

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **JEFF JOSEPH SALE MOOR TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE**

Sale, Cheshire

LEA area: Trafford

Unique reference number: 106375

Headteacher: Mrs K Leaver

Lead inspector: Mr D Driscoll

Dates of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Inspection number: 268404

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

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#### **Terms used in this report**

*Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools **after** Year 6. Students in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Students in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for students of all ages at school.*

*At the end of Year 9, students aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the students know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, students aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**).*

*Inspectors judge the standards reached by students by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for students of the same age nationally. The students' achievements reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational value added over time. In this report, similar schools are defined as those having similar standards at the start of each stage of learning.*

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Foundation
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of students:	11 – 16
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1183
School address:	Jeff Joseph Sale Moor Technology College Norris Road Sale Cheshire
Postcode:	M33 3JR
Telephone number:	0161 9732713
Fax number:	0161 9620020
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Binch
Date of previous inspection:	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Jeff Joseph Sale Moor Technology College is bigger than most other secondary schools. Most students are White-British, although there are small groups of students from each of a large number of different ethnic backgrounds. The proportion for whom English is not the first language is a bit higher than most other schools, but only four students are at an early stage of learning English; the others are fluent.

Only two thirds of the students come from Trafford; the rest come from Manchester. Socio-economic circumstances are below average for the students who attend the school, although the proportion eligible for free school meals has fallen considerably since the previous inspection. Trafford operates a system of grammar and secondary modern schools, with the highest attainers attending grammar schools. As a result, standards on entry to the school are below average, as the school has fewer than average higher attainers. Nevertheless, there are year groups, such as the current Years 7 and 10, whose standards were average on joining the school. There are also considerable variations in attainment on entry in different subjects; standards of attainment of students currently in Year 9 were well below average on entry in English for example, but average in information and communication technology (ICT) and science.

The proportion of students with special educational needs has fallen considerably since the previous inspection and is now average, while the proportion with a statement of special educational need has increased significantly and is above average. The school has a

resourced provision for 30 students with a wide mix of special needs. Most students are on the special educational needs register because they have dyslexia, social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or moderate learning difficulties.

The school is a specialist technology college that was re-designated with Investors in People status in 2003 and an FA Charter Mark in 2000.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11933	D. Driscoll	Lead inspector	
9086	R. Watkins	Lay inspector	
33139	M. Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics
19596	B. Treacy	Team inspector	English
4145	C. Harrison	Team inspector	Science
10297	D. Cox	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
17868	E. Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art and design
15208	A. Briggs	Team inspector	Music
15462	C. Blakemore	Team inspector	Geography
19026	B. Downes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
2597	C. Jackson	Team inspector	Health and social care Special educational needs
2740	B. Barratt	Team inspector	History
30973	G. Hancock	Team inspector	Design and technology
12985	S. Jeffray	Team inspector	Physical education
30427	F. Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector	Religious education
22590	R. Castle	Team inspector	Citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a poor school that provides a **poor** quality of education and **poor** value for money.

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

- Standards are well below average and students' achievement is poor, because of poor teaching, well below average attendance and an unsatisfactory curriculum.
- The school has made poor progress since the previous inspection, as a result of poor leadership and management that do not have an accurate picture of standards and achievement or support teachers adequately.
- Students' attitudes are unsatisfactory and their behaviour is poor.
- Students' achievement is unsatisfactory or worse in mathematics, science, art and design, citizenship, design and technology, history, music and religious education.
- Students achieve very well in health and social care, and achieve well in English and physical education.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is good; students achieve well on the vocational courses.
- Students no longer report bullying because they do not trust staff, other than senior staff and the receptionist, sufficiently.
- The school has forged good links to help other schools through its specialist status.

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

Progress since the last inspection has been **poor**. Results in GCSE examinations have fallen from average to well below, attendance has fallen further behind the national average and exclusions are much higher. Teaching is now much worse. Weaknesses evident at the time of the previous inspection still persist.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	C	C	E	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Standards are well below average and achievement is **poor**. Students achieve well in English and very well in health and social care, but their achievement is unsatisfactory or worse in mathematics, science, art and design, citizenship, design and technology, history, music and religious education. Students learning English for the first time make good progress with the language, but in other respects the achievement is as poor as other students, including the highest attainers and those with special educational needs.

Students' personal qualities, including their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **unsatisfactory**. Students' attitudes are unsatisfactory and their behaviour is poor. Attendance is well below average, and punctuality is poor.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **poor** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **poor**. The best teaching is found in health and social care and ICT in Years 10 and 11, but teaching fails to reach a satisfactory standard in mathematics, science, design and technology, history, music and religious education. Teaching is badly affected by staff absence. There are significant weaknesses in the management of behaviour, setting appropriate work, marking and homework.

The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall; it is good in Years 10 and 11, but unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Provision for students with special educational needs or who are gifted and talented is unsatisfactory. The school fails to meet statutory requirements for the teaching of art and design and music. It does not provide a daily act of collective worship. The quality of guidance and support for students is unsatisfactory; students do not trust teachers enough to report incidents of bullying. Health and safety procedures are not carried out properly. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents and the community, and good links with other local schools and colleges.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school has declined as a result of **poor** leadership and management. The school does not have a clear picture of standards and achievement, because the analysis of data is inaccurate. Staff absence is high. There are some signs of improvement under the satisfactory leadership of the current headteacher, but governance is poor.

## PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

*Comments are based on those students and parents who responded to the questionnaires or attended the parents' meeting.*

Parents are unhappy with the education their children receive and have major concerns regarding behaviour, bullying, homework and the information they are given. Students are very unhappy; they worry about bullying and their lessons being disrupted by poor behaviour. They have confidence in the senior staff and the receptionist and feel they take their views seriously, but have lost confidence in other staff.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to raise standards and improve the quality of education are:

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in mathematics, science, design and technology, history, music and religious education.
- Ensure that students receive sufficient lessons in art and design, citizenship and music.
- Improve the behaviour of students, both in and out of lessons, and their attendance.
- Improve leadership and management, especially in the areas of data analysis, the curriculum and support for teachers.
- Rebuild the trust that students have in staff, so they will report incidents of bullying.

And to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.
- Meet requirements for the teaching of art and design and music.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS**

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

Standards are well below average by the end of Year 9 and by the end of Year 11. Students' achievement is poor.

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

- Students underachieve badly in their GCSE examinations given their standards on joining the school, because of poor teaching, well below average attendance and an unsatisfactory curriculum.
- Students achieve well in English and physical education; they achieve very well in health and social care.
- Students do not do well enough in mathematics, science, art and design, history, citizenship, design and technology and religious education.
- Students who are learning English for the first time make good progress, but the gifted, talented and those with special educational needs achieve poorly.

#### **Commentary**

1. By the end of Year 9, standards are well below average and students' achievement is poor because they do not do well enough in many subjects. Results from the national tests in 2004 were well below average; they were well below average in mathematics and science and below average in English. Students' achievement was poor in these tests, given their standards on joining the school. Results had been improving quite rapidly, until 2004 when they fell by some considerable margin, making the long-term trend similar to the national average. Standards are now below average in English, which represents good achievement given students' well below average standards on joining the school. However, standards are well below average in mathematics and science, which represents poor achievement as standards in these subjects were considerably higher on entry to the school.
2. As well as English, students also achieve well in physical education, reaching average standards. In art and design, design and technology, history, citizenship and religious education, however, students' achievement is unsatisfactory, and in music it is poor.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.5 (33.3)	33.5 (33.4)
Mathematics	32.6 (32.2)	35.7 (35.4)
Science	30.6 (31.8)	33.2 (33.6)

*There were 258 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Students' achievement is also poor in Years 10 and 11; standards are well below average. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were below average. These results were worse than would usually be expected from the students' results in the national tests at the end of Year 9, especially for the higher attainers, and the value added by the school since these students started in Year 7 was well below average. Results had been improving at a much faster rate than that seen nationally, and had reached the

national average in 2003 – a very impressive performance. However, results fell alarmingly in 2004. Standards are now average in English, art and design, ICT, foreign languages and physical education. However, standards are below average in geography and religious education, and well below average in mathematics, science, design and technology and history.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	34 (42)	52 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	83 (91)	89 (88)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	95 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	28.1 (32.5)	34.9 (34.7)

*There were 225 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Students achieve very well in health and social care, to reach standards that are above average. Students also do well in English, art and design, ICT, foreign languages and physical education. However, achievement is unsatisfactory in science, design and technology, history, citizenship and religious education, and is poor in mathematics.
5. The main cause of the high level of underachievement is the poor teaching that students' receive. However, there are other factors. The high level of absence on the part of students means that many have large gaps in their work or do not complete their coursework; this meant many students were not entered for GCSE examinations in one or more subjects they had studied in 2004. The curriculum also causes problems in art and design, music, religious education, citizenship and design and technology.
6. In all years, there are few differences between the achievements of different groups of students. The proportion of students at the early stages of learning English is very small. However, the provision made for them is good and they make good progress in learning the language. The proportion of students for whom English is an additional language is slightly higher than average. They receive good support to help them to feel integrated within the community, and with their language where necessary. However, they experience the same poor teaching as other students with the result that their achievement is equally as poor.
7. Many students with special educational needs are taught in separate classes for several of their subjects in Years 7 and 8. Whilst this has the advantage of ensuring a secure environment when they join the school, the arrangements do not work in the long term and students suffer from not being taught by specialists; the work is often too easy for them. When they are in mainstream classes, they receive the same quality of education as other students and their achievement is poor. Little specific provision is made for gifted and talented students outside of physical education, where they do well; in general their achievement is similar to their peers.
8. Standards in the basic skills of mathematics, language and literacy are below average in Years 7 to 9, but in mathematics fall to well below average by Year 11. Standards of basic competence in ICT are average. In general, the school does not do enough to

improve students' basic skills and relies too heavily on the good work carried out in English and ICT lessons.

9. The school failed to meet its examination targets in 2004. Standards and achievement are now much worse than at the time of the previous inspection.

**Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)**

Provision for students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is unsatisfactory. Their attitudes are unsatisfactory and their behaviour is poor. Attendance and punctuality are also poor.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lessons are often disturbed by the poor behaviour of a few students and at times most of a class are intent on causing disruption.
- The high numbers who come late or who are frequently absent cause considerable interruption to their own learning and that of others, although teachers in health and social care are combating this successfully.
- The provision made to teach a sense of moral responsibility is unsuccessful. Students often fail to appreciate the impact of their behaviour on others.
- Students have too few opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility towards others in the school community.
- In a few subjects a better climate is created and students' attitudes and behaviour are often good.

