-curricular opportunities it provides, and through sharing with all teachers the background and language needs of pupils it supports.
8. Pupils behave well both in and out of lessons. The school is crowded but movement between lessons and at lunchtime, under good supervision, is as civilised as possible in the circumstances. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This is closely monitored and there is a comprehensive recording system to inform action by pastoral staff. However, the school has not been entirely successful in eliminating smoking in the girls' toilets. Pupils are very positive about behaviour and indicated that incidents of bullying, racism and other forms of harassment were rare and effectively dealt with. Pupils with EAL have very good attitudes to learning and are very well integrated into the school community.
9. Attitudes and values of most pupils with SEN are not markedly different to those of their fellow pupils. The school's extensive range of support strategies benefits them considerably. The recently developed learning support unit caters very well for pupils with behavioural difficulties. Pupils' placement in the unit and their re-integration into mainstream is successful.

10. The level of exclusions in 2003 was quite high compared to national figures but it has reduced by a third in the last year. Exclusions are considered in each case to be justified. The school takes a firm line to prevent unacceptable conduct from affecting pupils' education. The procedure for dealing with exclusions is clearly laid out, well managed and documented. There are good arrangements for supporting pupils at risk and for reintegration subsequent to exclusion. The process is having a beneficial effect upon pupils' behaviour and progress.

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 | 553 | 75 | 3 |
| White – Irish | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani | 414 | 52 | 2 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 128 | 23 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 18 | 4 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 3 | 0 | 0 |

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

11. Strengths recognised in the previous report have been maintained and in some cases further developed so that provision for pupils' personal development is good. In some curriculum areas, lesson planning often identifies ways in which learning can contribute to personal development, but this is not particularly widespread.
12. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies and form time nearly always provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on the appropriately chosen themes and to pray if they wish. Their response is impressively respectful. However, because some tutors neglect to provide this opportunity, the school fails to fully meet requirements for daily worship. Provision among the subjects is patchy and sometimes opportunities are not seized upon as they naturally arise in lessons.
13. Provision for moral development is very 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 an appropriate range of moral issues relevant to pupils' lives.
14. More could be done to provide opportunities for older pupils in particular to demonstrate initiative and take responsibility but in general, the provision for pupils' social development is good. The school council is at an early stage of development but the very well organised and established peer mediation initiative provides a much-appreciated contribution to the social development of both the mediators and pupils seeking their support. Pupils respond well to opportunities to assist those less fortunate than themselves through charitable activity.

15. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. There is a wide range of extra-curricular opportunity offering participation in and appreciation of cultural activity. The good programme of sporting activity, educational visits, field trips and holidays, enhances the provision in this area. The school has made successful efforts to reach out to the wider community in the area, ensuring that pupils are able to value and appreciate the cultural diversity of its intake. The success of this is well reflected in the harmonious relationships, which are evident throughout the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides its pupils with education of good quality. Teaching and learning are good but assessment is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is good and resources are satisfactory. The programme of care support and guidance is of good quality. The school has a good partnership with parents and other institutions.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in the core subjects, English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- Most lessons are characterised by good planning, pace, and good relationships.
- The teaching of pupils with SEN and EAL is good.
- In the best lessons, teaching generates considerable challenge and a sense of enjoyment.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities in most subjects to use and develop their ICT skills.
- Teaching in art and religious education is unsatisfactory.
- Some marking does not show pupils well enough how to improve.
- Assessment is uneven in quality and needs to be strengthened in many subjects.
- Some lessons do not cater fully for the wide range of attainment in the class.

Commentary

16. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. This is responsible for the rising standards. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are good in English, Urdu, French, mathematics, science, dance, history, music, and drama. In all other subjects teaching and learning are satisfactory, apart from religious education, where they are unsatisfactory. Teachers employ a wide range of approaches to keep the pupils interested so lesson time is used well. A particular example of this is the skilled use of interactive whiteboards in several subjects. Good use of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy has improved teaching. It is now quite common for lessons to begin with a starter activity and end with a plenary session. Pupils learn quickly because class management is good and teachers plan carefully to ensure that they build securely on previous knowledge. Literacy skills receive good attention across the school. However, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunity to use and develop their ICT skills. A further weakness in some lessons is the aiming of the major component of the work at pupils of average attainment rather than catering fully for the whole range in the class.

17. Pupils with SEN are taught almost entirely in mixed ability classes and experience the same overall good quality of teaching as other pupils. Pupils with statements of SEN are helped well by classroom assistants who also help other pupils. However, there are too few assistants to provide as much support as is required. Tasks and resources are modified to help pupils learn but this not always done as extensively or as effectively as necessary. The demands made on gifted and talented pupils are sometimes no greater than on those of their peers.

18. Teaching of pupils with EAL is good overall. Where there is extra classroom support, teaching is very good. The well-qualified support staff and teachers, including native speakers, liaise effectively with class teachers, producing their own excellent lesson plans and resources; this enables all pupils learning English to successfully undertake tasks similar to those of other learners. When specialist support is not present, class teachers generally provide effective English language guidance to pupils. However, many teachers have difficulties in fully addressing the specific learning needs of pupils at the very early stages of English who then become dependent on translation by other pupils.

19. In Years 10 and 11, good teaching is responsible for the sharp rise in the quality of pupils' work as they move towards GCSE. Teaching and learning are good in the core subjects, English, mathematics, science and ICT. They are also good in Urdu, dance, history, music, geography, citizenship and drama. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in all other subjects, apart from religious education and art, where they are unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory teaching in these areas is responsible for the unsatisfactory standards that are evident in them. Good relationships between pupils and teachers help to generate a good learning atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils are generally keen to do well and rise to the challenges of GCSE. Since the previous inspection, teachers have improved the provision in most subjects for the highest attaining pupils, including those with particular gifts and talents. However, as in Years 7 to 9, pupils' use of computers to accelerate learning needs to be strengthened.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 126 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 25 (19.8%) | 59 (46.8%) | 38 (30.2%) | 4 (3.2%) | 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.

20. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall. The school was slow to address this key issue after the last inspection and has only recently developed policies and agreed practices. There are now good systems for collecting performance data in order to measure progress, agree targets with pupils, and to identify under-achievement. However, these approaches are not yet fully implemented in all subjects. There are inconsistencies in the quality of day to day assessment across the school. Practice is most effective in French, the core subjects, English, mathematics and science, and work-related learning, but it requires improvement in ICT, geography, physical education and religious education. Pupils' written work is marked regularly in most subjects, but teacher's comments, though supportive, are often rather brief, with insufficient advice about how to improve. Oversight of exercise books does not always ensure that pupils maintain good standards of presentation.

21. By contrast, assessment and monitoring of progress for pupils at the early and intermediate stages of learning English are excellent. Comprehensive records are frequently updated and made available to all teachers. Individual English language plans show pupils' competence according to LEA criteria, and set ambitious targets for improvement. Assessment of pupils at the advanced stages of English learning is good, but there is less whole school awareness of the continuing language learning needs which some of these pupils still have. Assessment for pupils with SEN meets all statutory requirements.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum is good overall. The programme of extra-curricular activities is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- There is effective support for pupils with EAL and SEN.
- The WRL provision is very strong and beneficial.
- Library provision is good but the stock of books is barely adequate.
- The school does not fully meet requirements for collective worship.
- Accommodation and resources for design and technology are unsatisfactory.
- Some non-specialist teaching is affecting standards and achievement.
- Parents are concerned about the lack of a timetable for homework.

