

# INSPECTION REPORT

**LEYLAND ST MARY'S CATHOLIC TECHNOLOGY  
COLLEGE**

Leyland

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119816

Headteacher: Trevor Day

Lead inspector: Clare Gillies

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> January 2005

Inspection number: 268410

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	779
School address:	Royal Avenue Leyland Lancashire
Postcode:	PR25 1BS
Telephone number:	01772 421909
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Raven
Date of previous inspection:	17 <sup>th</sup> May 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Catholic Technology College is a voluntary aided, mixed, 11-16 school with 779 pupils on roll. It has been a specialist technology college since 1996 and part of the Technology Trust's 70 Club since 2003, when over 70 per cent of the school's pupils gained A\*- C grades in design and technology subjects. The school gained Investors in People status in 2002 and received a school achievement award in 2002 and 2003. In 2004 it received the Sportsmark in recognition of its outstanding provision for physical education. Over 99 per cent of the pupils are white. Very few are from ethnic minority backgrounds or speak English as an additional language, and all these speak English fluently. Most pupils are Catholic. Pupils come from homes covering the full range of socio-economic backgrounds, but their overall socio-economic level is above average.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average; it is a truly comprehensive intake. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is just below average - mainly linked with dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties or behavioural problems - but the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is average. Practically all pupils enter the school in Year 7 and very few leave before Year 11. Four out of five pupils go on to further education, mainly at Newman College and Runshaw College, and one in five to a modern apprenticeship or training.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2059 7	Clare Gillies	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English as an Additional Language.
1376 2	Norman Shelley	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
3346 1	Jill Clough	<i>Team inspector</i>	English.
2063 9	Roger Grant	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics.
1276 2	Roger Catchpole	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science.
3051 8	Mike Johnson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art.
2714	Martin Patterson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and Technology.
8873	Charlotte Evers	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography.
2722 6	Richard Cribb	<i>Team inspector</i>	History; Citizenship.
2198 1	Anthony McDermott	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and Communication Technology.
2349 9	Howard Seymour	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music.
3164 9	Richard Marsden	<i>Team inspector</i>	French; Spanish.
2290 6	Barry Hodgson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical Education.
3074 1	Paul Copping	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special Educational Needs.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Leyland St Mary's is a very good and effective school.** Standards are well above average and pupils achieve very well. Leadership and management are very good and the school provides very good value for money.

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

- Pupils' positive attitudes and hard work contribute to their very good achievement in all years and to the well above average standards in Year 9 national test and GCSE results.
- The strong ethos, underpinned by the Catholic faith from home and in school, contributes much to the school's success and the very good relationships. It generates pupils' very good behaviour, values, respect for others and contributions to the community and charities.
- With very good leadership and management at all levels, the school functions efficiently, calmly and effectively.
- Teaching is very good; almost half the lessons observed during the inspection were either very good or excellent. Teachers convey their genuine interest in pupils' progress through the manner in which they teach and care for them.
- The pastoral care provided for pupils is good, linked with firm but very clear expectations of behaviour. Pupils feel safe, secure and well looked after.
- The excellent liaison with primary schools, particularly about the curriculum in Years 6 and 7, is very effective. Year 7 pupils waste no time and make rapid progress.
- The quality of teaching and the standards achieved in design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT) are outstanding. The school has used its technology specialism well both for itself and to support interesting work in primary schools and the community.
- Provision for the performing arts is not as strong as it is in most other subjects.
- Very few pupils study modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11.

**The school's effectiveness has improved well since its last inspection.** Year 7 English, mathematics and science sets are now organised differently from before and work reasonably well. Data is used intelligently to give pupils targets and to monitor their progress. There is now no significant gap between boys' and girls' performance. Technical support for design and technology and ICT has increased, although art still has no help. The library has a full-time and a part-time librarian. Most of the minor weaknesses identified in the last report have been addressed, including those related to health and safety. However, other minor health and safety issues that require attention were brought to the school's notice during the present inspection.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

**Achievement is very good in all years.** Standards are well above average in all years.

**Years 7 to 9:** in 2004, pupils in Year 9 attained well above average national test results in English, mathematics and science. They make very good progress in these years and the present standards in these subjects are as high. Boys did less well than girls in 2002, narrowed the gap considerably in 2003, and did slightly better than girls in mathematics and science in 2004. Pupils also do well in ICT, exceeding targets and the national average.

**Years 10 and 11:** although the percentage of pupils attaining five GCSE grades A\*- C dropped slightly in 2004 and was below the school's target, the percentages of A\*/A grades and of pupils gaining five grades A\*- G went up, raising the average total points score. Boys did almost as well as girls and the gap between their results was less than that seen nationally. In many subjects results were above, or well above, average, especially in design and technology, ICT and physical education. All pupils passed Intermediate GNVQ in engineering and business. Present standards are very high in ICT and well above average in English, design and technology, and history. They are above average in all other subjects except for geography, music and general physical education, where they are average.

**Pupils' personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** The Catholic faith strengthens pupils' spirituality and the school sets high standards for moral and social behaviour; pupils can certainly distinguish right from wrong. Many pupils do voluntary work in the community and are generous in raising money for charities. The school does not do enough to make pupils aware of multi-ethnic and different faith cultures from around the world. Pupils' attitudes to school life and learning are very good and practically all of them behave very well and concentrate in lessons. Exclusions are used rigorously to enforce the behaviour code. Attendance is well above average and punctuality is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good.** During the inspection several examples of excellent teaching were seen in English, science, design and technology and ICT, the latter three subjects being linked with the school's technology specialism. The success of the school's focus over the last three years, on making teaching more stimulating and encouraging pupils to think about their learning, is evident in several subjects.

The curriculum is good, particularly in Years 10 and 11, where worthwhile vocational courses, for example in engineering, are popular and successful. Music and art have only one lesson a week in Years 7 to 9, and there is practically no drama. The range of extra-curricular activities is good. Pupils leave school with a good awareness of the world of work and realistic ideas about their future education and careers.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pupils receive helpful advice about their work, know how well they are doing in most subjects, and have good careers guidance. The school seeks their opinions and the school council is reasonably effective. Several aspects of school life, to generate as healthy and safe an environment as possible, have not received adequate consideration. For example, present arrangements make it awkward for pupils, especially girls, to go to the toilet during lessons.

The school's partnership with parents is good. Parents are very supportive of the school's work and take an interest in their children's education. They receive a good amount of information about school life, though the reports are not as clear as they could be.

The school's partnership with the community is very good. Pupils contribute generously through voluntary work and church activities. The education they receive benefits from the extremely valuable links with primary and secondary schools and Sixth Form colleges.



## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher has a perceptive understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and has steered the school very well since the last inspection. The governing body has many strengths and provides good support. Governors take their duties seriously and are knowledgeable about the school's work. However, they have not considered in depth how they want the school to evolve over the next five to ten years. The governors comply with all statutory requirements.

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

Parents and pupils are very satisfied with the school. Although girls dislike the dark grey trousers and many pupils have a few moans, for example about the short lunchtime, they appreciate the quality of teaching they receive and know that staff go out of their way to help and support them.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Focus on improving the provision for performing arts.
- Encourage more pupils to study a modern foreign language in Years 10 and 11.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

**Achievement in all years is very good. Standards in all years are well above average.** The trend in GCSE results and in Year 9 national test results is slowly upwards.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good achievement starts in Year 7; pupils move on rapidly from the levels they attained in primary school.
- Year 9 national test results and overall GCSE results are well above average, reflecting the very good progress made by pupils of all abilities.
- Standards in most GCSE and vocational subjects are above or well above average.
- The gap between the performance of girls and boys, criticised at the time of the last report, has been significantly reduced. In some subjects boys now do better than girls.

#### Commentary

1. Pupils enter the school with average standards. In 2004 they attained well above average results in Year 9 national tests in English, mathematics and science, which indicates very good progress in Years 7 to 9. The table below shows that in 2004 the average point scores went up in English and mathematics. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 5, the expected level for their age, exceeded the target grades. Test results in science dropped slightly and were just below the target. Results in all three subjects have fluctuated since 2001 but they have always been average or higher. Between 2002 and 2003, the gap between the test results of boys and girls narrowed considerably; boys did slightly better than girls in mathematics and science, for the first time since 2000 and 2001 respectively. In English, one in five pupils attained Level 7, two levels above the expected level for their age. Pupils also do well in ICT, exceeding targets and the national average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.2 (33.7)	33.3 (33.4)
mathematics	38.1 (37.3)	35.5 (35.4)
science	35.1 (35.6)	33.1 (33.6)

*There were 155 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Although the percentage of pupils attaining five GCSE grades A\* - C dropped slightly in 2004 and was below the school's target, the percentages of higher A\*/A grades, and of pupils who attained five GCSE grades A\* - G, went up. Boys did almost as well as girls, and the gap between their results was less than that seen nationally; boys attained more A\*/A grades in history. In practically all subjects, results were above, or well above, average. All pupils who took engineering (the equivalent of two GCSEs) or Intermediate GNVQ business (the equivalent of four GCSEs) gained A\* - C grades. All pupils gained A\* - C grades in biology, art and design and statistics, and over 90 per cent gained these grades in physics, food technology, Spanish and physical education and chemistry, though the last of these

had a lower percentage of A\*/A grades than biology and physics. In several subjects two out of five pupils attained A\*/A grades.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*- C grades	69 (74)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*- G grades	94 (91)	89 (89)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*- G grades	97 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	40.4 (40.0)	34.9 (34.7)

*There were 173 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Relative to their predicted grades, pupils did particularly well in 2004 in Spanish, statistics, food technology, resistant materials, French and art. In mathematics, double science, and chemistry especially, results were lower than those predicted. In 2004 fewer than 50 pupils took French or Spanish for GCSE, and the school is rightly keen to increase this number.