## **Commentary**

10. Attitudes and behaviour are much worse than at the previous inspection. Parents and students make many complaints about the amount of unacceptable behaviour and they are right. Many students say they would like behaviour to be better. However, they lack self-control and often depend on continuing efforts from the teacher to keep them in order. Many lessons are slowed appreciably by students' silly distracting behaviour and reluctance to work. Behaviour tends to be at its worst amongst groups of lower attaining students, with boys often more disruptive than girls. At times poor behaviour links closely to teaching weaknesses such as boring, inappropriate tasks and weak behaviour management skills. At other times though, a whole class appears intent on misbehaving, regardless of the strategies the teacher uses. An on-call system operates, so that any teacher who feels unable to cope with a deteriorating situation can telephone for support from a senior member of staff. This system functions inconsistently. Help does not always come when requested and, in a few instances, the intervention of senior staff is not sufficiently adroit.
11. In some lessons, notably in English, ICT, foreign languages and physical education, a different climate exists. Students arrive ready to learn and sensible behaviour is the norm. In the rare lessons where they encounter excellent teaching, students' attitudes and behaviour are transformed by challenging, interesting activities and they become completely absorbed in learning.
12. Behaviour around the school is as poor as in lessons. Although individuals are at times thoughtful of others' convenience, groups moving to lessons are often noisy and inconsiderate even when staff are present. Over-boisterous behaviour frequently occurs. Students are most concerned about the level of bullying, including name calling, which is part and parcel of the general unconcern for each other's feelings and well-being. Students do not feel secure enough about asking for help to resolve such problems. The school recognises the poor behaviour as a serious concern. For the past year, senior staff have been applying relevant strands of the Key Stage 3 Strategy so as to improve matters. They have made some progress even though problems such as inconsistencies in teachers' management of behaviour remain a large obstacle. The rate of use of fixed term exclusion was very high in 2003-2004, when more than one in eight students were excluded, but has been reduced by half since September 2004. Despite the high rate of fixed term exclusions, no students was permanently excluded, which is a credit to the school's perseverance. In 2003-2004, students from ethnic minority backgrounds were much more likely to be excluded but this is not the case now.

**Ethnic background of students****Exclusions in the last school year (2003-2004)**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1016	217	
White – Irish	3		
White – any other White background	4		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	16	6	
Mixed – White and Black African	2		
Mixed – White and Asian	7		
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	3	
Asian or Asian British – Indian	11	4	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	12	6	
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	9	1	
Black or Black British – Caribbean	41	31	
Black or Black British – any other Black background	29	11	
Chinese	8		
Any other ethnic group	13	7	
No ethnic group recorded	7	4	

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of students excluded.  
The number of students on roll is for the current year*

13. The school encourages students to support charity work and many subjects emphasise personal and moral responsibility. Students demonstrate a sense of responsibility for those less fortunate than themselves. The response to the recent Tsunami appeal by students following the leisure and tourism course in Year 10 was supported by the school community, and demonstrated a strong desire to help those in need. The school is forging links with a school in Pakistan, and students responded well to suggestions that they might support students' education overseas. The annual Christmas party for 'Senior Citizens' was clearly enjoyed and appreciated by all who took part. Many students, however, do not extend this sense of community to their own school. Many fail to appreciate the impact of their behaviour and attitude on others within the school. While they recognise that a minority of badly behaved students disrupts everyone's studies, there is little evidence of positive peer pressure in class, or clear support for teachers seeking to modify this behaviour.
14. Most lessons in Years 7 to 9 are in tutor groups that are set by ability or achievement. As well as reducing opportunities for students to mix socially, this means some students spend much of their day trying to work in lessons disrupted by the same disaffected students who appear to have much influence over their peers. The regular example of badly behaved students, and rudeness to teachers, diminishes the school's provision for the moral development of its students.
15. The short lunch break reduces opportunities to develop extra-curricular interests or practise artistic skills, and students recognise this lack of opportunity. The rush to finish their lunch before the next session prevents reflection on the morning's work or real relaxation before the

afternoon lessons. Despite the lack of time, a good number of sensible and mature older students are keen to demonstrate responsibility and commitment as mentors, prefects and sports captains. The breakfast club is a shining example of students actively supporting the school community. However, such opportunities for older students to act as positive role models are very limited. The staggered lunchtime means there is little chance for different year groups to interact or for older students to take responsibility for the clubs and teams of younger students.

16. The short lunch break, together with the need for students to catch buses home, limits extra-curricular provision for the students' cultural development. Time available for clubs or rehearsals is very limited. The annual visit to France or Spain is well supported and provides a good opportunity to widen students' horizons, although multi-cultural experiences within school are few.
  
17. Attendance has fallen further behind the national average for the past three years and is now well below average. Absence causes much interruption to students' learning. They usually fail to catch up on the lessons they miss so their achievement suffers. Older ones often have big gaps in their coursework, to the extent that it becomes unrealistic for them to continue their courses. Older students stay away more often than younger ones; on a typical day in 2004-2005 an average of five students were missing from each Year 11 class. Attendance tends to be lower in lower achieving classes. 'Looked after children' (students in the care of the local authority) are among those with low attendance. Pastoral staff, together with the education welfare officer, strive to support any individual with low attendance. Some success is achieved with individuals but current indications are that little overall improvement has resulted in recent months. A range of relevant strategies is employed but currently these serve to maintain attendance rather than improve it. For instance, there are prompt efforts to contact parents about any unexplained absence. However, the school and the education welfare officer meet cases where it is hard to track parents down. Overall, current efforts are not enough to counter the negative, demotivating experience that many lessons offer, especially when this is put alongside the varied personal and social troubles that tend to characterise those with poor attendance. The education welfare officer is soon to be based on the school site, so as to be on the spot to work with staff to tackle absenteeism.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.8	School data	1.3
National data	6.9	National data	1.1

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

18. A GNVQ health and social care teacher is achieving some success through an innovative approach to tackling absence. A Year 10 class has a very poor attendance record, though when students come they work well. Students have been paired, with each undertaking to phone their partner and coax them in if they fail to turn up. This support system is leading to an increased sense of responsibility, with students recognising that they let their peers down when they stay away.
  
19. On occasion students appear for morning registration but then leave the site instead of joining lessons. The school's vigilance limits the extent of this problem but does not eliminate it. The computerised registration system is not used consistently in lessons,

so its potential for quickly identifying such truants is not fully exploited. Lateness is another cause of disruption. Latecomers dawdle into lessons so that it is difficult for teachers to organise a brisk start. Five or ten minutes are frequently wasted. Punctuality to school is encouraged to some extent by the breakfast club, but many students still arrive late.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is poor. Teaching and learning are poor. The curriculum is unsatisfactory, as are arrangements for the care and safety of students. Links with parents, the community and other schools are good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching is poor and results in poor learning for students of all ages. The quality of assessment of students' work is unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour that goes unchecked by the teacher.
- Teachers do not expect enough of higher attaining students, nor provide work of suitable difficulty for others, especially those with special educational needs.
- Teaching is very good in ICT and health and social care in Years 10 and 11, and good in English and physical education, but fails to reach a satisfactory standard in mathematics, science, design and technology, history, music and religious education.
- Marking and the setting of homework are poor.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 114 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (4%)	13 (11%)	34 (30%)	35 (31%)	12 (11%)	14 (12%)	2 (2%)

*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.*

### Commentary

20. While teaching is good or better in English, health and social care, ICT and physical education, it is unsatisfactory or poor in mathematics, science, design and technology, history, music and religious education. Examples of unsatisfactory, or worse, lessons were observed in all subjects inspected except art and design, physical education and health and social care. Many subjects suffer from a lack of continuity caused by staff absence – a point made by parents, students and teachers alike. Students are simply fed up with a continual stream of temporary teachers in some subjects and the resulting disruption to their learning, although this is not always the case. In history, for example, there are no permanent members of staff left, but the teaching observed during the inspection was clearly of a much better standard than that usually experienced by students, given the evidence in their books and their comments to the inspector.
21. The main cause of the poor teaching is a failure to control the behaviour of students. On many occasions, a few students are allowed to disrupt the learning of the whole class, but in the worst cases the teacher has no control over the class at all and highly dangerous situations arise. On three occasions during the inspection, an inspector

had to intervene to prevent students being harmed during lessons. Poor behaviour in lessons is one of parents' and students' biggest concerns.

22. In a few cases, the students come to lessons apparently intent on disruption, but in others their poor behaviour is a reaction to a different weakness in the teaching. The most common cause is a failure to set work that is appropriately demanding for the students, especially in mathematics and science. Often the work is too easy and consists of colouring in pictures, copying from the 'board or doing word searches. On other occasions, the same work is set for a whole class, regardless of the level that individual students have reached. In these cases, lower attaining students can find the work too difficult; they do not understand what to do, lose interest and start to misbehave.
23. Students with special educational needs are taught mainly in the mainstream classroom with support from learning assistants. There is also limited withdrawal for work on computers and reading. Two classes in each of Years 7 and 8 are taught by special educational needs staff for their English, history, geography and personal development lessons. The aim of this is to best support these students on their entrance to secondary school. However, in some of these lessons there is a considerable lack of challenge and the pace. Activities in these lessons are often inappropriate for secondary school students. A majority of mainstream subjects have unsatisfactory special educational needs provision; these include mathematics, science and history. Class teachers often do not plan sufficiently to meet the identified needs of the whole range of students on the special educational needs register and they are not always aware of how to best use learning support assistants effectively. There are a large number of support assistants who give freely of their time and expertise. They know the students very well indeed. They have a wealth of information, which they can impart to teachers, and they have very good relationships with their students. They all work with tremendous energy and enthusiasm but some lack appropriate training and do not receive sufficiently focused guidance and support.
24. Nevertheless, there are subjects, such as foreign languages and health and social care, where poor behaviour never arises. These subjects benefit from having a stable staffing so that all teachers know their students well; students come to lessons aware of their teachers' high expectations in terms of behaviour and know that they will be enforced.
25. Teaching in health and social care and ICT in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Here lessons are planned with a strong emphasis on activities that will interest the students. These activities are then varied and changed on a frequent basis to maintain students' concentration. This is very important, as some students spend a whole day on the same subject. The teachers also ensure that the degree of difficulty of the tasks is matched to the needs of the individual student, so low attainers are not left behind, while higher attainers can forge ahead.
26. There are other areas of weakness that only become apparent by looking carefully at students' books. Homework, another bone of contention for parents, is set in a haphazard way and does not extend students' learning beyond the classroom. Few students receive enough homework on a regular basis and some, particularly in lower sets, receive next to none. Even when homework is set, many students do not complete it and it is not followed up by the teacher. In some cases, students do not do their homework because they know that the teacher will not check or mark it. Marking is another area of weakness throughout the school. Few teachers mark work



sufficiently frequently with helpful comments that tell students what it is they have got wrong or need to do to improve. It is very rare for teachers to support the work of the English department in raising standards of literacy, by correcting errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar.