Commentary

22. The curriculum is good overall. It has good breadth and balance, and enables boys and girls of all abilities, backgrounds and ethnic groups to make good progress as they move up through the school. Effective programmes of support enable most of the large numbers of pupils with EAL and SEN to have full access to the curriculum. The personal and social education programme (PSE) provides citizenship and careers education. In PSE, pupils also receive sound advice relating to sex and drugs education and health issues.
23. The school has addressed almost all the weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection. Lessons are now shorter, time allocations for most subjects are satisfactory, and previously identified breaches in requirements have all been eliminated. Requirements for citizenship are fully met, although active citizenship still requires further development. The WRL provision is very good and meets all new statutory requirements well. Vocational courses, including some at a local college, augment the extremely well organised programme of work experience and careers education.
24. For pupils with SEN, there is a small amount of helpful additional provision to develop their literacy skills. Pupils who meet the school's criteria for inclusion on the register are carefully identified. Good individual education plans are in place. The school has identified ten per cent of its pupils as gifted and talented. Many pupils have benefited from their participation in a wide range of enrichment activities. The effectiveness of the programme is carefully monitored. It has successfully raised the aspirations of many pupils.

25. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy has had a positive effect on the planning of curricular content in English, mathematics and design and technology but it still needs to be strengthened in mathematics and science. There are also strengths in dance and ceramics, where innovative programmes really motivate the pupils. Homework is set regularly but parents have a justifiable concern about the lack of a timetable for it.
26. Pupils benefit substantially from a comprehensive programme of extra-curricular activities and enrichment opportunities. Apart from homework and coursework clubs in many subjects, there is a wide range of social, sporting and enrichment activities including football, basketball, music, drama, art, dance and an Urdu poetry club. The EAL homework club gives invaluable English or home language practice to pupils of all cultures.
27. Staffing is satisfactory overall. The core subjects of English, mathematics, ICT and science all benefit from strong teams of staff. This is also true in Urdu and design and technology. Weaknesses relate to some non-specialist teaching in religious education and geography, which affect learning and standards, and insufficient classroom assistants to provide extra help for all of the EAL and SEN pupils who need it.
28. The library is a well-managed resource centre, available for use all day until after school. It is a pleasant place for study and leisure, with an adjoining ICT suite. It is used well, particularly at lunchtime, and for library lessons by Years 7 and 8 and for project work in most subjects. Currently around a third of pupils have books out on loan, which is a good proportion for the beginning of the school year. However, the stock of books is barely sufficient for the number of pupils in the school.
29. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is adequate but constraints adversely affect learning in some subjects. Some rooms are too small for the number of pupils using them. Facilities for art and physical education are good but changing facilities are unsatisfactory. There is insufficient specialist teaching space for all aspects of design and technology. This affects learning. Some parts of the buildings are in need of refurbishment. The narrow corridors and stairways restrict movement and cause lateness to some lessons.
30. Resources are generally satisfactory, although there are still some weaknesses. The shortages in science, geography and religious education, noted at the previous inspection, have been addressed and resolved. However, there are insufficient computers for the school's needs, and in design and technology resources for resistant materials are inadequate. In all other subject areas provision of resources for learning is satisfactory. In modern foreign languages, provision is good including a full complement of interactive whiteboards and up to date ICT software.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are very well cared for. The school listens to their views and acts on them. Pupils receive good advice, support and guidance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between teachers, helpers and pupils are very positive.
- The arrangements for learning support contribute well to achievement.

- Induction procedures are very effective.
- Personal support for pupils at an early stage of learning English is excellent.

Commentary

31. The arrangements for the transfer of pupils from their primary schools and for settling in are very effective. A foundation course that enables the same teacher to teach them for several subjects in their form base during their first year contributes well to their sense of belonging and reduces the amount of movement around the school. Pupils feel safe and valued because of the way they are treated by the adults in the school and they are confident that they can turn to them for help. Their views are sought through questionnaires and are respected and acted upon. Health and safety procedures are now generally satisfactory. Child protection and children in care procedures are very well implemented.
32. There is excellent cultural and personal support for pupils learning English. The teachers give tirelessly of their time, organising excellent opportunities for pupils to meet others of the same language group. They receive daily help with their learning and advice on personal matters. The modern languages department enables many pupils to take GCSE in their first language.
33. Personal support for ethnic groups, asylum seekers and travellers is very good. The racial equality policy is in place and protects the rights of all groups within the school. The school shows concern for the progress of all groups by analysing and monitoring their assessment results. This has resulted in the identification of the lower GCSE results of Asian boys. English language issues regarding this group are now being explored. The EMAG faculty provides very good specialist English language support, ensuring that pupils have full access to the curriculum. The EMAG faculty also organises invaluable cultural and first language support for asylum seekers when they first arrive at the school, and subsequently monitors their personal development. The success of the school's provision for the different groups within the school is evident in the good progress that they all make. The large team of learning mentors helps to support the welfare, learning and behaviour of many pupils with SEN. The SEN co-ordinator works closely with primary schools to ensure a smooth transition from Year 6 to Year 7. The programme for gifted and talented pupils is successful in raising their aspirations towards increasing their participation in continuing education.
34. Pupils are well informed about their targets and progress towards them. An annual targeting day at which parents are present contributes well to this process. Extra tuition, revision and homework support are available at lunchtime and after school. Extra curricular experiences, especially in creative, expressive and performing arts provide further opportunities for pupils to achieve more. The learning mentors add a further dimension to the good quality of support provided, particularly for those pupils who have learning and behavioural difficulties. However there are not enough learning support assistants to meet the needs of all pupils who need extra help.
35. Pupils receive good advice and guidance, for example about optional subjects in Years 10 and 11. Careers education, work experience, and a careers convention enable pupils to be appropriately informed about employment.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents have a good regard for the school and are confident in it. The partnership between school and parents is good. Links with other schools and the community are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents express positive views about the school and their children's progress.
- They support the school well.
- The school works very closely with its partner primary schools.
- Experiences in the community contribute well to pupils' learning and personal development.

Commentary

36. Parents are pleased with the quality of education and care that is provided. They are justified in their belief that their children achieve well academically and personally. A minority is concerned about poor behaviour but there is little evidence of it in school because firm action is taken to eliminate it. The school is right to have high expectations of pupils to behave responsibly and expects that its strategies will reduce the relatively high exclusions over time.
37. Parents are justified in saying that they are unsure about homework because it is not set according to a fixed timetable. Some would like to receive extra guidance about how to help their children with work at home. Parents are generally well informed about the life and work of the school and their children's progress. They are regularly consulted for their views. Two outreach workers provide an important channel of communication with families whose first language is not English. The school has regular contact with the parents of pupils with SEN. Almost all parents attend the annual reviews of pupils' statements. Work with a wide range of external support agencies on behalf of pupils with SEN is successful. Parents' attendance at meetings is usually good and turnout is usually high for school performances. A few parents participate in the curriculum from time to time and the parents' association raises funds for resources.
38. Pupils are very well prepared for their transfer from primary schools. Curricular projects contribute very well to continuity of learning between schools. Vocational experiences for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are provided in very good partnership links with a local college of further education. The school successfully incorporates amenities in the locality and further afield into pupils' education. Examples are work experience, field trips and residential visits. Specialists, such as artists, visit the school to share their knowledge and expertise with the pupils. The school is currently working to develop further its communications and involvement with local ethnic groups.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership is good and management is satisfactory. Strong leadership by the headteacher, with effective support from senior staff, is providing a clear vision of good attitudes, achievement and 'pride in excellence' to underpin the school's work. Management is improving. Governance is satisfactory. However, the school does not fully meet requirements for collective worship.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has quickly ensured a clear agenda for raising standards and school improvement.
- The quality of the senior team's leadership and management is good.
- Governors have a strong commitment to providing a good quality of education.
- Leadership and management of the EMAG faculty are very good.
- The school does not meet requirements for collective worship.
- There is too little monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by some subject leaders.
- Management requires improvement in physical education, religious education, and art.