4. Parents rightly believe that their children achieve well. Academically gifted pupils are taught in top sets and attain a high percentage of A\*/A grades. Pupils with particular aptitudes in mathematics and ICT are encouraged to take GCSE early; results are strong. Some pupils take GCSE statistics in Year 11 and do well. Through the science department, pupils take part in Creativity in Science and Technology (CREST) awards and do well. Pupils are capable and confident users of ICT, which gives them a very good preparation for their future studies. Several pupils taking GCSE music have attained grade VI on their instruments. Individual pupils represent the school in team and individual sports at local and county level.

5. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, particularly improving their reading and mathematical skills in Year 7, where they are taught in small groups supported by learning support assistants. They gain in confidence and achieve particularly well in design and technology and ICT. Pupils make very good progress extending their technical vocabulary in science. In one lesson, a number of pupils with special educational needs confidently discussed the chemistry of acid rain and linked this with pollution. In an English lesson, they understood the concepts of language and performance in *Macbeth* well and discussed plot and character confidently.

6. Standards and achievement seen during the inspection are summarised below:

	Years 7 to 9		Years 10 and 11	
	Standards	Achievement	Standards	Achievement
<b>English</b>	Well above average	Very good	Well above average	Very good
<b>Mathematics</b>	Well above average	Very good	Above average	Good
<b>Science</b>	Well above average	Very good	Above average	Good
<b>Art</b>	Average	Good	Above average	Very good
<b>Design technology and</b>	Above average	Good	Well above average	Very good
<b>Geography</b>	Average	Satisfactory	Average	Satisfactory
<b>History</b>	Above average	Good	Well above average	Good
<b>French</b>	Above average	Good	Well above average	Good
<b>Spanish</b>	Above average	Good	Well above average	Good
<b>ICT</b>	Well above average	Very good	Very high	Excellent
<b>Music</b>	Average	Satisfactory	Above average	Good
<b>Physical education</b>	Above average	Good	Average	Good
<b>Citizenship</b>	Above average	Good	Well above average	Good



## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development (including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development) are very good. Attendance is well above average and punctuality is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very positive about all their experiences in school.
- Lessons and learning proceed very well because behaviour is very good.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- The number of exclusions is high because a small number of pupils have been excluded several times.

### Commentary

7. Pupils enjoy school. They are conscientious and want to do well. Most are enthusiastic about the various activities available and support them in large numbers. They particularly appreciate that their teachers care about their progress and support them well. They also acknowledge that the strict behaviour policy generates a feeling of security and safety. Believing that teachers will listen to their concerns, they voice their opinions, for example about how the new rewards system is working and whether teachers are applying it consistently.

8. Behaviour is very good in almost all lessons. Pupils are co-operative, are mutually supportive, and generally get on very well with each other. Their conduct around the school is usually considerate and orderly, despite the narrow staircases and corridors. The school expects high standards of behaviour and rigorously applies its policy and strategies to achieve them. Some bullying occurs but pupils do not regard it as a significant issue for them. They confirm that bullying is dealt with effectively when it is reported. The number of fixed period exclusions in the previous academic year was higher than that usually found in secondary schools. It has fallen this year. Detailed analysis shows that a small minority of pupils receive three or more fixed period exclusions, with eight pupils accounting for half the exclusion days in the present year. The school does everything it can to prevent permanent exclusions.

#### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	
White – British	

#### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
777	117	1

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

9. Attendance is well above the average for secondary schools and most pupils arrive on time for the start of the school day and their lessons.

#### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year was 93.9%***

<b>Authorised absence</b>		<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	
School data:	5.7	School data:	0.4
National data:	7.2	National data:	1.1

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

10. Pupils make very good progress towards becoming mature, and adopt responsible attitudes to tasks that are assigned to them. Pupils' spiritual development is very well developed in religious education, English, and other activities such as the holocaust assemblies, mission days and community service. Pupils' self-awareness is particularly well developed through their involvement with charity work. Very good opportunities for pupils to pray together in masses, tutorials and assemblies help them to reflect on life's fundamental questions, and they respond in a very mature way.

11. Pupils' awareness of a moral code, responsibility and the importance of having a caring nature is apparent throughout the school. Pupils clearly know what is right and what is wrong. Their very good behaviour in lessons and around the school reflects the respect they show both for adults and for other pupils. Pupils are well aware that they are expected to help those less fortunate than themselves. They take a very active part in fundraising for charities, and all pupils undertake community service. The latter is an outstanding aspect of their education; links with elderly local citizens are exemplary. In Years 10 and 11 pupils explore moral issues linked to topics like abortion, euthanasia and war. Consequently they have a good understanding of how moral codes influence decisions that can affect their lives.

12. Pupils' social skills are very well developed in a variety of ways. In practically all lessons pupils work well in pairs or groups and get on very well together. The wide range of sporting and social activities plays an important part in developing pupils' confidence and awareness of living in a Christian community. Year 11 pupils work as prefects and act as guardian angels to Year 7 pupils. The chaplaincy links and the Alpha programme sessions develop pupils' social skills particularly well.

13. Pupils' awareness of the multicultural British society in which they live, and the wealth of different faiths and cultures beyond Europe, is not extended enough through the curriculum. Whilst English literature and religious education studies help pupils to explore cultural backgrounds, most subjects do not identify, and therefore do not emphasise, the contributions they can make to pupils' awareness of multicultural aspects.

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

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good.**

Teaching and learning are very good. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is good.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The percentage of **very good** or excellent teaching has increased since the last inspection. Excellent teaching was seen in 11 lessons.
- In many lessons teachers use imaginative resources, encourage pupils to learn independently, make learning fun and relate it to pupils' experiences.
- In several departments, teachers use analysis of performance data well to adapt their teaching and help pupils to improve their work.

### **Commentary**

14. The percentage of very good or excellent teaching has doubled since the last inspection. In almost half the lessons observed during the present inspection teaching was

at least very good. This included 11 lessons when it was excellent, especially in design and technology, ICT, science and English, of which the first three are linked with the school's technology specialism. The highest percentages of at least very good teaching were in design and technology and ICT, which are taken by all pupils, with GCSE results reflecting the high quality of teaching. The most effective teaching was in Years 8 and 11, the latter clearly contributing to the school's well above average GCSE results. Most of the very few lessons when teaching was unsatisfactory were in Year 9, where unexciting teaching, combined with the pupils' inattention, resulted in unsatisfactory learning.



## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 127 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
11 (9%)	49 (38.5%)	41 (32%)	21 (16.5%)	5 (4%)	0	0

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

15. Class sizes for lower ability pupils are small and intensively supported. Examples of very good teaching were seen in English and science, with work well matched to pupils' abilities. Expectations of what pupils with special educational needs can achieve are high, and teachers are alert to pupils' preferred learning styles. Reading *Of Mice and Men* with a low ability Year 11 group, the teacher judged perfectly when to ask questions that challenged pupils' understanding, as well as reinforcing their knowledge. In the higher ability sets, gifted and talented pupils are expected to aim for high levels and high GCSE grades; most pupils respond well and work hard.

16. Teachers enjoy working together and pupils are quick to sense this. The teamwork seen in several departments is a strong feature. Teachers collaborate and share ideas, which inevitably benefits the pupils. In the same way, the work done with primary schools means that teachers do not repeat work covered in earlier years but encourage Year 7 pupils by giving them new and interesting work. This sows valuable seeds and helps pupils to appreciate that learning can be enjoyable.

### Features of successful lessons observed during the inspection included:

17. *Interesting and imaginative resources:* Using a card sorting game about levels of belief in ghosts and dragons, pupils in Year 8 English explored with great success how fact and opinion may be deceptively mingled. Teachers of French and Spanish use games, songs, competitions, and hands-on activities which make lessons stimulating. In geography, enjoyable ways are devised to start lessons with the use of ICT, such as slowly uncovering pictures for Year 7 pupils to identify the location.

18. *Encouraging pupils to work independently:* In a very good Year 8 mathematics lesson, pupils drew on their knowledge of the area of a rectangle and used card and scissors to work out for themselves the formula for the area of a triangle. In a Year 9 science lesson on the human circulatory systems, pupils highlighted key words and phrases in a text and then put the key points together, an activity which developed their understanding most effectively. Pupils regularly discuss and share ideas in history, and they make presentations, for example in design and technology.

19. *Broadening the content of a lesson by references to other subjects and pupils' experiences:* In ICT, Year 9 pupils successfully analysed the making of a cup of tea, and Year 11 pupils used a spreadsheet to analyse a milkman's round and to operate a fourteen screen cinema. In the best English lessons references are made to history, geography, law, or politics. In history, pupils have to consider how modern times reflect the past. In art, pupils drew shoes after considering the work of shoe designers, and cultural and historical representations of butterflies. Work of this kind broadens pupils' horizons and stimulates them to volunteer their own ideas.

20. *Teachers' transparent enthusiasm and expertise in their subjects:* Expert demonstrations in art, physical education, design and technology or music all help pupils' practical work. When Year 7 pupils were learning about simile and metaphor, the teacher's instructions were full of wit, evoking delighted and disciplined responses. Some teachers

use interactive whiteboards well to strengthen learning. In a top set lesson in Year 11, high standards were shown by pupils, who understood how to draw graphs of complex mathematical functions when they saw them demonstrated on the whiteboard.

21. *Teachers expecting pupils to talk about their work and articulate their ideas.* Good practice in design is constantly reinforced by pupils sharing their designs, such as the graphic modelling of computer-generated trophies. A lesson on conquering one's fears gave Year 7 pupils considerable confidence to express their personal views and work together to solve problems. Year 11 pupils gained very good understanding of basic economics when the teacher skilfully created a vibrant and enjoyable atmosphere for a survival game in citizenship.