27. The school policy for assessing students' attainment and progress has been recently revised and is now a useful tool. It is comprehensive and provides a framework within which departments can devise their own policies and strategies. Systems are established to provide information about each student's current standard and potential for future achievement. The full impact of these new systems has yet to be seen. A substantial amount of data is collected on the students when they enter the school but the analysis is not sufficiently thorough.
28. The use of assessment information to ensure planning is accurate is unsatisfactory. It is better developed at a whole school level than within departments where it is variable in quality. Assessment is not used to respond to individual needs effectively. Marking is poor and inconsistent. Only in a few subjects do students know how well they are doing in terms of the level they are working at. The majority of students do not have this indicated in the marked work they receive. This results in students not being sufficiently clear as to how to improve. In English, physical education and mathematics effective use of assessment data is made and teachers use the information to ensure students make progress. In other subjects students have an increasing awareness of their potential grades and levels, but less idea of how to achieve them because teachers do not always tell them what to do to improve their work. In design and technology, music and history, teachers have not assessed students accurately at the end of Year 9 and this has resulted in greatly inflated levels.
29. The assessment of students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Information obtained from primary schools and from later testing is used to identify targets in students' individual educational plans but these plans vary in specificity. Many students have little input into their plans and are often unaware of the targets that they are working towards. Their individual education plans are not written in student-friendly language and the targets are far too long term to be easily achieved. There are often far too many targets for students to focus upon and, as a result, in many subjects the work is not always suitable to meet their individual needs and in these instances students do not learn as well as they should.
30. Teaching and learning are now much worse than they were at the time of the previous inspection.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is unsatisfactory; it is good in Years 10 and 11, but unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. There is a satisfactory range of extra clubs and activities. The school has adequate accommodation and resources, but staffing is unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Music and art and design do not meet statutory requirements.
- There is a good range of vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 which are helping to motivate students.
- Provision for students with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented is unsatisfactory.

- The arrangements for grouping pupils are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

31. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Students study all the subjects of the National Curriculum plus religious education. In addition, students have separate lessons in drama and can study a second language. An innovative development is the introduction of an option which increases motivation. In Year 9, students begin GCSE in design and technology. Expressive arts are introduced as well as a digital media module. However, all these extra courses mean that some subjects of the National Curriculum are not covered adequately. This applies particularly to music and art and design, where the unsatisfactory curriculum is a major reason for underachievement and statutory requirements are not met. The curriculum in design and technology is poorly planned, modules are too short, leaving many students with incomplete work, and half of Year 8 is not able to study food technology. Students have not received enough citizenship lessons in the past to ensure a satisfactory level of achievement.
32. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum is good. There are three pathways which are well suited to the differing needs of students. There is a strong emphasis on vocational education, which develops skills and knowledge and has a strong work-related element. There are very good links with colleges of further education. A group of students follow a specific work-related curriculum at college that meets their needs very well. These students gain success and attain vocational qualifications.
33. There is satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities. As well as clubs catering for students' interests, there are also extra academic classes. There is a good range of sporting activities which occur out of normal school hours, but provision for extra-curricular music is poor. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship and in many cases the form period does not provide a worthwhile start to the day.
34. The setting arrangements lead to the creation of classes, some of which have significant numbers of students with behavioural difficulties; many teachers are unable to control these students and achievement is adversely affected. There is little by way of co-ordinated approach to the teaching of basic skills across the different subjects, with a heavy reliance on English and ICT lessons to improve standards; few other subjects make a significant contribution to standards of language, literacy, mathematics and ICT.
35. Overall, the curriculum for students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. In Years 7 to 9, the special educational needs support is through in-class support and some withdrawal. The withdrawal is not planned well enough to ensure that students do not keep missing the same lessons each week, or that they catch up on work they have missed. Two classes in each of Years 7 and 8 are taught by specialist special educational needs staff for their English, history, geography and personal development lessons. Whilst this allows for these students to be carefully supported on starting their secondary education the lack of access to subject specialists is spread over too long a period and there is a lack of challenge and pace in some of these lessons, so they do not make the progress of which they are capable. In Years 10 and 11 many students benefit from a vocational curriculum which meets their needs and aspirations well.
36. Provision for gifted and talented students is unsatisfactory. Gifted students have the opportunity to enter early for some GCSE courses in Year 9 and provision for talented

sportsmen and women is good. However, little is done outside of these areas and few subjects stretch the higher attainers, resulting in such students underachieving.

37. Whilst there have been significant improvements to the curriculum in Years 10 and 11, the quality of the curriculum is now worse in Years 7 to 9 than it was at the time of the previous inspection.
38. The main problem with staffing has been the high levels of absenteeism resulting in the need to engage many supply teachers. Several subjects are affected, with the worst case in history where there are no full-time teachers left at the school. The lack of continuity has resulted in students' poor attitudes in many lessons, resulting in poor progress. The issue is being addressed by the headteacher and improvements are evident, but the use of temporary teachers continues to leave a poor legacy for learning.

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

Provision for the care, guidance and support of students is unsatisfactory, as are measures to ensure they remain safe. The school takes satisfactory account of students' views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Too many students miss out because the school fails to motivate them to learn.
- Current efforts to support those students with significant personal and social difficulties are too limited.
- Attention to health and safety is inadequate, because of times when hazardous incidents occur during lessons.
- Good efforts are made to help new Year 7 students transfer happily into the school

### **Commentary**

39. On balance, the guidance extended to students is unsatisfactory. Suitable systems are in place to discuss work with individuals and set targets for further improvement; however, the information on which this is based is often inaccurate because assessment is not good enough. The restructuring of pastoral teams to include progress co-ordinators is a positive step. However as more mature students point out, at present if you do not want to succeed the teachers often fail to get you back on track. The poor learning experience often offered in lessons is demotivating. Students who persevere despite this, praise the way teachers find extra time to help them overcome difficulties with their work. They appreciate the revision sessions organised for them. Awards such as merits and 'praise postcards' provide positive encouragement but there is room to use these more consistently, to give success a higher profile. Records of students' awards and sanctions, successes and problems are at present insufficiently co-ordinated and disseminated to aid the efforts of pastoral staff. The school has plans in hand for a new system to improve this situation.
40. Parents and students say how helpful senior staff and the receptionist are when they are approached about problems. Students feel less secure about the way other staff may help them. Students' awareness of bullying issues is raised appropriately by the personal, social and health education programme; they know the recommended response is to report any problem to staff. However, many students have lost confidence in the staff and say it is better to put up with bullying rather than tell a teacher and risk retaliation from the bully. The school put a lot of effort into raising the profile of bullying earlier in the year, but this appears to be having little impact on the problem.

41. Pastoral staff find that around one in every ten students has significant personal or social problems that impede their education. Poor attendance is often associated with a range of other difficulties. The current efforts of pastoral staff are insufficient to fully meet all the diverse needs of such students. Time is one constraint. As one step to further cater for pastoral needs, a non-teaching pastoral support manager has recently been appointed to Year 7 to start in the term following the inspection. Year 7 teachers visit all the widespread primary schools from which students transfer. They gather a range of information, which they use in planning Year 7 provision. These incoming students like the way that they have the school to themselves on the first day of the autumn term. The pastoral team is also active in building partnerships with a range of other relevant outside organisations and agencies. Staff welcome the chance promised by the new national 'Every Child Matters' co-ordinated approach, to improve the effectiveness of their links so that students benefit.
42. A suitable range of health and safety procedures has been adopted following a recent review. Concerns arise about times when these are not reflected in practice. Instances of unacceptable hazards arise in practical lessons in science and in design and technology, and even in theory lessons in mathematics. These hazards follow from inadequate management of behaviour, coupled with a failure to ensure students have a suitable grasp of safe practice.
43. Satisfactory account is taken of students' views. The school council has been brought back into operation in recent months and students' views are being sampled in other ways as well. As part of the current efforts to tackle bullying and poor behaviour, questionnaires were issued to a cross-section of students and the school council helped to identify parts of the school where bullying is likely to take place. Similarly new Year 7 students were invited to give their views on the school after their initial settling-in period. Students have been consulted about school dinners. Many who expressed views to inspectors want to eat a healthy diet. They feel the food on offer does not do enough to encourage this. Students would like action taken on the deplorable condition of their toilets; actions are already planned to act on this issue. They would also like their views considered concerning the very short break that gives them little time to engage in any activity other than queuing for lunch.

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

Good supportive partnerships with other schools and colleges are forged through technology college status. Other partnerships with parents and the community are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher is taking good steps to strengthen the school's partnership with parents.
- Parents express many negative views of the school.
- Local primary schools value the help extended to them with the curriculum, especially with ICT.

### **Commentary**

44. The headteacher is keen to strengthen links with parents. She recognises that a significant minority have negative views about the school and she gives careful consideration to any concerns that they express. Similarly she seeks to increase support from the larger number who take little or no interest in their children's learning. Parents of more able students come in good numbers to any meetings offered with

staff, but others are on balance less interested. Parents complain about the organisation of parents' evenings. Because of this, the yearly cycle of reports and consultations has recently been reorganised to be more helpful. In addition the school is trying out Target Action Planning days, when parent, student and tutor have time for an extended discussion about the student's learning and progress. Indications so far are that parents like this kind of consultation. The headteacher is also successfully exploring other new ways of organising functions for parents. For instance, parents of the present Year 7 students appreciated the model lessons they could attend during a 'Learning to Learn' evening held in the autumn term.