Commentary

39. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors support the school in shaping its future and debating and challenging key areas for development. They understand the main strengths and weaknesses of the school well and have a genuine desire to contribute to providing high standards of education and care for the pupils. They are beginning to be involved more in checking aspects of the schools' performance. In reviewing and formulating policies they have done their best to ensure that all statutory requirements are in place. However, the school does not fully meet requirements for collective worship because some form tutors do not follow agreed procedures.
40. The leadership of the headteacher is good. He has high expectations of pupils and staff, and strongly challenges any underperformance. Governors endorse his clear and ambitious vision for the future development of the school. Recently appointed, he has moved swiftly and decisively in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the school. An agenda for improvement has been set in place in a constructive framework, and staff are responding well to the open approach to management and increasing accountability. There has been a positive impact in a number of important areas, including revised senior management roles and responsibilities, sharply focussed school improvement procedures, and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by the senior team. The headteacher and senior team work well together in providing consistent leadership, expectation, and visible support throughout the school.
41. Management across the school is satisfactory. Priorities in the new school improvement plan, though not explicit in their perceived costs, relate primarily to raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. The plan also endorses new developments that will further improve standards, for example, the positive re-shaping of 14-19 curriculum opportunities in partnership with a local high school. These priorities are reflected in faculty and subject plans, and consequently there is a common and well-focussed drive for improvement. Rigorous procedures have now been put in place to track progress in putting the school improvement plan into action, including regular review by senior staff and information shared with governors.
42. The management by subject leaders is variable. It is very good in drama, music, WRL and in provision for SEN and EAL. It is good in English, mathematics, science, and modern foreign languages, subjects where effective use is made of assessment data in setting pupils targets and tracking their progress. Elsewhere, management is often less consistent, with particular concerns in physical education, religious education, and art. The monitoring of teaching and learning by some subject leaders is not securely in place. As a result, there is insufficient debate about the effectiveness of teaching and its impact

on pupils' learning. Strategies such as the regular review of pupils' work and teachers' marking are emerging, but observation and review of lessons are insufficient. The sharing of good practice is not consistently established. This aspect of subject responsibility requires greater emphasis, and is properly given priority in the school's draft improvement plan.

43. Leadership and management of the EMAG faculty are very good. The head of department leads the nationally recognised department of dedicated teachers and support staff with vision, and she manages skilfully the complex and fluctuating English support programme. Information is made available to the whole school through training programmes and comprehensive documentation. An area for development is the training of teachers on the needs of the more advanced learners of English. Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with SEN and those who are gifted and talented are also very good. The SEN co-ordinator ensures that support staff are well trained and has introduced a formal programme of professional development. She meets regularly with subject teachers and support staff to share good practice.
44. Professional development is well advanced. It links well with performance management and the school development plan. Newly qualified and recently appointed teachers are strongly supported. The school has good links with teacher training institutions and its full participation in the graduate training initiative makes a significant contribution to initial teacher training.
45. The school's financial affairs are managed well. Principles of best value are applied well, although there is need to provide more precise anticipated costs in the school's improvement planning. Appropriate use is made of funding for pupils with SEN and EAL. Current barriers to the improvement in standards are the very low literacy levels when pupils enter the school, and unsatisfactory accommodation in design and technology. Unit costs are above average 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 (£) | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Total income | 4,527,241 |
| Total expenditure | 4,551,810 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 4,025 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year | 41,278 |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 65,847 |

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

The main focus of the inspection was on English, French, and Urdu but Spanish and German were also sampled. There were no GCSE results in Spanish in 2003 or 2004 because it is a relatively new subject at the school. Results in German were well below average in 2003 but improved considerably in 2004. In Spanish in Year 9, teaching was very good and pupils were achieving very well. In German in Year 10, teaching was good and pupils were achieving well.

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are below average achievement is good.
- Results in national tests in Year 9 and in GCSE have improved steadily since 2001.
- The quality of teaching is good so pupils learn well.
- Relationships in the classroom are good, encouraging pupils to work well.
- Pupils do not use computers sufficiently.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not have a common programme of formally assessed tasks.
- Literacy skills are a barrier to learning and are very low when pupils join the school but improve because they are well taught.

Commentary

46. Results in the national tests in Year 9 in 2003 were below average but represented good achievement over three years. Girls did better than boys, but only as they do nationally. Results in GCSE English and English literature in 2003 were below average at grades A* to C but represented good achievement. Results at grades A* to G were broadly in line with the national average. Girls did better than boys, but only as they do nationally. Results in both the national tests in Year 9 and in GCSE have improved steadily since 2001 and continued to improve in 2004, reflecting considerable progress from a very low base.
47. 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 English is an additional language for a significant number. A suitably modified programme of study and additional support in the classroom enable pupils with EAL and SEN to achieve as well as their classmates and very few pupils leave without a qualification in English. However, there is not enough classroom support for all of the pupils who could benefit from it.
48. By Year 9, pupils listen well. They share ideas sensibly in pair and group talk, generally respond simply but clearly to questions and often contribute ideas enthusiastically. Pupils

are happy to read aloud, though some read slowly and painstakingly, and can find information in and respond to a good variety of texts. A good range of writing is produced and increasingly extended pieces are undertaken. Writing is generally careful, though often affected by lack of vocabulary and uncertain spelling. By Year 11, pupils listen well and make perceptive contributions to discussion in class. They respond well to their reading and produce a good volume of extended writing. It is well planned and the quality of expression improved by the process of drafting and revising, though only higher attaining pupils are able to express themselves fluently and with a good range of vocabulary without teacher support.

49. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are mostly subject specialists with a good range of experience. Good relationships in the classroom encourage pupils to contribute. Lessons are well planned to engage pupils, who are stimulated and work at a good pace. There is good practice in the use of library lessons in Years 7 and 8 to develop reading skills. 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. Pupils' work is regularly marked, their efforts praised and targets for improvement identified. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use ICT.
50. Leadership and management are good. There is a commitment to and a shared concern for raising standards. There is good teamwork and the sharing of ideas. Teaching and learning are well monitored and good records are kept of pupils' progress. However, the dispersal of teaching rooms in various locations makes communication difficult. Pupils' work is assessed well and their progress monitored, but pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not have a common programme of formally assessed tasks to assist monitoring and ensure consistency. Progress since the last inspection is good. Standards have improved and continue to rise.

Literacy across the curriculum

51. Standards of literacy are very low on entry to the school and English is an additional language for a significant number of pupils. Achievement is, however, good and pupils make good progress in developing literacy skills. Literacy development is a priority in the school and the National Strategy for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is well established in general teaching practice. A literacy co-ordinator works with a cross-curricular committee to implement the well-established and recently revised school policy. Teachers have undertaken training in the teaching of literacy to inform practice. Pupils' progress is assessed annually. Classroom assistants and specialist support teachers promote pupils' literacy development very well. Literacy development is integral to the work in English and good use is made of the school library to consolidate and develop reading skills. Across the curriculum, practice varies but there is a general emphasis on the display and use of key words to extend pupils' often limited vocabulary. There is good practice in the development of skills of speaking and listening particularly in science, modern foreign languages, history, dance and music. There is reading for information in all subjects, but opportunities are taken in science and religious education for reading aloud. Emphasis on writing varies between subjects, but there is insistence on the use of sentences in science and good development of writing skills and opportunities for extended writing in history and geography.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and pupils achieve well.
- Leadership is good and has created a good climate for study.
- Assessment is very good and is well used to support learning.
- Standards in are not high enough in Year 11.
- Speaking is a weakness in Year 10, especially amongst girls.