22. Teachers are developing their understanding of how to use the increasing amount of performance data. This is analysed with the use of a commercial software system, operated by a member of the administration team. Several most effective assessment strategies are in place. Excellent use is made of pupils assessing and evaluating their own work and that of others in ICT. This helps them to work out what to do to improve. English teachers use assessment data well to ensure that high ability pupils are stretched and to help lower ability pupils to raise their achievement. In geography, assessment is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 as it is not frequent enough and not used as a tool to guide learning; in Years 10 and 11 it is satisfactory, but there is little evidence of the use of GCSE grading in pupils' books.

23. In many subjects teachers mark work well, helping pupils to understand the level or grade their work is at and what they must do to improve. In mathematics, French and Spanish, marking is constructive. Some marking in English is bland, and comments in art do not always give pupils clear guidance. In contrast, good practice was seen in art, showing examples of pupils' work at different levels. In the main, teachers support pupils' literacy skills well, by expecting them to use the correct technical words and displaying this vocabulary in classrooms.

24. Performance at the whole school level is monitored and evaluated regularly for thoroughness and consistency, using national test and examination results for comparison. Very good use is made of data about individual pupils' work in all subjects, to secure rapid identification of underachievement. Assessment, as a tool to improve learning, is making a positive impact on teaching and learning in several subjects.

## **The curriculum**

**THE CURRICULUM IS GOOD OVERALL AND VERY GOOD IN YEARS 10 AND 11.**

**Opportunities for enrichment, including good extra-curricular activities, are very good. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are good.**

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Pupils in Year 9 have the opportunity to start on GCSE mathematics courses.
- Except in the performing arts, there is a very good range of courses in Years 10 and 11; these meet pupils' interest and aptitudes well.
- Accommodation and resources are excellent in design and technology and ICT but some other subjects do not have easy access to computers.
- The time available for art and music in Years 7, 8 and 9 is less than in most schools.
- Pupils are unable to take two modern foreign languages in Year 9, and very few pupils take either French or Spanish in Years 10 and 11.

## **Commentary**

25. In Years 7 to 9, the Key Stage 3 strategy is firmly in place and has been well adapted to meet pupils' needs. Higher attaining pupils achieve their full potential in mathematics and ICT by starting the GCSE course in Year 9 and taking the examination in Year 10. If they wish, keen mathematicians can take GCSE statistics in Year 11. The time available for music and art for pupils is less than in most schools, and very little drama takes place; the performing arts are not as

strong as other areas of the curriculum. In contrast, the time for ICT is generous and pupils use their high level ICT skills well in other subjects. Pupils cannot take two modern foreign languages in Year 9. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) course is well planned, mainly through religious education lessons (see paragraphs 117 and 118).

26. There has been good innovation in developing the curriculum in Years 10 and 11, which is now very good. The range of courses offered in design and technology is very good: graphics, electronics, resistant materials, engineering, food technology and textiles. In science higher attaining pupils take biology, chemistry and physics separately. The choice of vocational courses at GNVQ and NVQ levels is well suited to pupils' interests and aptitudes. These are taught in school and at nearby Runshaw College and Preston College. Every pupil in Years 10 and 11 takes an accredited ICT course, whichever is best for their capabilities. Very few pupils take either Spanish or French in Years 10 and 11.

27. GCSE courses provide a good foundation for higher level academic courses taken at partner colleges. GNVQ courses offer a seamless route to more advanced vocational courses at further education colleges, and NVQ courses provide experience and qualifications for pupils who enjoy practical work. Opportunities to fast track pupils in mathematics and ICT mean that these pupils are able to take additional GCSE courses.

28. The programme offered to enrich and extend learning beyond school hours is very good. The school has made much progress in developing its website Extranet, which allows pupils and parents to access the curriculum from home. Many departments offer booster classes after school; pupils can take CREST awards in science and enter the Lancashire mathematics challenge. In design and technology and in ICT, pupils can improve the quality of their course work after school. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities in physical education, with well attended school clubs and teams. There are many other opportunities for pupils to take part in activities such as public speaking, Duke of Edinburgh award, French and Spanish exchanges and an annual ski trip. There are wind instrumental groups but no string or singing groups.

29. There has been good progress since the last inspection in the development of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 now have a considerable choice of GCSE and vocational courses which match their interests and capabilities. There has been some improvement in the curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9, especially in design and technology and ICT. However, opportunities for drama in these years are limited, as is the time for art and music. Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 have less time for physical education than in most schools.

30. The curriculum is taught by specialists in practically all classes. Staffing in design and technology and ICT is excellent. The experienced design and technology team has made very successful contacts with commerce and local industry, and the school has benefited from brand new workshops with state-of-the-art equipment. Most classrooms are of a reasonable size and are clean and well maintained, with adequate storage space and facilities. However, some areas are in need of refurbishment, and a few classrooms – those used for art, for example – are too small. The outdoor all-weather sports pitch, heavily used by the local community, is in poor condition. Other shortcomings noted at the last inspection have been rectified, but there is still no dedicated medical room.

31. The shortages in resources identified in the previous inspection report have largely been dealt with. Resources for ICT and design and technology are now excellent, reflecting the school's specialism well. In English, art, French, Spanish, geography, physical education and special educational needs there are too few computers for pupils to use ICT

easily in lessons. It is not always possible for these departments to book computer rooms when they need, which limits pupils' independent learning. The library now has a satisfactory stock of books but the computers there are often used for ICT lessons, which prevents pupils from using them for independent research and study during lessons.

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

Care, guidance and support are good overall. The school 's care for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school gives pupils good support, advice and guidance, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The school seeks to involve pupils well in its work and development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of care and relationships is a strong feature of the school.
- The arrangements for transfer from primary schools and settling in at the school are excellent.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Some minor matters relating to health and safety require further attention.

### **Commentary**

32. Considerable attention is given to ensuring that pupils transfer from their primary schools confidently, so that they make the best possible start. There is a high degree of continuity between the schools in many subjects. This results from visits by primary school pupils, long before they transfer, and extensive curricular work by teachers at Leyland St Mary's in Years 5 and 6. The extended settling-in process helps pupils to integrate very effectively. Thereafter, teachers, helpers and the chaplain take a keen interest in pupils' welfare, doing their best to meet their personal and academic needs. Trust and mutual respect are clearly evident, and pupils feel safe and valued because of the way they are treated. An atmosphere of calm, purpose and confidence prevails.

33. Underpinning the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs is the staff's willingness to help them and the understanding all teachers have of these pupils' needs. For example, a pupil with a background exclusively in special schools transferred successfully into the school. Staff were well informed in advance and had a very positive attitude towards the pupil's happiness. Reviews for pupils with special educational needs who have statements are very well organised, and records are clear, complete and meticulously maintained.

34. New support assistants at Leyland St Mary's gain training by shadowing experienced staff at one of the two local special schools. Also valuable is the arrangement by which the local special schools offer fixed, ten-week placements to Leyland St Mary's pupils to address a particular need. These placements are infrequent, but when needed they augment the scope of the provision that the school can make.

35. The school has introduced the innovative practice of putting the statements and targets of pupils with special educational needs on its Intranet; this offers potential for very rapid communication to all staff. Currently, most targets are set at bi-annual meetings, and some are not fully relevant for the entire period between reviews. Targets tend to be general and steps towards improvement are not always mapped out in enough detail. Any

shortcomings in this respect are compensated for by the staff's very good understanding of ways in which students require support.

36. The progress support room provides a calm and constructive environment for pupils, and there is a clear understanding that it should not become somewhere where any pupil spends too much time. Its direction by specialist staff promotes pupils' rapid return to normal classes. This is effective, though such specialist work is made more difficult by the fact that pupils with behaviour problems are there as well as those with temporary medical needs. Professional links to help the school assess and support pupils' different needs are generally successful, although a long-term problem remains; there are frequent changes in the personnel of local education authority psychology services, so that links with psychologists have not been developed. Nevertheless, some agencies, such as the police and welfare service, provide reliable support. A life coach who comes to school one day a week has very successfully helped some pupils to cope with school life and work.

37. The procedures for child protection and children who are in care are sound. The procedures for health and safety are in place for the very large majority of situations. Some of the few matters that are awaiting attention are included in the school development plan and some minor issues were brought to the school's attention during the inspection.

38. The school council, with the school's agreement and support, has been instrumental in achieving some improvements. However, members feel that they have not made enough progress with responses to some of their welfare-related representations, for example the short lunchtimes, girls' trousers and the fact that pupils have to ask for a key to use the toilets during lessons. This can be embarrassing, particularly for girls.

39. Pupils understand well how they are doing in their subjects through teachers' marking, and by attending progress review days. The advice, guidance and information they receive about their potential and realistic targets give them indicators on how to improve and the goals they are capable of reaching. Very good support is provided, for example a homework club, access to computers and extra tuition. Pupils also receive good advice and guidance about subject choices and what to expect in Years 10 and 11. The Connexions service, careers staff, colleges of further education and employers contribute much in helping pupils realise and prepare for opportunities beyond the school.

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

The school's partnership with parents is good. The school's partnership with the community is very good and its links with other schools and colleges are excellent.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very positive and confident about the school.
- The school works closely with primary schools to raise standards before the pupils transfer.
- Pupils develop a very good sense of responsibility for the wider community.
- Parents' involvement in the life of the school is limited.

### **Commentary**

40. Parents are very pleased with the quality of education and care that is provided. They are confident that their children achieve well. A very few parents expressed some concern

about pupils' behaviour, but the inspection showed that standards of behaviour contribute very positively to the quality of learning and that comparatively few pupils behave unacceptably.