45. However, parents express concerns over other aspects of school life, most notably bullying, poor behaviour and homework. They feel that the school went downhill rapidly in 2003/4 and is only now starting to pick up again.
46. Senior pastoral staff work hard to liaise with parents when difficulties arise over absenteeism, or if serious problems with behaviour are identified. Most parents welcome such contacts and are happy to help tackle any problems. However, others are unco-operative or even hostile to teachers' efforts.
47. Supportive partnerships are developed with other schools and educational establishments through ICT. For example, good supportive links are well established with several local primary schools, to help enhance and maintain their ICT provision. Additionally, liaison with the many feeder primary schools supports transferring students. A group of students from Years 10 and 11 benefits from links with a further education college, that let them opt into a choice of vocational courses. Liaison with other schools currently brings extra teaching expertise into some classes. Collaboration with successful departments in other schools merits further development and the school recognises this in its planning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school is poorly led and managed. Some improvements are being made under the satisfactory leadership of the new headteacher, but leadership at other levels in the school is poor. Governance is poor.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's decline is a result of poor leadership and management.
- Staff absence has been very high, often because of stress related illnesses.
- Data is not used well enough to identify strengths and weaknesses, and actions are not taken quickly enough.
- The work of teachers has not been monitored or managed well enough to ensure an adequate teaching provision.

### **Commentary**

48. The school has made poor progress since it was last inspected; GCSE results have fallen from average to well below, attendance has fallen further and further behind the national average and exclusions have risen considerably. The decline in the school's performance is a result of poor leadership and management. The academic year 2003–2004 saw a big decline in the school's examination performance, after several years of good improvement, but there were other indicators of longer-term decline already apparent. Attendance, for example, had been falling further behind the national average since 2001. The school failed to meet any of its targets as a specialist college. Insufficient has been done to tackle these emerging shortcomings. The school had no deputy headteachers in post for the whole of 2003-2004 and

the headteacher was out of school for over a third of the year, although the school appointed an associate headteacher on a temporary basis.

49. There have been many staffing problems at the school. Some have been caused by difficulties in recruiting suitable replacements for staff who have been promoted, but many have been caused by staff illness. In the year to April 2004, almost 800 days were lost through staff illness alone, equivalent to over two working weeks for every teacher in the school; this figure does not include the extra days associated with doctors' appointments or visits to hospitals for example. Most subjects have been affected at one time or another by such absence and the disruption to teaching and learning it has caused. Two subjects have been without a leader for considerable periods of time; there is no head of mathematics or history present in the school, for example, and the head of science has only just taken up post. The cost of such staff absence is very high, resulting in the school having only a small contingency budget last year.
50. The arrangements for supporting staff who are having difficulties in the classroom are not working. On several occasions, a class would settle while a senior manager was present, but would immediately misbehave again once they left. On other occasions, the senior manager did not turn up. Senior advisory staff from the local education authority have had great difficulty in gaining access to the school to support teachers in the past, but now they are working much more closely with staff, and their efforts are proving to be of great benefit.
51. The management of subjects by senior staff has also had an impact on the quality of education they provide. The time allocated to art and design and music, for example, mean that these subjects can no longer teach the requirements of the National Curriculum, while the school has been slow to introduce an appropriate curriculum for citizenship. In other subjects, such as design and technology, poor leadership at middle management level has led to unsatisfactory teaching and a poor curriculum. There is some good leadership of subjects, where teams have been brought together and are all focusing on improving standards. However, only in English, physical education and health and social care is such leadership backed up by good management; often because the head of department has put his or her own policies and procedures into practice rather than relying on a whole-school approach.
52. The leadership and management of special educational are unsatisfactory. There is a special educational needs co-ordinator and a head of the resourced provision. This structure is unwieldy and the leadership of special educational needs lacks vision and direction. As a result not all teachers are aware of their responsibility to provide appropriately for students with special educational needs in the mainstream classroom. Teachers also receive insufficient guidance on how best to use learning support assistants in the classroom. The school has plans to rectify the deficiencies by creating a new management post.
53. One area of considerable weakness in the school is the management of data. Nobody has an accurate overview of examination and test results, so nobody gets a clear picture of how high standards are or how well students are achieving. The information available to the school on students' standards on entry has not been analysed sufficiently, so nobody was aware, for example, that the proportion of students reaching level 4 or above in science is in the top 25 per cent nationally. This poor use of data means that teachers are not fully aware of their students' capabilities and so cannot match the work to their needs.
54. Governors have not been sufficiently informed to be able to carry out their role adequately. They had been told to expect GCSE results in 2004 to be the best on record, when in fact they were the worst since at least 2000. They have either been unaware of the indications of the school's decline, or have taken insufficient actions to prevent it. Examination results, with which they have been presented, have been inaccurate and poorly analysed, so they have been unable to ask appropriate questions or take the right actions. Governors have failed to ensure that the school provides a daily act of collective worship, or sufficient lessons in music and art and design to meet statutory requirements.

55. The monitoring of the school's work is poor. Records of performance management show that some staff have either not gone through the procedures, or their records are missing. Targets for senior members of staff are brief and unclear, often based on incorrect data, and few have been reviewed. Many middle managers do not monitor the work of the departments well enough to improve standards as they have not been provided with sufficient leadership from senior managers. Planning for the school's future is unsatisfactory. The senior managers have identified the correct priorities, but the previous development plan was too unwieldy, being around 400 pages long. The current plan shows that the school has fallen a long way behind other schools in its development with priorities such as "establish benchmarks for measuring progress and attainment" and "develop whole school policy for monitoring and review", which would usually have been firmly established.
56. There are, however, some signs of improvement under the current headteacher. Staff absence has been reduced by half since her appointment and exclusions have fallen by the same margin this year. The school has appointed a data manager from September 2005 and actions have been taken to improve the performance of individual members of staff. Performance management, although in its early stages, is now much more rigorous. Many other actions have been taken, but there has not been enough time for them to bear fruit. As several parents pointed out, "the headteacher has started to turn the school around, but has not been here long enough".

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4477114	Balance from previous year	21667
Total expenditure	4414225	Balance carried forward to the next	84556
Expenditure per student	3721		

## OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

### Work-related learning (WRL)

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good range of vocational courses and college-based courses which cater for those who learn better in practical subjects.
- The work experience programme is good; it supports and complements school-based work.
- Subjects do not consistently take advantage of work-related experiences to enrich learning.

### **Commentary**

57. Overall, the school's provision is satisfactory and it meets the statutory requirements. All year 10 students take part in a two-week work experience towards the end of the summer term. The preparation and de-briefing of work experience are strong features of the programme. Students keep a detailed diary of the experience, which is endorsed by the local Business Education Partnership. Students value their placements and make use of their experiences in their studies in Year 11. A small group of Year 10 and Year 11 students take part in a day-a-week course throughout the year, gaining experience of a broad range of jobs; this course is very well suited to their needs. The school runs six vocational courses based in school, but not enough of the more traditional subjects take advantage of WRL to enrich both teaching and learning.
58. Careers guidance is satisfactory; students receive guidance from Year 7 onwards. Through this guidance and the WRL programme, students start to understand the needs of employers and the world of work. Students successfully write job applications, prepare curriculum vitae and undergo interviews.



## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

In some subjects there was insufficient evidence to reach judgements on standards and achievement in Year 11, as the students were on study leave and not enough of their work was available to inspectors. In these cases, judgements were made on Year 10 and are indicated in the table at the start of each subject's section.

#### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

##### English

Provision in English is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement, teaching and learning are good throughout Years 7 to 11.
- In Years 10 and 11 many students have good attitudes and redraft their work carefully to improve its quality.
- The head of department provides good leadership.
- Monitoring has not yet been successful in eliminating poor or unsatisfactory practice or in sharing best practice.
- Other subjects do little to improve standards of language and literacy

##### Commentary

###### **Examination results**

59. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 9, results were below the national average. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations in English were below average and in English literature they were well below average. However, in English literature almost a quarter more of Year 11 than is normal was entered for the examination. Students did significantly better in GCSE English and English literature than they did on average in their other subjects.

###### **Standards and achievement**

60. GCSE results in 2004 were just below average. As a result of good, consistent teaching, standards observed during the inspection at the end of Year 11 have improved to being in line with the national average.
61. When students enter the school their skills in speaking and listening are well below the national expectation. Many of them express themselves briefly, have only a limited vocabulary and find difficulty in explaining themselves more fully when asked to do so. Few understand how to contribute effectively to group discussion. However, as they move up the school, and particularly in Year 9, when they are given the chance to take part in well-structured oral work, they display greater maturity, increase their vocabulary and are able to find the right tone. The limitations in Year 7, and improvements by Year 9, seen in oral work are also evident in writing. The majority

are able to write more fully and imaginatively and higher attainers learn how to adapt what they write for different audiences. However, it remains the case that the work of many students contains many errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

62. In Years 10 and 11 students improve their skills at a rate that means they move up to being in line with the national average. In general, students become more confident and can employ a formal style when it is required. Higher attainers become articulate and persuasive speakers. Students also learn how to become more self-critical and develop their skills in improving their work by redrafting it. Work is also fuller and better structured; higher attainers produce good quality essays on a variety of topics. Though students do not read as much for their own interest as might be expected, reading skills improve at this level in the school. However, it remains the case that many students continue to make a number of basic errors in their written work.

### ***Teaching and learning***

63. Teaching is most effective when the teacher has very good knowledge of the subject and the course requirements and associated assessment procedures. This means that teachers ensure that students understand what they need to do if they are to attain good standards and are, in fact, able to assess their own performance and that of their peers with accuracy. There is some inconsistency as to how often and how well teachers use ICT. Even so, some lessons were seen in which it was used effectively to communicate information and to encourage discussion on the meaning of texts and how to best organise ideas. The quality of questioning is good, leading students to think more deeply about issues raised in the text and requiring them to be active in their own learning. Most of the marking is of good quality, paying attention to accuracy at the word and sentence level and providing evaluative comments that guide students about what they need to do if they are to improve. This leads students to take a pride in their work and to redraft it with care. This is undertaken more thoroughly in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. However, there is inconsistency in the quality of marking and some of it is superficial and does not give students the guidance they need. When teaching is good, teachers exercise effective control, students behave well and are co-operative, and generally relationships are positive.
64. When teaching is less than satisfactory, the teacher's discipline is not effective; students do not co-operate with teachers, and become noisy and behave inappropriately. In less effective lessons, teachers do not sufficiently take into account students' prior attainment, or do not sufficiently explain or demonstrate to students what is expected of them, with the result that they become confused and do not make satisfactory progress.