Commentary

52. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average in the range A*-C and they declined further in 2004. This had much to do with staff absence. Nevertheless, in 2004, most pupils achieved a pass grade in the range A*-G. Overall, these results represented considerable underachievement.
53. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is very low, particularly in terms of literacy, and a number join considerably later with no prior knowledge of the language they are to study. Nevertheless, because teaching meets the needs of boys and girls from all ethnic groups and is successful in engaging their attention they achieve well. In Year 9, current standards in reading, speaking, writing, listening and understanding are below average but represent good achievement. There is some evidence that pronunciation by Asian heritage pupils is better than by other groups.
54. This is the last Year 11 in which all pupils have been required by the school to take a language. Here, standards are well below average and represent some underachievement as a result of the effect of staff absence last year. From the evidence of their written work it appears that the pupils have not fully recovered from this setback. However, efforts are now being made to make up for lost ground. It was not possible to judge standards of speaking, listening or reading because Year 11 pupils were out of school on work experience during the inspection. In Year 10, only 24 pupils have chosen French, very few of them boys. Here, standards are broadly average and much better than in Year 11. Half of the pupils recorded average results in their teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004. However, some pupils, mostly girls, are not confident in expressing themselves orally.
55. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teachers plan lessons for younger classes very well, and they encourage pupils effectively by brisk interaction in the foreign language. Interactive white boards are a valuable resource and help to add a further dimension to teaching and learning. Some class sizes are small, and the mixed ability approach is successful without classroom assistants. Pupils with SEN and EAL make progress as good as that of others because teachers and other pupils are supportive of them. Workbooks taken home give pupils a sense of ownership of their learning. Boys learn as well as girls. In Year 10, teaching generates good attitudes to learning but it does not always fully cater for the highest attaining pupils or those who struggle. This is because the same work is provided for the whole class even though there is a very wide range of attainment within it.

56. Leadership and management are good. The Head of Faculty gives strong leadership, and has established procedures which ensure that teachers and learners alike know where their strengths are and what they need to do to improve. Teaching methodology is at the cutting edge, especially in relation to the use of ICT. However, time still needs to be found to review and monitor the targets set for individual pupils. Educational visits to France are popular and make a worthwhile contribution to learning. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory because the unsatisfactory teaching reported at that time has been eliminated. Standards have improved considerably, especially in Years 7 to 9.

Urdu

Provision in Urdu is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers are excellent language and cultural role models for their pupils.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils achieve very well in writing.
- Pupils respond well to their teachers.
- There is insufficient use of ICT.
- Marking in Years 7 to 9 is not sufficiently detailed.

Commentary

57. In 2003, GCSE results were broadly in line with the national average for community languages, with pupils gaining below average results in Urdu and average results in Bengali. Girls performed better than boys. In Bengali and Urdu, pupils gained better results than in their other subjects. Bengali is no longer taught in Years 7 to 10.
58. By Year 9, standards are average for Urdu and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of speaking and listening skills in Asian languages, but often with little or no knowledge of writing in the Urdu script. They make very good progress in listening and in formal speaking. In writing, pupils achieve very well; by Year 9 many have mastered the complex Urdu script. In reading, pupils make good progress. By the end of Year 11, standards are average and pupils' achievement is good. The higher attaining pupils reach above average standards in all years. Pupils with SEN and EAL achieve well because their language background is similar to that of other pupils.
59. Teaching and learning in Urdu are good throughout the school. The teachers are excellent cultural role models for their pupils. They use Urdu consistently in lessons, providing an excellent authentic model of spoken language. They make good use of resources, including the interactive whiteboard, to give pupils clear focal points for learning. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, pupils confidently moved Urdu text to demonstrate understanding of the present, past and future tenses. However, in Years 7 to 9, pupils rarely undertake independent learning tasks, especially using ICT. This particularly affects boys, some of whom begin to lose interest and concentration in Year 9. Assessment is good in Years 10 and 11, but in Years 7 to 9, marking of written work is not sufficiently detailed, and teachers do not systematically link their teaching to National Curriculum levels. This results in pupils having limited awareness of their progress. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally very good, and support learning.

60. Although there is currently no separate leadership of community languages, leadership and management are good because the teachers work exceptionally well together within the modern languages department to raise standards. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. GCSE standards are still average but there is now no second community language in Years 7 to 10. However, in Urdu, standards are rising and teaching is now more imaginative.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in Year 9 tests and in GCSE have improved considerably.
- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Pupils do not use ICT frequently enough.
- Marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

61. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below average but represented satisfactory achievement over three years. Performance has improved steadily since 1999, and the results in 2004 showed a further advance. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average but compared well with other subjects in the school. They represented satisfactory achievement. Results in 2004 were considerably better and the percentages of pupils gaining grades A*-C and A*-G were close to the previous year's national averages.
62. Current standards in Year 9 are below average overall but represent good achievement because pupils enter the school with well below average standards in this subject. Work set is challenging and shows good coverage of number and algebra, shape and space, and data handling. However, studies involving investigations and the application of mathematics to problem solving are less secure. The highest attaining pupils are working with success at above average levels. Standards in Year 11 are below average overall but represent good achievement, showing good progression from the well below average standards recorded in Year 9 in 2003. Many pupils are preparing for the intermediate and higher examinations at GCSE. Girls have improved relative to boys since the last inspection and there is now little difference in achievement. Pupils with EAL achieve well and are not generally limited by difficulties with language in mathematics. Pupils with SEN generally make good progress. Lower attaining pupils, including many with SEN and EAL, are in small classes enabling them to receive more attention from the teachers and learning support assistants. However, the work set for them in class is occasionally too difficult.
63. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and have improved since the previous inspection. Teaching is always at least satisfactory and is often good or very good. Teachers are currently incorporating ideas suggested by the National Strategy for Years 7 to 9 into their lessons but these approaches are not yet fully embedded in the work of the department. More stimulating oral and mental starter activities would promote

wider discussion. Some teachers are not using oral questioning well enough to check understanding or to keep the whole class involved. However, teachers work hard, set a good pace and are beginning to use ICT well in their presentations. Relationships are very good, as are attendance and punctuality. Pupils respond well and are co-operative. Behaviour is very good. These good attitudes support learning. Pupils willingly demonstrate at the board, work well in pairs, and offer answers when invited to do so.

64. There are some opportunities for pupils to apply mathematics in investigations and GCSE coursework, but more interesting contexts, games and puzzles would stimulate interest and enable pupils to hypothesise and explain their ideas. Although pupils have some experience of spreadsheets and databases, there is insufficient use of ICT. Difficulty in accessing the ICT rooms has limited the opportunities to use computers, and graphic calculators are not used regularly. Assessment is unsatisfactory. A new and effective system of tracking performance, agreeing targets and improving pupils' awareness of their own progress is being introduced. However, teachers' marking, and the oversight of pupils' own marking, does not promote sufficiently high standards of presentation or give pupils sufficient advice about how to improve.
65. The new head of subject provides good leadership and manages the faculty well. She provides a good role model, and has been effective in developing teaching. A range of helpful documentation has been produced, and department performance is monitored through lesson observation, scrutiny of pupils' work and detailed analyses of examination results. Since the previous inspection improvement has been good. There have been clear improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, in particular with higher expectations in Years 7 to 9. Consequently standards have improved considerably throughout the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Pupils apply a range of mathematical ideas in other subjects, such as measurement and scaling in art and design and technology, co-ordinates and graphical work in geography, and formulae in science and ICT. Although pupils' numerical skills are below average, they are generally able to cope with these ideas, although some graphical work is not of a good standard. The faculty has led whole school training in approaches to numeracy, and teachers of other subjects have been looking at ways of ensuring consistency in approach, and are dealing with misconceptions in mathematics. However, there is little evidence that other subjects are contributing to the development of pupils' numerical skills in a co-ordinated fashion.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because teaching and learning are good.
- Standards are rising quickly.
- Leadership and management are strong.
- Books are marked well but comments are not always followed up.
- Plenary sessions need to be improved.
- An effective system has been set up to assess pupils' progress.
- Literacy skills are a barrier to learning.
- Opportunities for independent learning are insufficiently frequent.