41. Information for parents is mostly good, through newsletters, the interesting website and contact with pastoral staff. Annual reports lack some clarity and consistency across subjects and improvement targets are not sufficiently specific. Interim reports are helpful indicators of progress. There are enough opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress, and meetings are well attended. In the spring term the headteacher offers Year 11 pupils and their parents appointments in late afternoon sessions where the pupils' career plans and general progress are aired. This is a helpful arrangement.

42. Parents give good support to events that involve their own children. A few help at times in school. Although there is no association for them, parents take part in fund raising. Information evenings for parents are arranged. The school does not periodically survey all parents for their views on a range of issues but it takes account of responses at parents' evenings and via annual report returns.



43. All pupils carry out forms of community service, much of which is long term and often involves evening visits. Some contacts continue after pupils have left school. Elderly residents speak highly of the interest pupils show in them and the practical help they give. Members of the community offer advice and guidance to pupils under the direction of the chaplain. A substantial number of local residents, including some parents, attend computer classes weekly. Several local employers offer valuable support, particularly with work experience placements.

44. Primary schools receive exceptional support in several subjects; there is help with teaching, sharing of expertise between teachers, bridging projects, practical support and the use of resources. All this not only enriches the learning experiences of Years 5 and 6 pupils but help them to achieve better and make a really good start at secondary school. Leyland St Mary's pupils have built mobile bookcases for a primary school. Older pupils have received training and lead after school clubs for younger pupils. School events are mutually supported.

45. Arrangements with colleges of further education include vocational courses for pupils and advice and guidance on Post 16 opportunities. The close ties with Runshaw College and the Catholic, Newman College work well, and most pupils go on to one of these two places. The school's links with other secondary schools are most effective and worthwhile. South Ribble headteachers have generated a culture of mutual support which benefits pupils in all the schools. The school also provides successful placements for graduate training teachers.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management overall are very good. The work of the governing body is good.**

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The headteacher has a perceptive understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Departmental leadership and management are good throughout the school and often very good.
- Performance management is now fully in place and staff take advantage of opportunities for professional development.
- The governing body provides good support, although it has not considered how it wants the school to develop in the long term.
- Financial management is very good and the school gives very good value for money.

### **Commentary**

46. The headteacher took up post just before the previous inspection and since then he has steered the school forward very well. He has a perceptive understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and knows the teaching expertise of his staff extremely well. With one deputy head and one assistant headteacher, the leadership team is small but effective, and other senior managers, for example the Key Stage 3 strategy manager, contribute significantly to its deliberations. The newly appointed deputy head, who took up post just before the inspection, has quickly grasped the areas of school management and direction where he can contribute expertise and experience. The

assistant headteacher, well supported by year co-ordinators and form tutors, provides a valued oversight of pastoral matters and is always ready to offer pupils advice and support.

47. Leadership and management are good in almost all departments, very good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, and outstanding in ICT. In the most successful subjects the heads of department share their teaching expertise with colleagues and have established good teamwork which greatly improves the quality of pupils' learning. Sharing of good practice is, however, restricted because some heads of department do not have enough time to monitor teaching within their departments. Occasionally, the impact of the library as a resource for learning is held back because the computer suite is often used for ICT lessons. The librarian cannot, for example, guide pupils to use the networked catalogue in English lessons. There is no formal structure for the librarian to liaise with heads of departments, for example about book orders. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very experienced.

48. At whole school and subject level, the analysis of data and results is carried out well and is used to identify pupils who are underachieving, to set targets for pupils, and to monitor performance by teaching group and ability levels. This has improved since the last inspection. The headteacher uses the outcomes of data analysis intelligently and perceptively observes that there is no clear correlation between what might be considered to be imaginative and exciting teaching and the achievement of the best results. The headteacher is keen to weigh up the balance between teaching to pass examinations and teaching that pupils find enjoyable.

49. The racial equality policy rightly starts with the statement that the pupils at Leyland St Mary's are predominantly white. So far, too little has to been done to check that all departments do as much as possible to promote pupils' understanding of other ethnic and faith cultures. The school is fully aware of the need to check the gender balance of teaching groups and to give fair access to the curriculum for all. Only in physical education is there an imbalance, because dance is offered only to girls. It is of concern that teachers do not all respond in the same way when girls ask to leave lessons to go to the toilet.

50. The governing body has taken a positive approach to performance management, and procedures are good. They have contributed to the improvement in the standard of teaching. The headteacher and governing body work hard to attract new staff and offer a good training and development programme. Good arrangements are in place for the induction of new and newly qualified staff. Management of the recruitment and retention of teaching staff is good.

51. The governing body provides good support for the school, and its members bring considerable relevant expertise to their work, for example in finance or education. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and recognise that it has achieved much as a result of its technology specialism. The chair of governors values the fact that the age range of the staff is now wide and he is astute in his contributions to key appointments. Governors have been fully involved with the significant developments in technology and the wider curriculum.

52. The chair of governors has a straightforward vision for the school, focused on overcoming the continual tightening of the budget and the restricted funds for the planned developments and refurbishment, which are needed. As pupils' achievement is now consistently well above average, the time is right for the governors to consider how they will meet their determined aim to address 'the needs of the non-average children even better'. They have not considered in depth how they wish the school to evolve over the next five to ten years; their lack of long-term strategic planning was mentioned in the previous report. The relatively weaker provision and standards in the performing arts is an area that merits the governors' consideration.

53. Financial management is very good. Funds are allocated efficiently and effectively to departments to allow them to implement their development programmes. The money which supports the school's technology specialism has been used particularly well, as evident in the performance of the design and technology and ICT departments and the beneficial collaboration, at many levels, with primary schools. Governors are fully involved in budget work, and spending patterns are monitored closely and successfully. Best value principles are applied rigorously to ensure the most effective use of the school budget; governors do not always take the lowest bid but evaluate the best quality deal for the school. The recent audit recommendations have been fully put into effect.

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

<b>Income and expenditure (£)</b>		<b>Balances (£)</b>	
Total income	2,419,751.00	Balance from previous year	45,194.00
Total expenditure	2,400,551.00	Balance carried forward to the next	64,394.00
Expenditure per pupil	3,027.00		

54. The school's effectiveness has improved well since its last inspection. Year 7 English, mathematics and science sets are now organised differently from before and work reasonably well. Data is used intelligently to give pupils targets and monitor their progress. There is now no significant gap between boys' and girls' performance. Technical support for design and technology and ICT has increased, although art still has no help. The library has a full-time and a part-time librarian. Most of the minor weaknesses identified in the last report have been addressed, including those related to health and safety. However, other minor health and safety issues that require attention were brought to the school's notice during the present inspection.

### **WORK-RELATED LEARNING**

Provision for work-related learning (WRL) is **satisfactory**.

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

- Valuable WRL topics are studied in science, design and technology and ICT.
- There is a very good range of vocational courses which broaden many pupils' appreciation of the world of work, although performing arts courses are not offered.
- Work experience, consisting of two weeks for each pupil, is well organised and worthwhile.

#### **Commentary**

55. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 study science, design and technology and ICT, and through these subjects they are introduced to the world of work particularly well. In science, for example, pupils study such topics as the treatment of metals linked to their uses in the home, or how vaccinations are made to counteract disease. Industrial links, outside speakers and competitions in design and technology lessons raise pupils' awareness of the complexities of the modern world. Teachers strengthen pupils' cognitive skills in ICT, and many tasks relate to complex real life situations, such as sequencing operations for a garage or evaluating chip and pin technology and credit card fraud. Factory laws and trade unions in the past are mentioned in history, but the school has not yet carried out an survey to establish where WRL is emphasised through subjects. Several heads of department have not considered WRL at all, although teachers cover some relevant areas in topics linked with citizenship.

56. The school offers several valuable vocational courses for GCSE and GNVQ (see paragraphs 114 to 116). Pupils following the NVQ courses off-site, in health and beauty, catering, and the built environment, mainly chose them because they wanted to move into jobs after leaving school. A few pupils are considering taking higher level NVQs in the future. All pupils have ICT skills suitable for the world of work and several choose to continue studying ICT. One WRL area of the curriculum that the school does not offer is in the performing arts. For example, there are no media studies, dance or drama courses.

57. Preparation for work experience is thorough and afterwards pupils evaluate what they have learned. In discussions with pupils, several confirmed that they were considering further education or training related to their placements. The careers programme (see paragraph 39) focuses pupils' thoughts on how their future education will affect their working lives. It is made quite clear to pupils where qualifications lead in terms of future employment.

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

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Standards are well above average	Pupils achieve very well
Teaching is very good	Learning is very good
Leadership is very good	Management is good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Test results and GCSE results are well above average.
- Teachers successfully help pupils to learn independently.
- Pupils are eager to learn and are very responsive.
- Pupils enjoy drama but have few opportunities for it.
- The English department does not have easy access to computers.

#### Commentary

55. The national test results for Year 9 in 2004 were well above average, and a significant improvement on the previous year. Over half the pupils reached the higher level, Level 6 and above, compared to just over a third in 2003. GCSE results in English language and English literature in 2004 were well above average. Over 70 per cent of pupils attained A\*- C grades in these subjects and 26 per cent of pupils attained A\*/A grades in English literature, which was taken by practically all the year group. Pupils' attainment on entry is average, so they make very good progress to achieve these results. Most pupils can write at length, using complex sentences in well-ordered paragraphs. They read well and enjoy expressing their ideas in class.