### ***Leadership and management***

65. The head of department is an energetic and committed individual who is a good role model. Newly qualified teachers in the department are well supported by the head of department, by other colleagues and by professionals from the local education authority. Much of the day-to-day organisation of the subject is good. However, monitoring has not yet been effective in sharing best practice and eliminating poor or unsatisfactory practice. Standards and achievement have been maintained since the previous inspection, despite a decline in the school overall; this represents good progress.

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

66. The standard of literacy is below average. Whilst the minority of students who are higher attainers are able to express themselves clearly and effectively orally and in

writing, such students are in the minority. Many students in the school lack basic skills in writing and their work contains many errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Few students develop a wide range of reading skills.

67. Provision for teaching literacy varies considerably from subject to subject, and overall is unsatisfactory. In English and geography, for example, students improve their skills to meet the demands of the subject. In many other areas, however, only limited opportunities are provided for students to practise and develop their ability to read and write. Marking is inconsistent and, in general, too many errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar are overlooked.

### Modern foreign languages

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection.	Satisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of more stable staffing and good teaching in Years 10 and 11, standards are rising.
- There is still some poor teaching, but provision for gifted and talented students is a strength.
- The good leadership of the head of department is a strong factor in raising standards and in the very good behaviour of students.

### Commentary

#### **Examination results**

68. The language studied to GCSE level alternates between French and Spanish; in 2004 it was Spanish. GCSE results in 2004 were below the national average, but students did better in Spanish than in many of the other subjects they studied. Boys do less well than girls in examinations. A small number of students identified as gifted and talented are entered for GCSE at the end of Year 9 and gain very good results.

#### **Standards and achievement**

69. After a period of decline, due mainly to staff changes, standards are now rising again. Standards of reading, writing, speaking and listening are all below average in Year 9, which represents satisfactory achievement given these students' standards on joining the school. Standards in all four aspects improve by Year 11, and students achieve well. Students with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as other students, but achievement is excellent for those students who take GCSE examinations at the end of Year 9.

#### **Teaching and learning**

70. A very strong feature of the work of the department is the high standards of behaviour that are expected in all lessons. Students show very good attitudes to work and no

time is lost in lessons over controlling poor behaviour. Working relationships between students and with their teachers are very good and lessons are relaxed and businesslike. Teachers' planning is good both in the longer term and for individual lessons. Teaching for gifted and talented students is a strength of the department. Students are set targets to help them improve their work, but the targets set are often too general to provide specific help. Students' work is marked and corrected. The use of marking as a means to help students improve their work is limited, because there is an over-reliance on ticks at the expense of helpful comments. The subject makes a good contribution to students' literacy development, by stressing correct vocabulary and grammar. The use of computers to enhance learning is satisfactory and this is a substantial improvement since the previous inspection. The difference in the quality of teaching between Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11 is caused by less focus on the foreign language. In a minority of lessons in Years 7 to 9, the teacher and students speak more English than the language being taught, so students have very limited opportunities to listen and respond to the foreign language. In these lessons the work is neither challenging nor interesting and students become bored, resulting in poor learning.

### **Leadership and management**

71. The head of department has shown good leadership in establishing a strong working atmosphere in the subject. The management of the subject is satisfactory. Much of the day-to-day running of the department is good, but monitoring of teaching has not been rigorous enough to identify and improve some poor teaching. The curriculum for gifted and talented students is good, enabling them to study two languages if they wish. Trips abroad enrich the curriculum provision.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **poor**.

	Year 9	Year 10
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Poor	Poor
Teaching and learning	Poor	Poor

Leadership	Poor
Management	Poor
Progress since previous inspection	Poor

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students' lack of interest, general passivity and poor behaviour, result in their overall poor achievement.
- Despite pockets of better practice, teaching overall is poor and results in poor learning.
- Staffing difficulties and poor leadership and management are leading to falling standards.
- Work is not sufficiently matched to students' needs to ensure all are appropriately challenged to achieve their potential.
- Insufficient work is done by teachers in other subjects to improve standards of basic numeracy.

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

72. Results in the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 9 were well below average and were just slightly higher than those in 2003. In 2004 the GCSE results attained were very low and were lower than those in 2003. Over recent years these results have continued to fall. Students did worse in mathematics than they did in most of their other subjects. The standards attained in the 2004 examinations were lower than those observed in lessons. This is due to the students' non-submission of, and weaker attainment in, their coursework as well as their poor attendance.

### ***Standards and achievement***

73. By the end of Year 9 standards are well below average and students' achievement is poor, as they started Year 7 with just slightly below average standards. By Year 9 higher attaining students have above average numerical skills. When exploring number sequences, they can describe the rule for finding the next term a sequence. However, the lower attainers have well below average numerical skills. Whilst they can read time on the 12-hour clock, they struggle to round to the nearest quarter of the hour. Investigation skills are particularly weak at all levels of attainment. Students in Years 7 to 9 have a limited exposure to mathematical investigations and this does not prepare them sufficiently for the demands of their GCSE coursework. Standards at the end of Year 10 are well below average and continue the poor achievement made in Years 7 to 9. The higher attaining students have above average shape, space and measures skills. The lower attaining students have well below average numerical skills. Whilst they have a basic understanding of number multiples, they are unable to accurately identify some even numbers. The ability to carry out mathematical investigations remains a key weakness, with very low standards exhibited by students in Years 10 and 11.

### ***Teaching and learning***

74. Despite pockets of better practice, teaching overall is poor and results in poor learning. Teachers plan lessons clearly. However, apart from the aim or objective, this planning is rarely relayed to the students in terms of lesson content and expectations of progress to be made. Consequently in the weaker lessons this results in a drop in pace as students become unsure of what is expected of them. Only in the better lessons are starter activities used effectively to get students learning. However, the finishes, where used or where the students' behaviour allows them to take place, rarely recapitulate learning sufficiently. In the weaker lessons the students' lack of interest and general passivity, not effectively dealt with by weak teaching, result in poor learning taking place. In the majority of lessons work is not sufficiently matched to the individual needs of the students; with higher attainers, particularly, not challenged to reach their potential and students with special educational needs not supported well enough. Only in the better lessons does helpful diagnostic marking take place. This inconsistency in marking across lessons leaves some students unclear on how well they are doing or how to improve. Homework is used to extend students' learning; however, the consistency, level of challenge and presentation vary greatly across lessons, with some students receiving regular worthwhile homework and others receiving very little, if any, at all. In lessons, computers are sometimes used as a teaching aid, but are not used sufficiently by students to consolidate and develop their understanding of mathematics.

### ***Leadership and management***

75. Overall the management of students' behaviour is poor. Although systems are in place to deal with this behaviour they are having little effect. Consequently a lot of staff time is spent on behaviour management at the expense of teaching and learning. The head of department is absent and there has been severe disruption caused by staff illness. The present staffing difficulties have resulted in a lack of continuity and exacerbated the already difficult behaviour problems in classes. The students' poor attendance and punctuality severely reduce learning and achievement. Schemes of work are in place, but are not sufficiently developed to fully support teachers. Monitoring of both teaching and of students' work does take place but is insufficient to challenge and support the weaker teaching. Students are assessed regularly, but are not sure of how well they are doing or their areas for improvement. Standards and achievement have declined markedly since the previous inspection.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

76. The students' overall standard of mathematical skills across all curriculum subjects is below average, and is well below average in Years 10 and 11. Only in a few departments are these skills being developed. For example in ICT, lower attaining students in one Year 7 lesson use animated spreadsheets to predict the costs of feeding sea lions in a zoo. However, this is not the case in the vast majority of subjects, where little has been done to embed numeracy in their teaching or drive up standards.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **poor**.

	Year 9	Year 10
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Poor	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Poor	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Poor
Management	Poor
Progress since previous inspection	Poor

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' GCSE results in 2004 were very much worse than they should have been.
- Teachers are often unsuccessful in managing students' behaviour, so that learning is disrupted for the whole class.
- There is not enough monitoring of, and support for, teaching.
- The new head of department has a clear understanding of the improvements that are needed.

### Commentary

#### Examination results

77. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 9, results were well below the national average. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were very low compared with the national average; around one in five students failed to gain any grade at all. Students did significantly worse in GCSE science than they did on average in their other subjects. Results fell significantly, between 2003 and 2004, in both the Year 9 tests and GCSE examinations.

#### Standards and achievement

78. The standards seen in students' work in Year 9 generally reflect those indicated by the 2004 test results. In Years 10 and 11, standards have improved since last year, largely due to the introduction of the GNVQ science course that is particularly suitable for the middle sets who are following this course. In all year groups, some students gain standards that are around the average for their age. For example, some students in Year 10 showed satisfactory understanding of photosynthesis and successfully demonstrated that light is essential for the process.
79. However, most students, in all year groups, attain standards that are well below average. These students often have weak listening skills, do not take in the teacher's explanations and then later have only limited recall of topics they have studied earlier. Their written answers are often imprecise and students do not say exactly what they mean. Practical and investigative skills generally match students' skills in other aspects of science.
80. At the end of Year 11, students do much worse in GCSE examinations than might be expected, given their test results when they entered the school. Hence their overall achievement is poor. The major cause of this poor achievement is the quality of teaching that students receive. However, there are other important factors. Many students' attendance at

school is poor. Their absences result in gaps in their notebooks and corresponding gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Many students have been taught by several different supply teachers over the last few years, their progress has been disrupted, and many have developed poor attitudes towards science.

### **Teaching and learning**

81. Teachers usually have secure knowledge of their subject and provide appropriate information and explanations for students. However, students' exercise books reveal some weaknesses in teachers' understanding of physics topics. Some teaching is satisfactory and, occasionally, good. For example, in a good lesson for Year 8, students were impressed by the display of rocks, quickly deduced how the various rocks had been formed and then wrote careful descriptions to reinforce what they had learnt.
82. Nevertheless, in many lessons, there are significant weaknesses in teaching and learning. In particular, teachers are often not successful in managing students' behaviour so that the poor behaviour of some students is allowed to disrupt the learning of the whole class. Teachers often do not expect enough from students; they provide activities that are unchallenging, even for students with special educational needs, the pace of the lesson is slow and students do not learn as much as they should.
83. Teachers' marking of students' written work is unsatisfactory overall. Although some teachers give useful indications of how the work could be improved, much of the marking is cursory, teachers fail to notice important mistakes and students' misunderstandings remain uncorrected.