Commentary

67. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below average. However, they have improved at a faster rate than the national trend. GCSE results were also well below average with no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Results in the National Curriculum tests of 2004 were similar to those of 2003 but GCSE performance improved. Pupils enter the school with very low attainment, particularly in literacy, so these results represent satisfactory achievement. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls or pupils with SEN or EAL.
68. Current standards in Years 9 and 11 are below average but better than previous results would suggest. This is due mainly to improving teaching, improved assessment procedures and more effective management. However, basic ideas are still misunderstood by some pupils. For example, pupils in Year 9 carried out an experiment involving the reaction of calcium carbonate with acid carefully and made accurate observations but they had little understanding of the reaction between the chemicals. Higher attaining pupils in Year 10 showed a lack of understanding of current flowing in a simple series circuit. The quality of investigations by pupils in Year 10 is well below average with evaluation of their study being particularly weak. Pupils behave well and show interest rather than enthusiasm for science. They remain on task and conduct practical work carefully in a mature manner. Pupils from all backgrounds work well together. Weak literacy skills on entry to the school are a barrier to raising standards quickly. Where additional assistance in the classroom is a factor then pupils with SEN and EAL achieve well.
69. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and prepare well-structured challenging lessons that are delivered briskly. Classes are managed well so pupils co-operate fully with the teacher and with each other. Marking is thorough but pupils frequently ignore the comments in their books. Teachers do not follow this up. The better lessons provide a range of learning strategies for pupils who have different levels of understanding. Learning objectives are discussed well but the final session is frequently hurried and does not always evaluate the effectiveness of the lesson sufficiently rigorously. Teachers firmly direct most of the learning but ICT is used as an additional strategy allowing pupils to begin to develop some independence. Teachers use interactive white-boards effectively but pupils do not experience data logging other than through demonstrations.

70. The faculty is well lead and managed, with clear vision and a strong drive for improvement. Newly qualified teachers are supported well and are making a valuable contribution to its progress. An effective assessment structure is in place allowing progress of individual pupils to be tracked through a database of regular test results. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and ICT is used mainly to consolidate learning. There are strong links with local primary schools with pupils attending Falinge Park to experience practical lessons. Resources are generally good but provision for data logging is unsatisfactory. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection. Standards have risen steadily, and assessment procedures, teaching, provision of textbooks, and leadership are better. However, there is now a need to promote effective independent learning more strongly.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know their subject well and teach effectively.
 - Pupils don't use computers enough in their other subjects.
 - Pupils are attentive in class and always try their best.
 - More computers are needed.
 - In Years 7 to 9, assessment is unsatisfactory.
 - Lessons do not always take sufficient account of differences in pupils' abilities.
71. GCSE results for 2003 were below average overall, and very few pupils obtained the higher A* or A grades. Results in 2004 improved compared to those of 2003. Over the two years, there has been no consistent pattern between girls and boys.
72. Current standards in Year 9 are well below average. Nevertheless, this represents satisfactory achievement given pupils' very low Year 7 starting point, particularly in literacy. The vast majority of boys and girls can use the basic features of major software programmes, for example, in word processing, creating slide show presentations or publishing brochures. However, few pupils can successfully use the more advanced features. They have not yet developed the capability to make independent decisions for themselves, for example in selecting information for different purposes and audiences. By Year 11, standards, although still below average, have risen, and pupils achieve well. The vocational GCSE course that the majority of pupils take puts a strong emphasis on the use of computers in business. Consequently their knowledge and understanding of how ICT can help businesses promote themselves more effectively and become more efficient are good. Other pupils take the European Computer Driving Licence course where, although basic computer skills are average, designing solutions to solve problems in business through the use of ICT are well below average.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers know their subject well and can explain difficult concepts accurately and in ways that pupils can understand. They insist on high standards of behaviour and lessons proceed smoothly and according to plan, with pupils working hard and doing their best to succeed. However, in Years 7 to 9, teachers of other subjects do not provide enough opportunity for pupils to practice, consolidate and develop their ICT skills. Sometimes in ICT lessons, there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to work independently of the teacher using

self-help resources. In a minority of lessons in Years 7 to 9 with mixed ability classes, lesson plans do not take into account how the different levels of ability represented can be fully stretched and supported. Assessment practice in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. Pupils don't know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve.

74. Leadership and management of the ICT courses on the timetable are good. The strong team of specialist teachers and technical staff is well supported and encouraged. Pupils have good access to computers outside lesson times. New vocational GCSE courses have been successfully introduced. Standards are rising but assessment and target setting still need to be improved. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Staffing, achievement, GCSE results and the attitudes of pupils are all better. However, resources are still below average and restrict the opportunities of staff in other subjects to use ICT in their teaching.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. The use of computers to support pupils' learning in all their subjects is unsatisfactory. Pupils' basic skills, which are at least satisfactory, are not being utilised in their other lessons. Although most subjects make occasional use of the Internet for research, and often encourage pupils to use computers for presenting written work, this is not regular enough, or planned well enough, to become an integral part of every pupil's learning experience. In science, mathematics, art, design and technology, geography, music in Years 10 and 11, religious education and GCSE physical education classes, computers are not used enough to help pupils learn.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Almost all pupils are very well behaved and have positive attitudes.
- Teaching has much improved since the previous inspection.
- The acting heads of department are effective in improving provision.
- Some teachers have insecure subject knowledge and this affects learning in Years 7 to 9.
- The scheme of work, assessment procedures and the use of ICT are underdeveloped.
- Sketch maps and diagrams are sometimes poorly executed and inaccurate.
- Written work of higher attaining Year 11 pupils is good.
- Teaching tends to be aimed at the middle ability level of the class so higher and lower attaining pupils do not always learn as much as they could.

Commentary

76. In 2003, GCSE results were well below average. Girls did slightly better than boys but pupils did not do as well in geography as in their other subjects. Nevertheless, the results represented broadly satisfactory achievement. In 2004, GCSE results improved considerably compared to those of 2003.
77. Current standards in Year 9 are well below average but they represent satisfactory achievement because pupils join the school in Year 7 with very low attainment, particularly

in terms of literacy. In Year 9, pupils' understanding of human geography is better than their limited understanding of physical processes. The standards of many lower attaining pupils are reduced by much incomplete or missing work. Pupils with EAL complete much written work well when supported by worksheets or textbooks but their independent writing shows some weaknesses.

78. By Year 11, standards are below average and represent good achievement. Pupils have a good geographical vocabulary, which they generally use well in lessons and in written work. They can construct and interpret graphs and draw sketch maps and diagrams. However, these are sometimes poorly executed and are often inaccurate. The written work of pupils in Year 11, particularly higher attaining pupils, shows good knowledge and understanding of a range of geographical patterns and processes.
79. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 to 11. Much teaching is lively and engaging, and sometimes fun. Pupils respond with interest and most behave well and work hard. Boys and girls from all ethnic backgrounds work well together. Stimulating teaching in a lesson in Year 10 enabled pupils to rise well to the challenge of drawing good field sketches. Learning is evaluated at the end of lessons but this often lacks rigour. In some lessons, where teaching appears to be successful, insecure subject knowledge and low expectations of pupils restricts their learning. Much teaching is aimed at the middle ability level of the class so pupils with SEN and gifted and talented pupils do not always learn as much as they could. Classroom assistants for pupils with SEN and EAL are effective but there are too few of them to help all of the pupils who need extra attention.
80. Leadership and management, following a lengthy period of difficulty, are now satisfactory. The acting heads of subject are making strenuous efforts to improve the department. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Standards have risen in Years 10 and 11 and teaching and learning are better. However, aspects of the curriculum are unsatisfactory. There is not an effective scheme of work, formal assessment is underdeveloped and is not moderated, and ICT is under-used. Accommodation is unsatisfactory as classrooms are widely dispersed. Many teachers provide tuition in geography. Most of them teach in other departments and some are not geography specialists. This makes it difficult to develop a team or to monitor teachers' work effectively.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- All groups of pupils achieve well and integrate well in lessons.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Examination results and assessment information are not analysed well enough.
- Occasionally, teachers' lack of subject knowledge adversely affects learning.
- Plenary sessions tend to be too rushed.