58. Teaching and learning were very good in half the lessons seen during the inspection. In these cases, teachers' very good insight into pupils' abilities enabled them to plan lessons which combined thoughtful structure with imaginative content, excitement and independent learning. To generate discussion about the reliability of evidence, Year 8 pupils successfully explored how fact and opinion may be deceptively mingled; they achieved this by using a card sorting game about levels of belief in ghosts and dragons. Year 11 pupils studying *Lord of the Flies* used an artist's impression of the island to analyse how the action of the novel became symbolic. The teacher's instructions to Year 7 pupils learning about simile and metaphor were full of wit, evoking delighted and disciplined responses. Reading *Of Mice and Men* with a low ability Year 11 group, the teacher judged perfectly when to ask questions that challenged pupils' understanding as well as reinforcing their knowledge.

59. Teachers swiftly make links between the material being studied and wider experiences, alluding freely but appropriately to history, geography, law, or politics. This broadens pupils' horizons and stimulates them to volunteer their own ideas. Teachers refer to moral and spiritual concerns thoughtfully, and this contributes to the pupils' very good

attitudes. Teachers allow generous time to encourage dialogue and debate; pupils respond with maturity and confidence. Where teaching is less effective, lesson plans are not imaginatively conceived or well ordered, the teachers' questions do not encourage pupils to explain their answers, and the pace is slow.

60. At its best, teachers' assessment of work is very good. Teachers analyse and interpret information rigorously to plan their teaching. They invite pupils' own judgements about their work and encourage them to comment on each other's. Teachers pay detailed attention to individual pupils' progress and provide focused support. They make lively, constructive comments on written work and give clear advice on how to improve, though this practice is not consistent. In the past, some written work was not marked, or marked only with bland comments. Three of the lessons seen were not planned to match pupils' different needs, with the result that not all pupils' learned well.

61. The curriculum is well balanced, as it allows teachers to choose materials to match pupils' interest, including those elements of the Key Stage 3 Strategy which they judge will be effective. Opportunities for learning through drama are poor. Although statutory requirements are met, the small classrooms make it difficult for teachers to develop pupils' understanding of drama texts through practical experience. It is not easy for pupils to use ICT in lessons, as the department does not have its own computers.

62. The head of department has built a very effective team which, by knowing pupils' abilities, is focused on ensuring that all pupils match or exceed their capability. Teachers consistently and regularly hold discussions with individual pupils, both informally and through structured mentoring and monitoring sessions. Despite much valuable informal work, there is little evidence at present of systematic monitoring of teaching and day-to-day marking and assessment.

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

63. Pupils' literacy skills are well above average, as a result of the way in which the Key Stage 3 Strategy has been developed and applied consistently over the last three years. Staff in all subjects are given detailed analyses of pupils' individual learning styles, and specific areas of focus for improving literacy each year. They use this information when planning their teaching, so pupils are provided with varieties of writing frames, key words and opportunities to develop the skills of skimming and scanning text. Pupils can transfer information from textbooks into their own words rather than copy. They use and spell technical words accurately and are encouraged to extend vocabulary. Pupils talk and listen very well to staff and to one another. They are given many opportunities to present ideas and evaluate work in class, and do so with confidence. In business studies one Year 11 class decided impromptu to make a formal presentation for the benefit of a visitor; in a Year 10 physical education lesson pupils took responsibility for explaining topics to the class; an ICT lesson was structured to enable pupils to learn how to carry ideas from one group to another.

64. There are literacy lessons for those pupils who need help with reading and writing. They receive intense periods of support, and paired reading in the library, which the pupils enjoy despite the short amount of time. They go enthusiastically to a monthly Reading Club, where they read and discuss fiction in an atmosphere of celebration. Several departments make very good use of book boxes from the library; and the school's own 'Big Read' attracts widespread support from pupils. The management of literacy is very good, and staff are kept in touch with initiatives through the research and development group.

The school has recently been judged a Leading Literacy School. There is very good literacy practice in almost all departments, though systematic monitoring of practice is lacking in geography and physical education.



## French and Spanish

Overall provision is **good**.

Standards are above average in Years 7 to 9 and well above average in GCSE classes	Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE classes
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is good	Management is very good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- GCSE results in French and Spanish are well above average.
- Teaching is lively, imaginative and thorough.
- Relationships are good and lessons are orderly and purposeful.
- The numbers taking a modern foreign language in years 10 and 11 are very low. In these years the school offers no courses except GCSE.

### COMMENTARY

65. Contrary to the national picture, boys commendably reach standards almost as high as those of girls by the end of Year 9, a reflection of the good teaching. In 2004 almost half the pupils who took GCSE French gained A or A\* grades, and in Spanish more pupils gained A\* than any other grade. However, numbers taking these languages are very small. In both languages, the most able pupils write at length, using several different tenses accurately and expressing a range of opinions and ideas. They can pick out gist and detail in complex passages. Although many pupils speak hesitantly, they use accurate grammar and a wide vocabulary.

66. Teachers plan lively and interesting lessons in which well-sequenced activities allow pupils to progress rapidly. Clear schemes of work and effective use of tests mean that long-term progress is also good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as others. The most able pupils are successfully challenged to reach high standards. There is virtually no difference between boys' and girls' achievement. The very good relationships in lessons contribute well to pupils' learning. Lessons are lively and purposeful, and teachers use games, songs, competitions, and hands-on activities to make lessons stimulating. They speak French or Spanish as a matter of course, which sets a really good tone to which pupils respond well. Teachers make some use of ICT but pupils do not use computer software or the Internet enough; more use would raise their motivation. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities in reading to exercise initiative and take responsibility for their own learning. Neither can pupils listen independently, for example on headphones or on computers, and decide what to listen to and how many times to play it.

67. The department's organisation and planning are thorough and detailed, and the head of department monitors other teachers' work carefully. Teachers analyse test results closely, determinedly focusing on raising standards. Teachers share ideas and have undergone training which has led to improvements in the classroom. However, the small number of pupils choosing a language in Years 10 and 11 is a cause for concern. The school offers no courses except GCSE. There are, for example, no vocational courses, which would complement the school's technology specialism.

68. The department's development plan is not sharply focused, for example on how it will attract more pupils to study French or Spanish after Year 9, or make more use of ICT. The

school library has a few materials for pupils to use independently, but pupils rarely use them. As at the last inspection, pupils work hard, listen carefully, answer readily, and work well together. Teachers still speak French or Spanish most of the time, and effectively. Teaching is now monitored more consistently. Pupils' use of ICT is still underdeveloped, and numbers taking a language in Key Stage 4 are still low.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Standards are well above average in Years 7 to 9 and above average in Years 10 and 11	Pupils achieve very well in Years 7 to 9 and well in Years 10 and 11
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is very good	Management is very good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the department is imaginative and creative.
- Pupils achieve very well because teachers make sure that work matches their abilities.
- Homework is planned well to build on work covered in lessons.
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils contribute to good learning.

### Commentary

69. Pupils enter the school with average mathematical skills. The results of Year 9 tests in 2004 were well above average, reflecting the very good progress pupils make. Higher attaining pupils do particularly well; the percentage reaching the highest levels is above average. The trend over the last few years has shown consistent improvement. This year, boys' results were better than those of girls for the first time, partly reflecting their slightly higher standards on entry. GCSE results in 2004 were above average; girls did better than boys. These results were slightly lower than in previous years. Practically all the small group of higher attaining pupils who took GCSE in Year 10 attained A\*/A grades. Similarly high results were attained by 18 Year 11 pupils who took GCSE statistics.

70. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work, and books are usually neat. There is no difference in the quality of boys' and girls' work. Higher attaining pupils work well and are given tasks which provide challenge for the most able. Pupils in a Year 11 top set showed high standards when drawing graphs of complex mathematical functions, made easier by the effective use of an electronic whiteboard by the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well and achieve as well as others; teaching is carefully geared to their needs, and learning support assistants provide valuable help. In a Year 9 special educational needs class, a student teacher, working with the class teacher and two learning support assistants, encouraged pupils to draw pi graphs. Many of them completed this successfully. This is a higher than expected standard of work, and pupils gained greatly in confidence as a result.

71. During the inspection teaching was at least good in over two-thirds of lessons, although there was one unsatisfactory lesson. Teachers know their subject well and their lessons often move fast, providing the right level of challenge. Teachers explain work clearly and focus on those pupils who find it difficult to understand new material, so they achieve as well as others. The very good relationships underpin the pupils' success in

understanding; they learn very well because they listen and play a full part. They are prepared to ask and answer questions and often take responsibility for their learning. In a very good Year 8 lesson pupils were handed pieces of card and scissors and, from a knowledge of the area of a rectangle, worked out for themselves the formula for the area of a triangle. Pupils say that they enjoy mathematics and this is obvious from the enthusiasm they show in lessons.

72. Following a manageable and regular programme of testing in all years, teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and record marks carefully, comparing them with predicted targets. This allows them to check that all pupils are achieving as well as they could. Teachers mark books well, with constructive comments which help pupils to learn. Homework is a strength as it is a logical extension of what pupils have learned in lessons.

73. The department knows where it is going, and the head of department ensures that there is always something new to move it forward. There have been some particularly successful projects in recent years. One of these was the CAME programme, which develops pupils' mathematical skills, and another was the forming of fast track classes in Year 9, which allow pupils to take GCSE in Year 10. A third was the introduction of a sophisticated system for tracking pupils' progress. The head of department leads such initiatives and is thus a very good role model for the department. Teachers use data projectors well. They also use the interactive whiteboard imaginatively. One teacher finished a lesson with a 'graphical aerobics' session in which the pupils physically made the shape of the graphs they had drawn. This fun session reinforced what pupils had learned. Since the last inspection there has been improvement in standards, teaching, leadership and management.