### **Leadership and management**

84. The new head of department has only been in post for six weeks. He already understands the weaknesses in the department and has sensible plans for improvement. However, as a result of staffing difficulties, the department has suffered from a lack of any consistent leadership and management over the past two years. Hence, necessary changes have not taken place and standards have fallen. For example, assessment is not being used as it should to inform students and encourage them to improve. In particular, there is not enough monitoring of, and support for, teaching to ensure that teaching is at least satisfactory for all groups.
85. Since the previous inspection, GCSE examination results have fallen from well below average to very low. Teaching was satisfactory at that time and it is now poor. Hence the department has made poor progress since it was previously inspected.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 10
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve well in Years 10 and 11 as a result of very good teaching.
- Students' poor attendance reduces achievement in all year groups.
- Good leadership is bringing about many innovations within the ICT curriculum, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

- Teachers in other subjects do not give students enough opportunities to use computers in Years 7 to 9.

## **Commentary**

### ***Examination results***

86. In 2004, examination results were very low in the vocational GCSE but above average at GNVQ. A high proportion of students failed to gain any grade in the vocational GCSE as a result of insufficient curriculum time and poor attendance which led to gaps in their coursework.

### ***Standards and achievement***

87. Students arrive at the school with broadly average standards of attainment; by Year 9, standards are average and therefore achievement is satisfactory. The impact of the good teaching is reduced by students' poor attendance. Students have above average presentation skills; higher attainers manipulate images using multimedia software. Lower attainers struggle with the concept of formulae when using a spreadsheet. Students know that changing variables within a computer model will change the outcome; higher attaining students can use predictions when analysing a budget. Students have an average knowledge and understanding of how to control and modify a sequence of events to provide a given output.
88. By Year 10, students achieve well given their starting points at the start of the course; many of these students started the course with below average standards. Higher attainers have well above average knowledge and understanding of multimedia software. A multimedia presentation called 'Experience Pakistan' won a national competition; this piece of work was of an exceptionally high standard. Students' presentations are let down by weak literacy skills, with spelling errors evident. Students do not always use the technical language of the subject when discussing their ICT experiences, which impacts adversely on their examination results. Achievement is also reduced by the poor attendance of students.

### ***Teaching and learning***

89. Teachers know their subject very well and use this to set interesting tasks such as using 'Colin's Coffee' program with lower attaining students when teaching control techniques. Teachers are currently rewriting the schemes of work to bring in more work with multimedia which many students enjoy using. When teaching is most effective, teachers manage students very well, set challenging tasks and expect students to concentrate. Teachers usually set out at the start of the lesson what students are expected to learn; however, teachers do not always check that they have been successful and this leaves the students not knowing how to proceed. There are examples of excellent teaching as observed in a Year 10 multimedia class. The teacher enthused the students through the use of interesting tasks and excellent behaviour management.
90. When teaching is less than satisfactory, which is more prevalent in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11, teachers are unable to manage students and learning is seriously disrupted. Whilst teachers use the discipline system and call for support, this support is sometime ineffective. The ends of lessons are occasionally rushed and the homework that is set is not recorded by students; students do not always complete homework.

### ***Leadership and management***



91. This is a subject that is improving as teachers work together well and are prepared to try different approaches and take on board new ideas. Schemes of work are being rewritten and more interesting tasks are being introduced. The newly appointed head of department is a good role model in his teaching and his openness about strengths and weaknesses in teaching is reflected in the openness of his staff and the way they are striving to improve standards. Standards and teaching are better than that noted in the previous inspection.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

92. Students' skills in using ICT are average by the end of Years 9 and 11. This is a result of the good work carried out by the ICT department. However, although some subjects, such as design and technology and expressive arts make good use of computers, many do not provide students in Years 7 to 9 with enough opportunities to practise and improve their skills.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 10
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are rising because teachers give good support to students.
- The curriculum is good and enhanced through fieldwork in Years 7 to 11.
- The assessment arrangements do not provide enough information about how well students are doing.

### **Commentary**

#### ***Examination results***

93. Results in the 2004 examination were well below average but were an improvement on the previous two years' results. Students did better in geography than in many other subjects. The results of a significant minority of students were adversely affected by high levels of absence.

#### ***Standards and achievement***

94. By the end of Year 9 students achieve satisfactorily and improve their knowledge and understanding of topics. They develop a foundation of geographical skills through fieldwork experience and map studies, but knowledge of places is weak because they do not make enough use of the atlas. Higher attaining students achieve above average standards in extended assignments because they organise and present work well. In class discussion, however, standards are below average because many do not explain answers clearly or fully enough. Standards of homework assignments are below average because insufficient care is taken and work is often incomplete.

95. By the end of Year 10 students have increased their knowledge of topics and use a range of geographical terms to write assignments. They understand about the growth of world population and are able to compare differences in the UK and India, but do not explain answers in enough detail, either orally or in writing. Many Year 11 students achieve well in coursework because they take care and organise work logically and standards are raised through using ICT. Higher attaining students write well-structured assignments but do not analyse data enough or use knowledge of places to support theoretical study.

#### ***Teaching and learning***

96. In Years 7 to 9 students benefit from being taught by specialist teachers and this has a good impact on students' attitude to learning. The aims of lessons are clear so they know what they are expected to learn. Students with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily because resources are designed to help them and they often benefit from additional adult support. Lessons are usually well managed, but occasionally learning is poor because the misbehaviour of the minority of students disrupts learning, and strategies to address this are not effective. Occasionally students take too long to complete tasks resulting in them making slower progress than expected.

97. In Year 10 students benefit from close guidance and support and as a result standards are rising. Teachers have clear expectations about students' effort and behaviour on the course. This is accepted, lessons progress smoothly and much is achieved. Resources are used well and fieldwork visits generate enthusiasm for learning. Learning resources provide opportunities for students of different attainment to achieve, but tasks do not always challenge higher attainers enough. Work is marked but there are inconsistencies in the quality of written feedback to students.

### **Leadership and management**

98. The department is well led and students' morale is high. The improvement plan has a clear, long-term perspective and recognises the future needs of the subject. The assessment procedures are at an early stage of development, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and are not providing enough information about standards and achievement. Support for newly qualified teachers is good and leads to their speedy integration into the department.

## **History**

Provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students are underachieving as a result of unsatisfactory teaching over the longer term.
- Teaching and learning in lessons are currently satisfactory because of the arrangements made to cover long-term absence.
- Assessment procedures have been improved recently but are not yet used well enough to track students' progress and set targets.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory and have resulted in long-term decline.

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

99. GCSE results have been well below average in recent years and in 2004 they were very low. High proportions failed to achieve any grade because of high levels of absence and/or incomplete work.

### **Standards and achievement**

100. Standards have been severely affected by long-term weaknesses in teaching arising from prolonged staff absence, and also by the poor attendance of some students. Standards are now improving. Currently Year 11 students are achieving standards which, while still well below average, are significantly better than the 2004 GCSE results. Standards in Year 9 are also well below average. Students' attainment on entry is below average. The achievement of all, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, is unsatisfactory.

101. The work of most students is usually factually accurate. Weaknesses lie in the development of historical skills. GCSE coursework is weakened by an insufficiently analytical approach especially in the interpretation and judgement of the reliability of sources, and by a lack of sustained argument and clear conclusions. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are lowered by similar weaknesses in historical skills, and also by too little detail and the careless completion of tasks. There are, however, signs of improvement in the work of students in Years 7 and 8, with work being more detailed and more carefully presented. In all years there is little evidence of independent enquiry, and standards are lowered by poor literacy skills. ICT is used well for presentation of GCSE coursework but not for research.

**Teaching and learning**

102. Teaching and learning have suffered in recent years from staff absence. Currently both the head of department and the second full-time teacher are on long-term sick leave. A third part-time teacher is on maternity leave. The good arrangements made for the cover of their teaching responsibilities are resulting in lessons where teaching and learning are satisfactory with some that is of exceptionally high quality. Students respond extremely well to this. In many lessons, strengths in teaching include brisk, purposeful starts, clear learning objectives and explanation, good reinforcement, and questioning to check understanding.

103. Where teaching and learning are weaker, over-direction and control by the teacher limits opportunities for students to take initiative and contribute their views. Presentations do not enthuse and motivate, and the purpose of tasks is not clear. Students’ interest and curiosity are not channelled, and some become bored and disruptive. Behaviour management is not effective.

104. The students’ previous work shows that marking does not provide enough guidance for improvement, and the awarding of National Curriculum levels is not secure. There are many pieces of work which are incomplete and there is little evidence of homework. There is too much work that is simply copied from text books or from the ‘board – a complaint made both by parents and students.

**Leadership and management**

105. The absence of a head of department is resulting in a lack of clear vision and direction, and of systematic monitoring, review and development planning for improvement. Teaching, learning and examination results are monitored within the school’s arrangements for performance management and review of subjects. The most recent review is beginning to have a positive impact on standards in Year 11, and line management is ensuring appropriate teaching arrangements, especially through the innovative teacher exchange with a local grammar school.

106. Performance data are not used systematically to track progress and set targets in all years. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory; standards have fallen and teaching is of worse quality.

**Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Insufficient evidence

Leadership	Good
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Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students are underachieving because of weaknesses in teaching and attitudes.
- Leadership shows a good vision for the future, but management is not good enough to improve teaching.
- Achievement is reduced by unsatisfactory attitudes, poor attendance and an unsatisfactory curriculum.

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

107. Results in the short course GCSE in 2004 were below average. There is a rising trend in results and in the numbers choosing to take the examination. Students now have a range of opportunities for accreditation. Those who take the examination early in Year 10 have the opportunity this year to take a further qualification in Year 11 and so achieve a full GCSE.

### **Standards and achievement**

108. Standards in Year 9 are broadly average, but vary considerably according to who is teaching the classes. Standards on entry to the school are better than in most other subjects. Around half the students are achieving well, but the other half are underachieving. Students are aware of a variety of religious practices and higher attaining students present fluent thoughtful responses to questions on a range of topics, for example Creation, and the needs of refugees. When considering moral dilemmas they can identify differing viewpoints and present their own opinions. Their reasoning, however, does not generally include original ideas. Higher attaining students include religious teaching in their written responses, but lower attaining students approach moral issues from a secular standpoint. When they have the opportunity to display sensitivity through poetry or imaginative prose, they achieve well and are inspired by what they write.