Commentary

81. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average. In relation to pupils' starting points at the beginning of the course this, nevertheless, represented broadly satisfactory achievement. Disappointingly, results fell slightly in 2004. Appropriate strategies are now in place to address the reasons for this decline. Teaching has been strengthened and the progress of GCSE pupils is being very closely monitored.
82. Current standards in Year 9 are below average. This represents good achievement in relation to pupils' very low starting points on entry to the school. Their capacity to understand how different interpretations of historical events arise represents a particular strength because the opportunity to develop this key historical skill is well embedded in the curriculum. Many pupils write the results of their investigations to a good length. More attention has been paid to this since the previous inspection when it was not so evident. However, only a relatively small proportion of pupils has the capacity to thoroughly analyse complex sources of information.
83. Standards in Year 11 are below average, which indicates that pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points. However, relatively few pupils consistently demonstrate the higher order skills of interpretation and evaluation of sources of evidence. Pupils currently beginning the GCSE course in Year 10 are making particularly rapid progress because of good teaching which ensures that from the outset, they structure their work to meet examination criteria.
84. Throughout the school, pupils with SEN and EAL make similar progress to other pupils because the learning is adapted well for them. Support from specialist teachers and classroom assistants is effective. For example, adapted worksheets are provided for pupils in their first language yet also promote their acquisition of the technical vocabulary of the subject in English. In classes where extra support is not available, the pace of learning sometimes slackens because of the extra demands made on the teacher.
85. Teaching and learning are good overall. Key strengths include the quality of planning, which provides well for the range of groups within the class, and the use of a variety of demanding tasks, often involving co-operative activity. Lessons are very well managed to ensure that all groups integrate well together and this also contributes well to the generally positive learning climate. Interest and motivation are developed well in starter activities. Intended learning outcomes are shared with pupils but the concluding parts of lessons are sometimes not effective in their evaluation of learning. They tend to be rushed or concentrate on what pupils have learnt rather than how well they have performed. Lack of precise knowledge and understanding in history, evident in some of the teaching by non-specialists, occasionally adversely affects learning.
86. Subject leadership and management is satisfactory. There is a good commitment to improvement supported, for example, by some effective monitoring and support for the quality of teaching. However examination results and other assessment information are not yet analysed well enough and the results are insufficiently used to inform the planning cycle. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Issues raised at that time have been largely successfully resolved. However, improvements to assessment procedures in Years 7 to 9 have been rather belated and still need to be fully implemented.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not high enough and pupils are underachieving.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because there is insufficient monitoring of lessons, and insufficient guidance and support for non-specialists.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall.
- Classroom relationships and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Progress in the recently introduced short GCSE course is good.
- Marking is ineffective and pupils do not know how to improve.
- Pupils do not use ICT or practise their extended writing enough.

Commentary

87. GCSE examination results in religious studies in 2003 were very low and no pupils obtained the higher A*-C grades. There was an improvement in 2004 but results were still very low.
88. Current standards in Year 9 are very variable but well below average overall. Achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because insufficient time is spent on learning activities, which enable pupils to appreciate the impact that belief has on the lives of members of faith communities, or which encourage them to make reasoned personal responses to religious issues. Too much of the learning about belief and worship in Christianity, Islam and the other major world faiths is relatively undemanding. Pupils are seldom encouraged to write at length or use computers to support their learning. However, in some cases, where the balance is right and the teacher is also clear about how the skills can and need to be progressively developed then achievement is good and pupils reach standards, which are close to average. These same inconsistencies are also evident in Years 7 and 8.
89. The sample of work for Year 11 pupils provided by the school was too limited to allow a reliable judgement on their standards to be made. However, assessment information indicates that standards are very low and that pupils are underachieving. All pupils in Year 10 now take the short GCSE course in religious studies. Work seen indicates that pupils are making good progress and that some reach average standards.
90. Teaching and learning in religious education are unsatisfactory. This is largely because of a lack of clarity about how the programmes of study need to be taught in order to progressively develop pupils' knowledge understanding and skills. In addition, non-specialist teachers, despite conscientious preparation of lessons and a good commitment to the subject, sometimes lack the detailed knowledge and understanding needed to stretch pupils appropriately. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching quality ranged from unsatisfactory to very good and some of the better teaching was by non-specialists. Classroom relationships are generally good and good classroom management ensures that boys and girls of all ethnic groups are well integrated. This contributes to a generally positive classroom ethos, which supports pupils' personal development. Marking is regular and supportive but because some teachers are unsure of expected standards, it is not always effective in helping pupils to improve. Pupils who require extra support in lessons are well served by specialists and classroom assistants but their progress in religious education is similar to that of other pupils.

91. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has recently improved with the introduction of a short GCSE course for all pupils and now meets statutory requirements. Experienced senior managers have effectively enhanced the teaching team. Schemes of work and resources for Years 7 to 9 have also improved. However, these measures have not been in place long enough to have had a significant effect on standards and so improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.
92. Leadership and management of the subject are also unsatisfactory because not enough has been done to monitor the quality of teaching and identify and share the good practice, which undoubtedly exists. Support for non-specialists has not been effective. Development planning is not focussed sharply enough on the creation and implementation of strategies aimed at improving standards and the quality of provision.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

93. Within design and technology, the school offers GCSE courses in resistant materials, graphics and textiles for Years 10 and 11, and food technology in Year 11.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership provides good vision and a sense of purpose.
- In Years 10 and 11, teaching in food and textiles is better than in resistant materials.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Assessment systems are good.
- Accommodation and resources are inadequate for resistant materials and graphics, and there is not enough use of ICT.
- In Years 7 to 9, pupils achieve well in food and textiles but barely satisfactorily in resistant materials.

Commentary

94. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average. Between 2001 and 2003, results in food and textiles showed steady improvement. However, the overall design and technology GCSE results of 2004 did not improve on the 2003 performance.
95. By Year 9, standards are well below average. On entry to the school, pupils have limited technological experience and skill. From this relatively low starting point, achievement is satisfactory overall with no significant difference across ability groups; achievement of SEN and EAL pupils is in line with that of other pupils. However, there are distinct variations in standards and achievement across material areas. For example, in food, pupils achieve well but in resistant materials achievement is barely satisfactory. Despite sound approaches to teaching, poor accommodation and resources in resistant materials and graphics often restrict pupils' progress. Nevertheless, pupils demonstrate a grasp and understanding of the design process although analytical thinking is often superficial. Production skills develop satisfactorily but unrefined freehand sketching skills hinder all aspects of design, particularly the generation of ideas and adding of a technical

specification. Evaluations are often shallow although testing of food products is undertaken to a greater depth. Good standards of accuracy and finish are emerging in textiles but they are less secure in resistant materials. Use of computer aided design (CAD) to explore, develop and communicate design proposals needs to be strengthened. Pupils' experience of computer aided manufacture (CAM) to ensure consistency and accuracy when forming and shaping materials is inadequate.