### Mathematics across the curriculum

74. Careful revision of number skills is a feature of many mathematics lessons. Many start with a class activity which involves pupils manipulating numbers in complex problems, without calculators or paper. Pupils' use of numeracy in other subjects is very good. In food technology, for example, Year 7 pupils measure out quantities accurately, and Year 10 pupils calculate proportions and work out costs efficiently. Pupils in physics carry out complex calculations such as kinetic and potential energies. and in all science subjects pupils plot graphs competently. Pupils draw graphs and analyse statistics competently in history, geography and GCSE physical education. Statistical work features regularly in ICT, particularly in spreadsheets, and pupils are confident to measure accurately in resistant materials, engineering and electronics.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Standards are well above average in Years 7 to 9 and above average in Years 10 and 11	Pupils achieve very well in Years 7 to 9 and well in Years 10 and 11.
Teaching is very good	Learning is very good
Leadership is very good	Management is very good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' enthusiasm and hard work complement the department's very good teaching.

- Lessons are well structured to help pupils learn in logical steps.
- The department works as a committed and well focused team.
- Teachers do not use the outcome of marking and tests in enough depth to tell pupils how to make progress.
- There is not enough good quality visual material to stimulate pupils' interest in the subject.

## **Commentary**

75. National test results for Year 9 in 2004 were well above average. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level and above has increased over the past three years but the percentage at the higher level, Level 6, has fluctuated. Double award GCSE results were average despite the fact that 30 higher ability pupils took the separate sciences; their results in biology, chemistry and physics were above the national averages. Over 50 per cent of pupils attained A\*/A grades in biology and physics but fewer than 20 per cent in chemistry.

76. Pupils have a very good work ethic and learn extremely well when teachers give them challenging tasks and ask questions which make them think. Well chosen questions helped lower ability pupils in Year 9 to come up with a range of factors which would make an electro-magnet pick up more paper clips. Pupils carry out investigations skilfully and successfully, and most of them

keep complete and accurate records. Teachers encourage them to write notes which explain their understanding in their own words. A small minority of pupils do not respond to the teachers' instructions to complete or correct the work in their notebooks, so they do not learn well and make unsatisfactory progress.

77. Higher attainers in GCSE classes are very good at articulating their knowledge and understanding from previous lessons; for example, Year 11 pupils explained rates of reaction and reversibility at a very high level. Pupils respond well to exercises that help build their literacy skills combined with interesting ways to learn. In a Year 9 lesson on the human circulatory systems, pupils highlighted key words and phrases in a text and then put the key points together. This developed their understanding most effectively.

78. The department has a very effective programme linking Leyland St Mary's science curriculum with the science covered in primary schools. As a result Year 7 pupils make progress immediately. This momentum is maintained throughout Years 7 to 9, as teaching is very good and pupils are enthusiastic. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as others, carry out investigations well and enjoy discussing issues, for example acid rain in a Year 9 lesson. Higher attainers following the separate sciences make outstanding progress in biology and very good progress in physics. They do not achieve so well in chemistry, as teaching is less challenging and stimulating. Pupils following the double award course make reasonable progress overall. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not set high enough expectations, and some of their methods and the materials they use, such as poorly designed work sheets, are not stimulating.

79. During the inspection, teaching was very good in over half the lessons seen and excellent in one lesson. In the best lessons teachers set clear objectives, keep the lessons moving at a good pace and establish an excellent rapport with pupils. When pupils are encouraged to work together and have to work things out for themselves independently they learn especially well. Year 7 pupils enjoyed working in groups unaided, discussing their previous knowledge to come up with key points about acid and alkalis. With only 50 minute lessons, some practical investigations have to be completed fast. This means there is not always enough time to review and reflect on what has been learned.

80. The head of department has created a very good team spirit and a high level of shared responsibility and organisation. Technical support is very good and helpful. The department has its own computer suite, and data logging equipment is beginning to improve the quality of investigation work. The development of the school's Extranet will allow students to access work from home. Extra-curricular provision is very good, with enthusiastic pupils able to gain bronze and silver CREST awards, which gives them added creative challenge and stimulus. Since the last inspection there has been improvement in behaviour, standards, the clarity of learning objectives in lessons and provision in ICT.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **excellent**.

Standards are well above average in Years 7 to 9 and very high in Years 10 and 11	Pupils' achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9 and excellent in Years 10 and 11
Teaching is excellent	Learning is excellent
Leadership is excellent	Management is excellent
Improvement since the last inspection has been excellent	

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent leadership and excellent management of the team produce excellent teaching which inspires pupils.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes to work and respond enthusiastically to demanding work, with the result that their learning and achievement is of the highest quality.
- The higher than average investment in staff, time, accommodation, hardware and software has been an important factor in the department's success.
- Assessment is used as an excellent tool for guiding pupils' learning, so that all pupils achieve their potential.
- Links with industry, especially for vocational ICT, are underdeveloped.

## Commentary

81. Targets set for Year 9 performance in 2004 were well above national expectations, and were exceeded by a large margin, as they were in 2003. Targets for 2005 are higher still and are already being achieved in some classes. In addition, one Year 10 class is taking GCSE in 2005, with confident estimates, confirmed during the inspection, that pupils will attain A\* to C grades. GCSE results in 2004 were significantly above average, with girls doing slightly better than boys. Boys' performance, compared to 2003, improved by a greater margin than that of the girls because the department had successfully focused on improving boys' learning. A Year 10 class took GCSE and all of the pupils gained A\* to C grades. All pupils achieve at least grade C in Year 11, including pupils who take alternative courses, some of which are the equivalent of four GCSE grades. Staff and pupils are rightly proud of their achievement.

82. Standards are so high because teaching is very effective and the number of ICT lessons is generous. The team of teachers has an excellent knowledge of ICT, plans work meticulously and uses assessment very well to meet the needs of each pupil. In a most successful Year 9 lesson, pupils learned how to use a Gantt chart to analyse the making of a cup of tea, producing the sequence in an interactive chart summarising how this is done. With the teacher making excellent use of time, pupils analysed the manufacture of a settee, using a Gantt chart to plot the complex operation. A second teacher, who was well briefed, assisted with the large class and made a very good contribution to the pupils' excellent learning.

83. The ICT department offers an outstanding choice of courses, all leading to ICT qualifications, so that all pupils have the chance to achieve their personal best. Pupils receive guidance on which course to attempt, based on excellent assessment records which are produced after all the information from Years 9 to 11 has been analysed. Many pupils take examinations one year early, which is possible only because they and their teachers are fully committed to rapid progress and success. In Year 11, pupils show a love of learning and become increasingly confident to learn independently. For example, one very capable group analysed the advantages and disadvantages of a milkman's round, using a spreadsheet which they completed quickly by sharing ideas. Another group used spreadsheet information to operate a 14-screen cinema. Such levels of challenge are exceedingly high, but pupils manage to analyse strengths and weaknesses well and write good summary reports.

84. The ICT curriculum has been structured thoughtfully, with aspects of the Key Stage 3 Strategy blended with units of work that the department has found successful in the past. With large classes, and computers and servers giving out large amounts of heat, the lack of

air conditioning is a problem in several ICT areas. The head of department is skilful in bringing out each teacher's strengths. Leadership is excellent and an exceptionally able team has been built up. Management is of the highest order, and an example of it is the integration of the two professionally qualified technicians who apply a wide range of skills. They run a large, diverse but highly reliable network, assist in class, and help to prepare very detailed development plans for the school. Improvement since last inspection has been excellent. To continue this, the head of department is focused on developing cross-curricular ICT further, and establishing links with partner primary schools.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. Many subjects use ICT in lessons. Pupils' competency is excellent, and they apply skills in new situations confidently. Nine data projectors, of which two are coupled to an interactive white board, have been fitted in school. The ICT team provides training for teachers each half term, and the two professional technicians are readily available to train staff. Overall provision for ICT across the curriculum is good. Design and technology has its own suite, and computer-aided design and manufacture, control technology, and design facilities are excellent. Use of ICT in art, on the other hand, is unsatisfactory. Importantly, the resource centre has a full suite of computers available after school so that no pupil is disadvantaged by not having access to computers and/or the Internet. The school has a very good website and is rapidly developing an Extranet accessible to all, with the curriculum on-line. Homework set by several subjects is accessible on the Extranet.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Standards are average in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE classes	Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE classes
Teaching is satisfactory	Learning is satisfactory
Leadership is satisfactory	Management is satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory	

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Relationships are very good; pupils have positive attitudes to work, respect their teachers, and work hard for them.
- The system for assessing pupils' attainment in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory.
- In most lessons teachers use effective starters to capture pupils' interest quickly.
- The relatively new head of department is taking appropriate actions to raise standards and achievement.
- Some tasks set in lessons are mundane and do not demand enough of pupils.

### Commentary

86. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 because they are taught effectively, work hard and want to succeed. Very occasionally they do not achieve enough because teachers give them mundane tasks, or unclear instructions, with the result that they are neither motivated nor interested. Higher attainers can explain the impact of human activity on the physical landscape well, for example the causes and likely effects of global

warming. Pupils draw and label maps accurately and write well at length. Lower attainers' knowledge and understanding are often patchy and their mapping skills are weak. Before the appointment of a second specialist teacher in September 2004, staffing problems led to a decline in both standards and achievement. This has especially affected pupils now in Years 8 and 9. It also contributed to a decline in the number of pupils choosing geography for GCSE.

87. The percentage of pupils attaining GCSE grades A\* - C in 2003 was above average. Although the figure dropped in 2004, the percentage of A\*/A grades went up. At present only a small proportion of Year 11 pupils are working at an above average standard. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily because they do not give up if the work is difficult. Occasionally, when teachers do not encourage them to think for themselves, their progress, especially that of higher ability pupils, is



held back. Pupils of higher ability know, and describe accurately, a range of weather and climatic features. They recognise and use the correct terms to describe key physical features, for example of glaciated uplands. They identify these features on maps successfully, a task which lower attainers find difficult. Almost all pupils use grid references accurately.