109. The achievement of a significant group of students is unsatisfactory where teaching is unsatisfactory or where learning is affected by absence and a failure to catch up or complete work. A significant number of students lose their books or fail to bring them to school. Achievement is further reduced when students are slow to arrive to lessons and to settle down. Where students are well motivated, disciplined and taught well, the 'fast tracking' pace towards early entry to GCSE results in very good progress. Students with special educational needs achieve well where they are supported by clear structures and writing frames that encourage them to reflect and give personal views, but this is not always the case and on other occasions they struggle.

110. There were no students in Year 10 and 11 being taught religious education during the inspection period. Scrutiny of their work indicates standards are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. Within the time constraints, students are completing the topics included in the short GCSE course; however, the inclusion of citizenship, personal and social education and careers in the time allocation is resulting in a predominantly secular approach. There is insufficient evidence of reflection on the validity of religious teaching or its potential effects on society. The limited time and homework contribute to a lack of independent investigation into topics studied. Some groups change teachers as they change topics and this affects the opportunities for continuity, 'follow up' and progression.

### **Teaching and learning**

111. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. No teaching was observed in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are well planned and tasks encourage students to reflect on the issues investigated and to appreciate different points of view. The opportunity to begin the GCSE short course in Year 9 is providing good challenge for higher attaining students. Teachers plan to involve students through role-play and discussion and encourage them to empathise with the situations they consider. However, there is too little concern for the quality of students' work or the level of their concentration. As a result a significant number of students at all levels delay starting tasks and demonstrate little pride in their work. In some lessons, time is lost as teachers settle classes and deal with unruly students. More motivated students lose interest while they wait and the continuity of concentration and learning is lost. Students are encouraged to develop understanding of attainment levels and many show pride in the key assessment tasks. Day-to-day marking, however, although encouraging, does not identify progress or challenge students to improve, complete or catch up work missed through absence or lost exercise books. This is particularly evident in Years 10 and 11 where worksheets predominate and there is little evidence of independent learning.

### **Leadership and management**

112. The department is well led, but management is unsatisfactory. There is a clear vision for the department and appropriate areas have been identified for development. In a short time, schemes of work have been reviewed and attainment levels have been introduced. This has yet to impact on the standards and behaviour of students. The unsatisfactory teaching is being addressed, but procedures for monitoring and improving the work of the department are not effective enough. Attitudes have improved following the introduction of the short course GCSE in Year 9 and the greater challenge of the double short course for some in Year 11. Not all students, however, are expected to enter for GCSE despite following the course. The pressure to include citizenship, personal and social education and careers along with religious education and the loss of continuity as groups change teacher, is affecting the motivation and achievement of students in Years 10 and 11. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory; standards in Year 11, and achievement, are now worse.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

	Year 9	Year 10
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Teaching: Satisfactory Learning: Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Poor
Progress since previous inspection	Poor

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The department does not evaluate its own performance rigorously enough and as a result the subject leader cannot pinpoint exactly what needs to be done to improve standards
- Students have an unsatisfactory attitude to learning; this added to their poor attendance is contributing to poor achievement overall and to standards which are too low
- The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is poorly designed and leads to underachievement and unsatisfactory learning
- Lessons are dull, and tasks too easy, in Years 10 and 11.

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

113. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2004 were very low. Over one student in five failed to gain any grade at all. Students did worse in design and technology than all their other subjects.

#### **Standards and achievement**

114. By the end of Year 9, students' designing and making skills are well below average; this represents unsatisfactory achievement overall. Despite the satisfactory teaching they receive in design and technology, the fragmented experience they receive means that students' learning is not progressing as they move from unit to unit. Half of the students in Year 8 are prevented from studying food technology and the six-week subject rotations result in unfinished work and limited progress; many students are disenchanted as a result. Students use a variety of tools and equipment competently in all material areas. However, standards vary considerably because some of the activities undertaken by students are either too easy

or uninspiring. By the end of Year 10 standards of designing and making are well below average. This represents poor achievement since Year 7. The best work is produced in graphics where the use of ICT is resulting in some very high quality work. However, students' attitudes to the subject are unsatisfactory and there is little pride evident in their work.

### **Teaching and learning**

115. In Years 7 to 9 the standard of teaching varies considerably but is satisfactory overall. Occasionally, as in some graphics lessons, students are inspired by creative, engaging teaching. In many lessons the teaching suffers because of the negative attitudes of many students and, where students are not well managed, behaviour is unacceptable and learning suffers; this inconsistency in teaching is one of the main reasons why not all students learn as much as they should do. Students clearly enjoy their practical lessons and experience a wide range of practical activities that enable them to design and make interesting products; in these lessons their attitudes are more positive. Students with special educational needs are often very well supported by teaching assistants and in some lessons worksheets have been adapted by the teachers in order to better match their ability. In contrast, very few opportunities are given to enrich or extend the more able students. In Years 10 and 11 teaching is unsatisfactory and as a consequence students' achievement is unsatisfactory. In addition, the poor attendance, punctuality and attitudes of the students are leading to serious underachievement. Very few students achieve the highest grades. Work is marked regularly. However, management of behaviour is unsatisfactory, as is the level of challenge and interest offered to students. Lessons are often slow paced and boring, so students do not learn enough.

### **Leadership and management**

116. The department has suffered from a period of neglect which has resulted in a complete lack of systems and procedures, a deterioration in standards, and worsening behaviour and attitudes. In addition, resources such as computer-aided design/computer-aided manufacture equipment have suffered from neglect and are now unusable. The new head of department is beginning to make a difference but currently lacks a clear focus for improvement; rather than focusing upon the key issues, a wide range of initiatives has been started. To date these have had little impact on the core problems and standards are too low. The poor management has resulted in weaknesses in the curriculum and a lack of rigour in the monitoring of teaching and learning; the subject leader cannot pinpoint exactly what needs to be done to improve standards. The department is now much worse than it was at the time of the previous inspection.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

The inspection focused on art and design and music. The school also offers expressive arts in Year 9 and expressive arts and performing arts courses in Years 10 and 11. The vocational performing arts course has been particularly successful and the expressive arts course is very popular.

### **Art and design**

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good



Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is inadequate time allocated in Years 7 to 9, so students underachieve.
- There is some underachievement in Year 10 GCSE classes caused by absence.
- Standards are very good in three-dimensional work, especially pottery.
- There is good provision for art in the vocational GCSE course.

### **Commentary**

#### ***Examination results***

117. In 2004 GCSE results were average. Standards have fluctuated but have been below average over the past three years. A significant minority of students were not entered for the examination because their attendance was very poor and they had so little coursework that they would not have been given a grade.

#### ***Standards and achievement***

118. By Year 9 standards are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because over two thirds of the students in Year 9 do not study art as it is offered only as an option. There is a clear aim to touch on all the National Curriculum requirements in Years 7 and 8 but these are not covered in enough breadth, depth or detail. Significant elements such as investigating ideas are not explored in enough depth. Where done, work in design and surface decoration is of a good standard.

119. Standards are average in the Year 11 GCSE and vocational GCSE courses. This represents good achievement given students' starting points at the beginning of the courses. Some of the best work is in drawing and painting from direct observation. There is good three-dimensional work in mask-making and light sculpture and very good work in pottery. Students on the vocational course can follow a brief well and all students show the ability to research and use the work of major artists to provide inspiration for their own work. Achievement in the Year 10 vocational course is good with students showing interest and initiative; however, there is some underachievement in Year 10 GCSE classes because some students' attendance is very poor, with a little over half the class attending in some lessons. There is very good use of a visiting artist that extends students' vision and makes a good contribution to work-related learning. There is some good use of ICT for research and good use of the digital camera in work on portraits, but little manipulation of images. Provision of ICT within the classrooms is inadequate.

#### ***Teaching and learning***

120. The teachers have good specialist knowledge and expertise. They give good demonstrations of effective techniques, such as ways of using tools for modelling in 'modroc' and brush work in painting. All students receive good one-to-one guidance and support so that students of all capabilities and ethnic backgrounds make similar progress in lessons. Marking is good and indicates how students can improve. All students are attentive to demonstrations but a significant minority in Years 7 and 8 lack self-discipline and composure and do not think for themselves; this is not tackled effectively by the teachers. Attitudes of those present are good in GCSE and contribute significantly to students' success.

#### ***Leadership and management***

121. The senior management decision to reduce the amount of time allocated to art in Year 9 has had an adverse effect on standards and achievement. However, there is good mutual support for teachers and a warm, co-operative and purposeful atmosphere that is valued by students. Clear records are kept. There is good extra-curricular provision. The subject makes a good contribution to students' spiritual and cultural development by studying these aspects, particularly in the art of other cultures. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the previous inspection because of the decline in standards and teaching in Years 7 to 9. Provision has improved in GCSE with the introduction of a vocational course.

## Music

Provision in music is **poor**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Insufficient evidence
Achievement	Poor	Insufficient evidence
Teaching and learning	Poor	Insufficient evidence

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Poor
Progress since previous inspection	Poor

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students badly underachieve because lessons do not focus on creativity and musicality and important areas of the curriculum are not taught
- Weaknesses in management over time have resulted in poor assessment procedures and a decline in standards.
- Students do not use computers to create, refine and manipulate sounds.
- New leadership is beginning to tackle important weaknesses, but marking does not tell students how well they are doing or what they need to do to get better.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to make music in groups and ensembles outside lessons.

## Commentary

### **Examination results**

122. Teachers' assessments of students' attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were inaccurate and resulted in levels well above those reported nationally. Students did not take the GCSE music examination in 2004. Results for GCSE in 2003 for those students taking the examination were in the bottom five per cent of the country.

### **Standards and achievement**

123. Students enter the school with below average musical ability. By Year 9 these standards have dropped and students badly underachieve because they do not cover all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Lessons do not incorporate enough practical activities to develop and extend musical ideas and build on a range of musical activities that integrate performing, composing and appraising. The curriculum is too narrow and has an overemphasis on notation rather than making music. Important areas such as the use of ICT to create, modify and refine sounds are not covered. In Year 9 students only receive 10 weeks of music and this, combined with the gaps in their prior knowledge, is not enough to cover requirements. Lower attainers and those with special educational needs do not get much opportunity to shine within the subject because work is not matched to their needs. Written work is

predominantly word-search based or worksheet driven. Other written work has little value such as colouring in the layout of an outdated symphony orchestra plan.