96. In Year 11, standards rise to below average overall and achievement is satisfactory. Work in food and textiles is stronger than in resistant materials. Although teaching is often good, the unsatisfactory accommodation and resources for graphics and resistant materials restrict the potential quality of pupils' learning. Application of design principles reveals more considered thinking than in Years 7 to 9 but unsophisticated graphic skills continue to hinder the quality of pupils' responses to a design brief. Working drawings are often too simplistic and lack technical detail; they do not provide a sound basis for precision in making products. Pupils' knowledge of materials, including smart materials, falls short of that required for the higher GCSE grades. However, there are emerging strengths in the quality of GCSE coursework in food and textiles. ICT is insufficiently used as a learning tool in all areas, particularly in relation to CAD and CAM as an integral part of designing and making.
97. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are restricted by the unsatisfactory accommodation and resources provided for graphics and resistant materials. However, in Years 10 and 11, where accommodation is better, teaching in food is very good and it is consistently good in textiles. Generally, lesson planning is thorough but the planning of extension work for higher attaining pupils requires refinement. Questioning and interventions require greater challenge and pace to ensure pupils retain and apply previous knowledge well. Class size regularly exceeds room capacity in graphics; it hinders the quality of demonstration and compromises safety standards. Relationships with pupils are very good and high expectations of behaviour ensure that they work carefully. ICT is not used in all teaching but recent installation of interactive boards is starting to broaden teaching method. Use of assessment is good and developing; pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve.
98. Leadership and management of the subject are good, with a strong commitment to improvement. Development plans have a sharp focus on priorities but costs and timescales relating to intended improvements are missing. The curriculum in Year 10 is enhanced with GCSE and NVQ vocational links in food manufacture and preparation with a local college. Strategies to improve literacy and numeracy require further promotion. Monitoring of staff performance including analysis of results is good but links with staff training priorities are underdeveloped. Improvements since the last inspection are unsatisfactory because issues of accommodation and resources, outside the control of the department, have not been properly addressed. Technical support remains inadequate.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

99. The main focus of the inspection was on art and design, music and drama. The media studies course was sampled. Media Studies is provided in Year 9 and is a popular optional subject at GCSE. In 2003, GCSE results were well below average. They improved significantly in 2004. A Year 10 lesson and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that standards are now below average and teaching and learning are good. Pupils

develop good analytical skills in the study of a range of media texts, film and television material. They develop practical skills of layout, design, filming and editing in the creation of their own productions.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is some good teaching in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils bring good attitudes to art and behave well.
- Procedures for assessment are good.
- GCSE coursework is weak and affects examination performance, which is poor.
- Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is undemanding and results in unsatisfactory learning.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

100. GCSE results in 2003 were very low. Girls did better than boys but only 16 per cent of pupils recorded a result in the range A*-C. Pupils did much better in their other subjects than in art and design. In 2004, results improved slightly but still represented considerable underachievement. Again, girls outperformed boys.
101. Current standards in Year 9 are below average but represent satisfactory achievement because pupils enter the school with limited attainment in art. Standards are below average in drawing, design work and painting but better in three-dimensional work. This is an area where there are encouraging signs of improvement because teaching is lively and innovative. Here, standards have reached a level consistent with expectations nationally and represent very good achievement. In Years 10 and 11, however, pupils' work in GCSE projects is fragmentary and some promising ideas remain undeveloped. Most of the work that pupils produce is of around GCSE grade E standard, although there is some that would merit grades D and C and occasionally higher. Coursework generally lacks depth and creativity, which affects performance.
102. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. Although they are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, they are unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Recent staffing changes have provided good support for learning in Years 7 to 9 and are helping to lift standards. There has been a strong impact on the development of three-dimensional work in these year groups and pupils' design work is improving through the development of a lively and creative quality. There is evidence of work being well prepared and sensitive to individual interests and needs, particularly in respect of pupils with SEN and EAL. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 fails to sustain this progress or inspire. Work is undemanding and changes focus far too frequently. Consequently, most pupils produce work consistent with relatively low GCSE grades. The actual preparation for the GCSE examination is unsatisfactory because it does not develop pupils' knowledge, understanding or skills sufficiently.
103. Leadership and management of art and design are unsatisfactory. Significant weaknesses reported at the last inspection still remain. These include insufficient use of ICT in creative work and a failure to promote a clearer linear development in the work of pupils in Years 10 and 11. Management of the area has some strong features but it is

unsatisfactory overall because action to improve GCSE results has been largely ineffective. Better features are the comprehensive documentation and the linking of schemes of work to National Curriculum programmes of study and the GCSE syllabus. Assessment is thorough and includes pupil self-assessment. Pupils are encouraged to think of their work in terms of National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades.

Drama

Provision in drama is **good**.

- GCSE results are above average.
- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Extra-curricular activities are very good.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

104. Attainment on entry to the school is very low but by Year 9, standards have risen to average, and achievement is very good. Pupils are familiar with the vocabulary of the subject and the requirements of behaviour. They listen carefully and follow instructions without difficulty. All pupils are able to participate irrespective of levels of ability. Drama is a very successful optional subject in Years 10 and 11. Results at GCSE have steadily improved over time. In 2003 they were above average at grades A*-C and all candidates achieved a grade in the range A*-G. They improved further in 2004. Current standards are above average and achievement is very good. Pupils of all abilities choose the course and are able to participate, contribute and profit from the experience.

105. Teaching and learning are good. Well-informed teaching stimulates pupils and good relationships in lessons encourage them to participate with enjoyment and generally without inhibition. Lessons are well planned and managed in a friendly but purposeful way. The leadership and management of the subject are good. A detailed programme of study progressively develops and carefully assesses drama skills. A rich programme of extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' experience and makes a valuable contribution to their personal and social development as well as to the life of the school. The subject is an integral part of the faculty of performing arts and has contributed well to a range of cross-curricular projects both in and outside the school.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Assessment and target setting are good.
- ICT is not used sufficiently in Years 7 to 9.
- Provision for instrumental tuition is good.
- Teaching does not always cater well for SEN pupils in Years 7 - 9.

Commentary

106. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average, but there was a strong improvement in 2004, part of a rapidly rising trend over the last three years.

107. Current standards in Year 9 are below average but they represent good achievement since the pupils joined the school with very low attainment in Year 7. Achievement by

pupils with SEN and EAL is also good. There are clear indications that standards are rising rapidly. By Year 9, boys and girls know how to use electronic keyboards and tuned percussion for performance and for composition. However, listening and appraising skills are well below average. In lessons, teachers make every effort to improve these to enable pupils to learn to use suitable vocabulary when describing music.

108. Standards are below average in Year 11 but they represent good achievement. By Year 11, pupils know how to produce compositions using a range of instruments, electronic keyboards and computers. Overall standards in composition, performance and musical appraisal are below average but there is evidence of rapid improvement for pupils of all levels of attainment. 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.
109. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils benefit from teaching with a brisk pace. Lesson planning is excellent with tasks well related to previous learning. Lessons have a range of interesting work, which helps to consolidate learning and maintain pupils' interest. Work is regularly marked. Teaching embodies a good range of styles and very good organisation. In Years 7 to 9, there is some work especially designed for pupils of a range of levels of attainment but it does not always fully cater for pupils with SEN. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have too few opportunities to use computers in music. This limits the choices available to them in composition. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are able to follow their own musical interests and work to their strengths. They learn to redraft their work to improve it.
110. Provision for instrumental teaching is good. The number of pupils taking lessons in school is well above average. The visiting instrumental teachers' work is well managed and fully integrated into the operation of the department. The quality of instrumental teaching is good but not all visiting teachers set targets for their pupils and the department does not officially record grade examination successes, which is a weakness.
111. Leadership and management are very good. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The department promotes literacy and numeracy in lessons; this helps pupils' musical and general development. There is regular assessment of pupils' work and attainment is analysed across the range of skills taught in music lessons. This information is used to set targets for pupils and develop the work offered to them. GCSE Music results are informally analysed by component and the improvement in aural skills monitored from year to year. Accommodation is satisfactory but there are insufficient computer resources. There is a wide range of extra-curricular work with pupils regularly taking part in musical activities. Asian heritage children do not take part in these activities at a level equal to their involvement in instrumental lessons. However, there is a successful annual multi-cultural concert. The regular school performances have a strong impact on pupils' cultural and social development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. In this curriculum area, the focus of the inspection was on physical education. The recently introduced GCSE dance course in Year 10 was also sampled. In the lesson seen in this course, standards were average and teaching and learning were good.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers enjoy good relationships with their pupils.
- Extra-curricular provision is a strong feature that is helping to raise standards.
- Pupils make good progress in dance because they are taught well.
- Standards and results on the GCSE course are too low.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not in place.
- Assessment procedures require improvement – marking is unsatisfactory.
- Work planned does not always provide sufficiently for the needs of pupils with differing levels of attainment.