88. There are good features of teaching in most lessons. Teachers use effective and often enjoyable ways to start lessons by using ICT, such as slowly uncovering pictures for Year 7 pupils to identify the location, or, in Year 11, getting pupils to pick a number and then name and explain the geographical feature hidden behind the number. When teachers use such interesting activities they capture pupils' interest quickly and pupils learn effectively and with enjoyment, especially when they are actively involved in discussion or group work. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and behave well, and in most lessons they do.

89. Since the previous inspection standards in Years 7 to 9 have declined and GCSE results have fluctuated, partly as a result of the staffing problems. However, there is clear evidence that with two specialist teachers working well together the department is now moving forward. The new head of department is focused on raising standards and improving achievement. The department uses field work and ICT well to support pupils' learning, although there are no computers for pupils to use and access to the ICT suites is not easy. At present, the system for assessing pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. It does not provide clear enough information for teachers to track pupils' achievement accurately.

## History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Standards are above average in Years 7 to 9 and well above average in GCSE classes	Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE classes
Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11	Learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11
Leadership is good	Management is good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results have been well above average for the last eight years.
- Very good teaching enables pupils to become independent learners who consistently achieve well.
- Lessons are very well planned to develop pupils' history skills and their understanding of the past.
- Pupils are very positive and mature in lessons because their teachers are very enthusiastic.
- Very good ICT support materials help pupils to make considerable progress in their homework and coursework.
- Opportunities for multicultural development are underdeveloped.

## Commentary

90. Pupils enter the school with average historical knowledge, understanding and skills. In 2004, teachers correctly assessed Year 9 standards as being above average, which reflects good progress. Results in GCSE in 2004 were well above average, with 25 per cent of pupils gaining A\*/A grades. Boys attained higher grades than girls. GCSE results have been high for several years, reflecting the department's consistently very good work.



91. In Years 10 and 11 most pupils analyse complex source materials very well. In lessons, pupils quickly realise that they are expected to work hard. They also find that learning about history is enjoyable. Lessons are very well planned to ensure that pupils learn independent study skills. When discussing why Russia and America were suspicious of each other in 1945, the teacher very skilfully engaged the pupils in work that showed their extensive knowledge of the modern world and enabled them to relate this knowledge to the period they were studying.

92. All teachers encourage groups to share ideas, question one another and develop personal views about issues. Most pupils are quickly able to identify the differences between primary and secondary source materials. They clearly understand the need to question the reliability and validity of each source. Thus, when asked, they point out that historians do not always have the correct answers to questions. In a Year 9 lesson on the development of towns, pupils used this understanding very well to discuss the benefits and disadvantages of town dwelling. By Year 11, pupils' GCSE essays show that many of them have high level analytical skills, and their coursework on evacuation in World War II and on the Vietnam war is of a very good standard. They are well informed about propaganda and the need to assess the origin and background of source materials.

93. The good leadership and management of the department ensure that pupils are very enthusiastic about history lessons. Pupils are confident that they are taught very well. All the teachers mark very carefully, with well written comments showing pupils how they can improve their work. However, pupils do not always fully understand what they have to do to produce work at a higher level. The well developed GCSE course is increasingly popular. Year 11 pupils particularly appreciate the considerable amount of time teachers give outside lessons to help them tackle examination work. Leadership is well focused on maintaining the department's high standards. Consequently, monitoring of both teaching and learning is thorough and pupils' work is scrutinised regularly. This ensures that GCSE results remain well above average. Pupils use ICT, particularly the Extranet material, very well. Teachers build up pupils' historical vocabulary very well in lessons. However, in all years, teachers do not focus enough on developing pupils' multicultural awareness through the topics studied.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

Standards are above average in Years 7 to 9 and well above average in Years 10 and 11	Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and very well in Years 10 and 11
Teaching is very good	Learning is very good
Leadership is very good	Management is very good
Improvement since the last inspection has been excellent	

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The experienced team of specialist teachers and support staff work together very effectively.
- The department is successful in consistently raising standards and GCSE results. It uses its excellent resources very well.
- The department has an excellent learning ethos.
- The superb learning partnership between teachers and pupils makes the most of pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour.
- Excellent progress has been made since the last inspection.
- The written guidance on what pupils need to do next is not always detailed enough.

## Commentary

94. Pupils join the school with average technical skills, though many have never used basic tools for construction and have limited experience of formal drawing and design techniques. The school's development of pupils' creative skills and practical capability has significantly improved since the previous inspection. Standards at the end of Year 9 have increased steadily. GCSE results, including the percentage of pupils attaining A\*/A grades, were high in 2003 and 2004. All pupils who took GNVQ engineering were successful. Work seen during the inspection confirmed these standards.

95. Achievement is very good, as most pupils develop their skills, knowledge and understanding rapidly. In most areas design work is very good and pupils explain and execute their ideas to a very high standard, as was seen in the very proficient way in which Year 8 pupils machined their nightwear designs. Broad ranging and thorough research is carried out to develop initial design ideas; for example, the high quality research for Year 10 GNVQ engineering projects makes good use of a range of different CD players to review production techniques. In food technology, students' evaluation of their practical work is also excellent, and they draw on a good understanding of technical vocabulary to help them explain the development of their food projects.

96. Pupils taking vocational courses at local colleges (see paragraph 56) learn well and make very good progress. The professional help and support given to them is extensive and effective, and often through sessions outside school hours. Pupils' achievement is significantly enhanced by the wide range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and regional challenges. The annual Master Chef competition is extremely popular and a school team won the 2004 Vertical Challenge held in Blackpool.

97. Much of the teaching and learning seen during the inspection was very good or excellent. Teaching is significantly enhanced by the services of the very good technicians and learning support assistants. A key strength is the way in which teachers encourage good learning habits and develop pupils' basic skills. Good practice in design is constantly reinforced by pupils sharing their designs, such as the graphic modelling of computer generated trophies in Year 9.

98. Where teaching was outstanding, as in computer control, textiles, resistant materials and food product development, teachers were very skilled in encouraging pupils to make their own learning decisions. Learning is strongly supported in this way, and is most effective in Years 10 and 11. In most technology lessons, pupils' communication skills are improved by group presentations and the use of word banks. These activities encourage them to use technical and descriptive words when analysing their products. Teachers mark work regularly, but do not always give sufficient attention to written guidance on how students might improve their work.

99. Despite the absence of the head of department during the inspection, his very good leadership and management were evident. The team approach to developing and improving the subject is one of the department's strengths. Consequently, results have improved significantly since the previous inspection. The department gives full attention to health and safety matters and is well placed to maintain its 'cracking' progress and achieve even higher standards. The recent refurbished technology area is outstanding and is very well equipped with a variety of excellent resources to meet the current and future demands of the curriculum.

100. The strong links set up with local schools benefit Year 7 pupils significantly. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their creative work, apply themselves fully in lessons, and some show exceptionally good independent study skills when they research information outside lessons. Their willingness to share and help each other is another significant factor in the high quality of learning. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and are very well supported by teachers and learning support assistants.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

### Art

Provision in art is **good**.

Standards are average in Years 7 to 9 and above average in GCSE classes	Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and very well in GCSE classes
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is good	Management is good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in 2004 were significantly above average.
- Pupils benefit from skilful personal tuition and guidance.
- GCSE pupils use their sketch books well for research and development.
- The full potential of ICT to help learning is underdeveloped in Years 7 to 9.
- The single lesson a week in Years 7 to 9 restricts the breadth of what is taught.

### Commentary

101. Pupils' work in Year 9 represents good achievement for the majority, considering their knowledge, understanding and skills when they entered the school. These standards are achieved because the teaching is good and pupils are very positive about the subject. Lower ability pupils and those with special educational needs do well. Pupils of all abilities work from direct observation and research to develop their art; they use line and tone effectively in drawings. In 2004, 20 per cent of pupils attained A\*/A grades; boys and girls did equally well. There has been an upward trend since the last inspection because good leadership has given the subject a clear sense of direction.

102. In the GCSE classes there is no significant variation in how pupils of differing abilities achieve. Sketch books are used to record research, and pupils' work shows how they absorb important movements in art and design or in the work of particular artists. Teachers are skilful at knowing how to encourage pupils, whatever their ability. They give pupils good scope to demonstrate their personal interests, ideas and responses to their own and other cultures. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and benefit from the teachers' individual attention.

103. Teaching and learning are most effective in the GCSE classes because teachers use a greater variety of teaching ideas and assessment procedures, so pupils can discuss their achievements and set targets for future development. Very good teaching was observed when pupils were actively debating their work, and were clear about their immediate learning objectives. When teachers use sharp questioning all pupils respond very well. Teachers are aware of pupils' different capabilities and often meet their needs through good individual tuition. In Years 7 to 9 assessment procedures do not always do enough to encourage pupils to move forward by telling them at what National Curriculum Level they are working and what they need to do to improve. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used enough in Years 7 to 9. The limited amount of time - one lesson a week - restricts the different materials pupils can use, for example working with clay for three-dimensional study.

104. The teachers work well as a team and share their good subject knowledge and expertise. Pupils learn skills and then develop them because teachers have good links with artists and art work outside school. The head of department carries out good monitoring by observing lessons and sampling work. The absence of technical support restricts the range of materials that can be taught. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, most noticeably in GCSE results and in pupils' knowledge and understanding of artists and art movements.

## Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Standards are average in Years 7 to 9 and above average in GCSE classes	Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9 and well in GCSE classes
Teaching is satisfactory	Learning is satisfactory
Leadership is satisfactory	Management is good
Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory	

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE pupils achieve well.
- The number of keyboards and the quality of computer equipment has improved.
- Time for music lessons is limited in Years 7 to 9.
- Choral work and string playing are underdeveloped.
- There is only one practice room, and this hampers practical and ensemble work.