124. Music is not currently taught in Year 10 and from next year will not be taught in either Year 10 or 11 because not enough students opted for the subject. It was not possible to judge the quality of provision in Year 11 because the nine students following the course were on study leave.

### ***Teaching and learning***

125. Teachers structure their lessons well. Relationships are generally good and students enjoy making music when given the chance. However, in many lessons, students misbehave because teaching is dull and topics are unexciting. Teaching is too focused on ensuring students understand theoretical aspects of the subject. Lessons lack musicality and teachers do not provide enough opportunity for students to be creative. For example, in one Year 8 lesson the students did not perform, listen to, or create any music whatsoever. They spent most of the lesson copying traditional notation from the board or repeatedly drawing treble clefs. In many lessons students spend too much time learning technical names such as crotchet or semi-quaver to the detriment of making music and understanding how music sounds. Many lessons do not fully involve all students. In these lessons lower attainers and those with special educational needs become bored and do not learn as much as they should. Lessons are not geared to stretching those who have been identified as particularly musically talented and the work given to these students is often too easy. Marking of work is inconsistent and rarely informs students of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Some comments are detailed and indicate what needs improving, whilst other comments such as “nice try” are particularly unhelpful.

### ***Leadership and management***

126. Leadership has improved recently and is characterised by a determination to develop teaching and learning and raise standards, but the initiatives have yet to have full effect. Assessment procedures have been inaccurate but a tighter structure is now in place. However, because of the small amount of music in Year 9, it remains difficult to accurately evaluate standards. Since the last inspection almost every aspect has declined. Standards are considerably lower and the curriculum is poor. The music computer room, highlighted as a strength in the previous report, is no longer available, so students do not use computers and until very recently did not use electronic keyboards. Music does not have a high profile within the school and there are too few performance opportunities for students. A small but growing number of students are again taking advantage of instrumental tuition but numbers are currently much lower than at the time of the previous inspection.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students achieve well in the GCSE examination as a result of good teaching and their good attitudes towards the subject.
- Good leadership has ensured good progress since the previous inspection.
- A strong extra-curricular programme offers opportunities for all students, especially the gifted and talented, to excel in school and beyond.
- Teachers' use of ICT in GCSE theory is constrained by lack of access to a teaching space equipped with the appropriate technology.

## **Commentary**

### ***Examination results***

127. The 2004 GCSE results were average and represent good achievement.

### ***Standards and achievement***

128. By the end of Year 9, students' average standards represent good achievement. Boys and girls achieve well in outdoor games, as seen in rounders and softball. Students with special educational needs are well supported, and achieve at the same rate as their classmates, well illustrated in athletics. In the Years 10 and 11 GCSE course, standards remain average overall. However, attainment is above average in practical aspects of the course, reflecting good achievement. It was not possible to see any core curriculum lessons in Years 10 and 11. Standards in extra-curricular sport are high, well illustrated by talented students' individual and team successes at district, county and, sometimes, national level in a range of sports.

### ***Teaching and learning***

129. Enthusiastic, knowledgeable and well-planned teaching motivates students to work hard. Most students, particularly those studying GCSE, have good attitudes to the subject, reflected in the energy they put into lessons, and their support for extra-curricular activities. Teachers' management of students is very good. Standards of participation, kit and behaviour in lessons are usually good, although girls' lack of participation in one Year 8 class gave cause for concern. Good teaching combines high expectations, challenge and interesting activities to ensure that students learn well. The best learning occurs when teachers make strong demands of students to do better, as seen in girls' athletics and GCSE theory lessons. It is this rigorous focus on quality and improvement that distinguishes the most effective teaching. Students' independent learning skills develop well as they are given opportunities to take some responsibility for their own learning. Assessment procedures are good, but the marking of GCSE theoretical work has inconsistencies, and even more could be done to let students know how to get better.

### ***Leadership and management***

130. Strong leadership is complemented by an equally strong team of committed staff with shared vision and values. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection, well illustrated by the establishment of, and continued success in, the GCSE examination. Curriculum development is moving forward, despite the constraints of timetabling and facilities. The school is not yet achieving the aim of the national strategy for 85 per cent of students to receive at least two hours a week of quality physical education. Staff are eager to develop the use of ICT in GCSE teaching and learning, but this is severely restricted by the lack of a designated teaching space equipped with the latest interactive technology. Accurate self-evaluation is a particular strength of the department. Students benefit from strong links with local sports clubs and visiting coaches in a range of sports.

## BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

### Health and social care

Provision in health and social care is **very good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have thorough subject knowledge and share their enthusiasm for their subject with their students.
- Very good achievement is the direct result of varied, stimulating and enjoyable teaching.
- There is a lack of access to health care professionals in the form of speakers coming into the school.

## **Commentary**

### ***Examination results***

131. The first group of students to take the applied GCSE did so in 2004. Whilst non-attendance affected the final GCSE results, they were average overall. However, the school recognised that the GNVQ route best meets the needs of their students and currently Years 10 and 11 are following the full intermediate GNVQ course.

### ***Standards and achievement***

132. Standards produced by students in Years 10 and 11 are above average. Students are achieving very well in comparison to their prior attainment. Students show a clear understanding of health and social care services and demonstrate a thorough knowledge of how people can gain access to them. They produce proficient, detailed, health plans, and all can clearly identify the various factors which affect an individual's well-being. In a very good Year 10 lesson, the students were able to accurately grade the portfolios of their peers; all were able to clearly identify the skills that bring about achievement at the very highest level.

### ***Teaching and learning***

133. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and quickly establish a purposeful atmosphere for learning. They make work interesting and varied, fully involving the students. Students clearly understand what is expected of them and tasks have sufficient challenge and variety to hold their interest. Because they spend a whole day on their subject, the teachers continually vary the activities and this ensures that students are always engrossed in their work. It also allows them to attend their work placements. Activities and demands are very sensitively matched to students' needs and teachers have a distinct understanding of students' individual needs and make every effort to meet them. Students thoroughly enjoy and benefit from the continual variety of activities that are offered to them and use every learning opportunity to its maximum benefit. Whilst the vocational relevance of the subject is well recognised by the staff, there is currently a lack of involvement with local health care professionals in order to provide more realistic examples of their work.

### ***Leadership and management***

134. Health and social care is not a distinct department and the teaching staff have demanding responsibilities elsewhere within the school. However, working as a team, they lead and manage the subject well. They carefully monitor examination results; hence the recent change of courses from GNVQ Part 1, to the applied GCSE and currently onto the full intermediate GNVQ. Both teachers concerned have a strong sense of direction and they share a continual drive for improvement of teaching and learning. There is a strong focus in the department on raising standards. Management functions are covered well and procedures are not unduly bureaucratic.

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

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The programme is well planned with good schemes of work and this is supported by lesson plans.
- There are some inconsistencies in the teaching of PSHE.

- The programme is active and involves students in their learning.
- The time allocation in Years 10 and 11 constrains achievement.

## Commentary

135. Overall, the school has a satisfactory PSHE curriculum. The programme is stronger in Years 7 to 9. The subject is well planned with good schemes of work and lesson plans for different year groups. There is a cohesive programme that meets statutory requirements and covers careers education, sex and relationships, health and drugs abuse. In the sex/relationships aspects of the course there is a strong emphasis upon consideration of relationships. Time is adequate for the delivery of the programme in Years 7 to 9. However, in Years 10 and 11, time is limited because religious education shares the time allocation. Special events and a good work experience programme at the end of Year 10 enhance the PSHE programme.
136. Lessons are mostly taught by a specialist team with a few groups taught by their form tutor, which leads to some inconsistencies; the specialist teaching tends to be better than that of non-specialists. However, the quality of teaching observed during the inspection was overall satisfactory. Lessons had a positive emphasis involving students in discussion, role-play and small group work. In the small sample of lessons seen and the scrutiny of students' work, standards were confirmed to be below average by Year 9 and Year 11. However, absence from lessons is clearly having an impact on the development of students' personal development.
137. There is satisfactory provision for careers education. There is close co-operation with the careers service, which enhances the quality of the information and guidance that students receive. There is a sound two-week work experience programme for students in Year 10 who gain a good insight into the world of work. PSHE makes a satisfactory contribution to students' welfare and personal development. It also contributes to their understanding of citizenship by raising their awareness of rights and responsibilities and helps them to make informed choices about life styles.

## Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment procedures are inadequate.
- There is no effective monitoring or evaluation of the citizenship programme; consequently there is uncertainty over what is being covered.
- Whole-school and year activities for charities enhance active citizenship.
- Many subjects do not contribute sufficiently to the citizenship programme and fail to make it explicit.

## Commentary

### **Standards and achievement**

138. Citizenship is taught through PSHE, religious education and all subjects. Only one religious education lesson was observed during the inspection, which focused on citizenship. There was insufficient evidence to reach a judgement on standards. However, students' work and discussion with students show that they are underachieving; they have had little in the way of education in citizenship until the current year and this is still minimal in Years 7 and 8.

### **Teaching and learning**

139. No judgements were made on teaching and learning. In the one lesson seen, where citizenship was the focus, the level of debate and student involvement was good as



students discussed issues about capital punishment, law and order. However, much of the work is poorly recorded by students. The programme is enhanced by active citizenship. For example, students engage in charity work; Year 10 students support a Pakistani child and raised money for the Asian Tsunami victims. The school supports charities like Operation Christmas Child and the Samaritans. These activities alert students to local and world problems and help them to appreciate and understand about wider aspects of being a well-informed citizen. The school council provides opportunities for all students to take part in the democratic process.

### ***Leadership and management***

140. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The citizenship co-ordinator has only been in post for three terms. During this time she has successfully assessed the situation and has begun to make progress with the development of citizenship from a low base. At present, all subjects across the curriculum contribute a little to citizenship; however, only a few subjects make a strong contribution. Citizenship is rarely made explicit to students in lessons. The citizenship programme is minimal in Years 7 and 8. A strong feature of the programme is the active citizenship throughout the school. However, the monitoring of citizenship has yet to be developed in order to ensure all elements are successfully covered. Assessment procedures are inadequate as they do not measure the progress students make. Reporting to parents is undertaken through students' self-assessment rather than teachers reporting on standards and progress.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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