Commentary

113. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average for both the highest A*-C grades and across the full range of A*-G. Candidates did not do as well as they should, and their results in physical education were significantly lower than in their other GCSE subjects. Most recent results in 2004 show a further decline in A*-C grades, but a substantial improvement in A*-G performance.
114. When pupils join the school in Year 7 they have a wide range of capability and experience in physical education, and overall their standards are considerably below average. Throughout Years 7 to 9 all pupils, including those with SEN and EAL, achieve satisfactorily. They make steady progress because effective teaching stimulates their positive attitudes towards the subject. Progress is better in Year 7 dance and in netball in Year 8 where pupils benefit from good, challenging teaching. By Year 9, the overall standards of both boys and girls are below, but closer to, average. Teachers' own assessments suggest that standards are slightly above average; inspection evidence does not support this and there is need for further moderation of their assessments.
115. It was not possible to judge standards in Year 11 because they were out of school on work experience. However, standards in core physical education in Year 10 are close to but below average and achievement is satisfactory. Good attendance and participation rates by both boys and girls support their progress and provide continuity in their learning. However, basic skills require further consolidation, for example, for boys in badminton and for girls in basketball. Standards in GCSE physical education are well below average, particularly in the theoretical element of the course, and represent some underachievement.
116. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory in core physical education throughout the school. Dance is taught well. Teachers are knowledgeable, hardworking, enthusiastic and relate very well to their pupils. As a result, boys and girls are keen to learn. In the better lessons, teachers plan work well, share clear learning objectives so that pupils know what they are learning and why, and regularly question them to check their understanding. All pupils learn quickly and achieve well when challenging tasks properly stretch them. This was illustrated clearly in successful lessons where Year 8 girls developed their dodging skills in netball, and in Year 7 dance where boys and girls made good progress in understanding how a dance is created. Not all lessons are as effective:

some are slow to get underway, whilst in others the work planned does not provide sufficiently for the needs of pupils with differing levels of attainment. Assessment procedures are not aligned to National Curriculum or GCSE criteria. The checking and marking of GCSE written work are unsatisfactory because they are inconsistent and provide little guidance to help pupils improve.

117. Leadership in physical education is satisfactory. Daily routines operate well, schemes of work are being improved, and subject action planning is in place. An effective staff team is developing, although the current male/female imbalance is affecting the move to single-gender teaching to help raise standards in core physical education. Management is, however, unsatisfactory at present because monitoring of teaching and learning is not in place, assessment and target-setting procedures are not securely established, and GCSE results are too low. However, improvements since the previous inspection are satisfactory. Time allocated for physical education has improved, although it is still too low in Year 9. Indoor facilities are now very good, but changing accommodation remains inadequate and unsatisfactory. The dedicated base for theory work is a major advantage for GCSE theory development, as is the successful introduction of the examination course in dance. Strong staff commitment is reflected in the good programme of extra-curricular activities that are popular with girls and boys, and are important in helping to raise standards.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

118. The school has just started to broaden its curriculum in this area by introducing new courses in Year 10. At the time of the inspection, the following had been running for two weeks: an NVQ Key Skills course in ICT, GCSE leisure and tourism, and link courses with a local college for GCSE food manufacturing and NVQ food preparation. In Years 10 and 11, the school offers GCSE business studies.
119. The Key Skills course is reported within the ICT subject report. The other courses except food manufacture and business studies were sampled. In the one lesson observed in GCSE leisure and tourism, teaching and learning were good and pupils were achieving well. In the linked NVQ food preparation course, standards were average, and teaching and learning were very good. It was not possible to observe any business studies lessons. GCSE results in 2004 were well below average.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

120. The main focus of the inspection was on citizenship. Two personal and social education lessons on careers, in Years 8 and 10 were also sampled. Teaching, learning and achievement were good in both.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good on the GCSE course and pupils are achieving well.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Leadership of citizenship is good.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning need to be improved in Years 7 to 9.
- Provision for active citizenship needs to be strengthened.
- Marking in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory.
- Literacy is a barrier to learning in Years 7 to 9. Pupils sometimes find discussion difficult and written work is a weakness.

Commentary

121. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with very low attainment, especially in literacy. This initially restricts achievement because competence in reading, writing, listening, and discussion in whole class debates all underpin rates of progress. Nevertheless, by Year 9, standards have risen slightly to well below average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils understand topics such as child labour, equal opportunities and violence in the home. They reflect on them seriously and higher attaining pupils are prepared to explain to the class how they feel about them. Pupils understand feelings connected with racist comments and know why they are unacceptable. However, many pupils find that discussion and writing are still quite demanding and standards in these aspects of their work are lower. Written work is often fragmented and poorly organised. Sentence construction, punctuation, presentation and fluency in English are all well below average.

122. It was not possible to observe Year 11 in class because they were out of school on work experience but it was clear that the very good WRL provision is instrumental in the promotion of attitudes and behaviour connected with good active citizenship. Local employers give accurate feedback to pupils on matters such as relationships, punctuality, industry and concern for others. Standards in Year 10, where all pupils follow the short GCSE course, are below average and represent good achievement. Progress picks up in pace here because teaching is better than in Years 7 to 9. Pupils have a good grasp of topics such as rules for the protection of people and property, human rights, and consequences of actions. However, lower attaining pupils still have the impression that citizenship is just about being good. Writing is much better than in Years 7 to 9 because work is thoroughly marked with helpful comments on how to improve it.
123. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Year 10. Boys and girls, including those with SEN and EAL make the same progress as the rest of the pupils because teaching caters properly for them. The best teaching inspires and interests pupils because it involves a number of compelling approaches. In Year 10, really probing discussions about fairness and human rights kept the whole class fully involved, and very well managed group work enabled pupils to understand through role play how a court functions. On the GCSE course, pupils' standards of literacy improve because of the emphasis that teachers put on it. In Years 7 to 9, teachers present topics to pupils in a way that they can understand them but in several classes written work is not marked well enough and opportunities to improve standards of literacy are lost.
124. Leadership is good. The recently appointed head of citizenship has significantly improved provision in the subject. The scheme of work is clear and assessment procedures at the ends of modules of work are good. These inform the reports to parents, which also include useful self-assessment by the pupils. All required aspects of citizenship are covered but active citizenship requires further development. Charity work, peer mentoring and environmental work and active citizenship log books are all in place but each child's entitlement still needs further definition. The school's management of the subject has been satisfactory. It has been enabled to grow and flourish but attention needs to be given now to monitoring of teaching and learning, especially in Years 7 to 9.

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 | 4 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 3 |
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| How well pupils learn | 3 |
| The quality of assessment | 5 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs | 3 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 2 |
| Accommodation and resources | 4 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 3 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 3 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 2 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 4 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 3 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 |
| The effectiveness of management | 4 |

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