## Commentary

105. Although the overall standard of work in Years 7 to 9 is in line with expectations, its quality varies between classes. Given the limited amount of teaching time, and the fact that some pupils have done more music in primary school than others, most pupils make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 9 pupils play the keyboard quite well. Lower ability pupils do not always achieve well enough, as a small minority of them do not behave properly in lessons. Each year a few pupils take GCSE music and achieve well to gain above average results.

106. Teaching has several features of good practice. Practical work is emphasised well, mainly with the use of keyboards, and teachers encourage pupils to use the right musical terms when they analyse and listen to music. Pupils do not sing regularly, and they listen to only a limited amount of classical music or music by British composers. Occasionally in Years 7 to 9, lessons are less effective because they move too slowly, the work does not vary, and teachers do not tell pupils clearly what they are meant to learn. In most lessons teachers support pupils well and they respond by behaving well. Teaching is most effective in GCSE classes, where students' composition skills and subject knowledge improve significantly; teachers plan work well and pitch it at the right level for pupils' abilities and interests. Pupils' GCSE composition work with the use of ICT is a strength. They master how to record and play back, and manipulate their work well.

107. The head of department is positive and committed. The number of keyboards has improved since the last inspection, so both specialist rooms have sufficient. What has not increased is the amount of time for music lessons – just one 50 minute lesson a week. Instrumental teaching and practice, and group work in lessons, is difficult because there is only one practice room. The number of pupils learning instruments is about average for the

size of the school. though apart from the guitar no string tuition is offered. The worthwhile initiative whereby Leyland St Mary lends brass instruments to primary schools could serve as a model for this, because the school has stringed instruments which are not being used. Elements of some instrumental teaching are unsatisfactory.

108. The swing and concert bands continue to make an important contribution to the life of the school. The summer residential weekend for players in both bands is a most worthwhile and enjoyable experience for them. No choir or singing groups meet regularly, except for specific events, and singing is not included in enough lessons. With two specialist teachers the department is now in a good position to move forward: to build on its achievements, to increase the amount of singing, and to provide the option of lessons in stringed instruments.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

### Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Standards are above average in Years 7 to 9, average in Years 10 and 11, and well above average for GCSE pupils	Pupils achieve well. GCSE pupils achieve very well
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is good	Management is good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils have very good attitudes, work with interest and enthusiasm, and achieve well.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Many pupils participate and attain high standards.
- Teachers do not effectively assess work related to National Curriculum Levels, to inform Years 7 to 9 pupils about how well they are doing and how to improve.
- Units of work are too short, limiting pupils' progress in different activities.

### Commentary

109. Pupils enter the school with standards at expected levels for their age in some games and in gymnastics. In new activities such as hockey, basketball and badminton they reach expected levels by the end of Year 9, and therefore achieve well. In hockey and soccer in Year 7, pupils develop skills in controlling the ball and increase their knowledge about team play in these games. In Year 9 standards in soccer are average. There is a wide range of attainment. Higher attaining pupils have good skills and are confident. Average attaining pupils demonstrate many of these skills in practice situations but lose possession when challenged in games. No practical activities by non-GCSE pupils in Year 11 could be seen during the inspection. Standards in boys' basketball in Year 10 were sound. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as others, as they are fully included and join in practical activities well.

110. GCSE results in physical education in 2004 were well above average, which represents an improvement on the previous year. Over 90 per cent of pupils attained grades A\*- C, with over one third attaining A\*/A grades. Present standards in the GCSE classes are above average, particularly in swimming and badminton. GCSE pupils achieve very well. They reach high standards of performance in practical activities and have a good understanding of theoretical aspects of sporting performance. Pupils have a good understanding of health and skill-related fitness and use this knowledge well to produce personal exercise plans.

111. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which they use well to give detailed explanations and demonstrations. They usually plan and prepare lessons well. In the best lessons, practices are developmental, challenging, and well matched to pupils' abilities and skills, leading to good learning. Occasionally, practices are not sufficiently extended for higher attaining pupils. The length of lessons is short for this practical subject, and even shorter, for reasons beyond the department's control, when they start late or have to end early, for example in Year 7. Teachers do not assess pupils' performance enough during



lessons to help them understand how well they are doing and how they could improve their skills. Pupils enjoy lessons and have very good relationships with the teachers.

112. Schemes of work are in place, but with only six 50-minute blocks of lessons for separate activities it is hard for pupils to develop their skills to a high level. Boys do not have the same opportunities as girls in Years 7 to 9 as they have a different curriculum; dance is offered only to girls. Extra-curricular activities are good and are well supported. The department is committed to these practices and matches, and teachers from other departments give generously of their time to provide valuable support. Since the last inspection, GCSE results have improved and the school has been awarded Sportsmark status. The all-weather pitch is a great asset but its use by the school and the community has reduced the quality of the surface significantly; it will need replacing very soon.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

113. One **GNVQ business studies** lesson was sampled. In 2004 all pupils attained grades A\*- C. Present Year 11 pupils, having prepared a checklist, visited a large retail shopping mall to evaluate display and standards of merchandising. Pupils gained a good understanding of the principles of marketing techniques. They worked very well in groups, confidently building up a picture of their visit and then making very good presentations of their findings. The lesson was very well delivered to a calm and purposeful class, with a good repertoire of teaching and learning styles. Standards are above average and pupils achieve well.

114. **GNVQ Health and social care** was introduced for the first time in September 2004. The work seen during the inspection, in pupils' portfolios and in class work, was of a high standard. Teaching is very good, creating well structured, interesting and active learning for pupils. They achieve very well, responding with enthusiasm to the wide range of tasks. They are expected to take responsibility for building their knowledge and applying it to practical situations. The course includes work experience and practitioners coming in to share their expertise and experience.

115. One lesson in **GNVQ leisure and tourism** was seen during the inspection. Pupils' attainment is below what is expected but pupils are interested in the subject and are achieving well. Their knowledge of the reasons why tourists visit the United Kingdom is patchy. A minority have poor knowledge of the geography of Britain. Higher ability pupils explain satisfactorily reasons for tourism in the main UK cities and in areas such as Wales. Teachers use ICT effectively to help pupils' learning. Pupils use the Internet well to research websites suggested by their teacher, for example for data on tourism, and competently create graphs to record such data. Teaching is good and leads to good learning.

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

### **Personal, social and health education**

116. Most of the topics which foster pupils' PSHE are delivered through the religious education programme. Pupils clearly respond very well to this. They have plenty of time to discuss and debate issues, with three lessons a week in Year 7 and two lessons in all other years. The quality of care for others, seen particularly through service to their community and charitable fund-raising work, is exemplary. For pupils entering the school in Year 7 there is a very well organised induction

in which Year 11 pupils act extremely well as guardian angels for the younger pupils. Year 7 and 8 pupils commented very favourably on this.

117. As pupils move up the school they regularly explore many key issues about everyday life, through their religious education topics, several themed days, and the missions and chaplaincy work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, take a full part in these activities. The assemblies and tutorial sessions are used well to support them. Good organisation ensures that as pupils mature they are taught those major areas they need to consider. Younger pupils consider themes such as bullying and hygiene; Year 7 pupils particularly enjoy the themed day which they spend discussing relationships. A Year 7 lesson on overcoming personal fears was taught very well. It provided pupils with the right atmosphere for them to discuss issues that affected them. When pupils are older, sex education and drugs education are taught sensitively, partly through science lessons. In addition, many external speakers support this work extremely well and pupils clearly benefit from this.

## Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Standards are above average in Years 7 to 9 and well above average in Years 10 and 11	Pupils achieve well
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is satisfactory	Management is satisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils take an active role in the school's excellent community service work.
- A well-structured range of themed days develops pupils' awareness of 'good citizenship' very well.
- Whilst pupils are well taught through subjects, they are not always aware when they are particularly focusing on part of the citizenship programme of study.
- Pupils respond in a mature and extremely positive way to citizenship topics and activities.

### Commentary

118. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good progress in developing skills of communication through class discussions. Their involvement in community service is exceptional. By the end of Year 11, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of what citizenship means. They develop their understanding and skills very well through a wide range of subject-based experiences. They play an active role in the school community, through charity work, mock trials, extremely worthwhile community service and work placements.

119. Active citizenship in the school is very strong. Pupils' response to their citizenship work is excellent. The school council's leadership of fund-raising is particularly noteworthy. A wide range of topics within subjects, and specially planned days, stimulate pupils' interest and ensure a positive interest in key issues that affect their lives. During the inspection, in lessons specifically about citizenship, teachers planned very well and developed pupils' interest very skilfully. A lesson on conquering one's fears gave Year 7 pupils considerable confidence to express their personal views and work together to solve problems. Year 11 pupils gained very good understanding of basic economics when the teacher skilfully created a vibrant and enjoyable atmosphere for a survival game.

120. Teachers, particularly in religious education, English, science, history and geography, ensure that pupils learn key aspects of the citizenship curriculum. Pupils' self-confidence and discussion skills are well developed. Through active involvement in community service pupils learn

a considerable amount about good citizenship and neighbourliness. Chaplaincy work is particularly strong in developing pupils' awareness of the needs of others.

121. Teachers do not assess in enough detail how pupils are progressing Pupils do not always record what they have studied on the 'citizenship' page in their diaries, because teachers do not stress that particular topics include strong citizenship elements. Year 9 reports are satisfactory, but the identification of learning in citizenship is inadequate at present. There are very clear plans to ensure that Years 10 and 11 pupils cover the full citizenship programmes regardless of their option choices for GCSE. Assessment and reporting are satisfactory, but further work is necessary to ensure that all pupils record their learning and experiences in citizenship accurately.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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