

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MADELEY HIGH SCHOOL**

Madeley, Crewe

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124410

Headteacher: Bridget Gilson

Lead inspector: Carmen Markham

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> November – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2004

Inspection number: 268414

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Comprehensive  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll; 684

School address: Newcastle Road  
Madeley  
Crewe

Postcode: CW3 9JJ

Telephone number: 01782 297200  
Fax number: 01782 297222

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of Mr N Stonier  
governors:

Date of previous 26<sup>th</sup> April 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Madeley High School is a small mixed 11 to 16 comprehensive school situated in the village of Madeley in Staffordshire. It serves a wide catchment area consisting of several rural villages which formerly served the farming community but which have now become commuter villages. Many pupils take the bus to school, coming from both council and privately owned property. The level of social deprivation is low and few pupils are entitled to claim for free school meals. The school is popular and oversubscribed. There are no pupils in the school with English as an additional language but 16 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average.

The school was recently awarded the Inclusion Quality Mark and has achieved the Silver Arts Mark. The school has specialist school status for technology in partnership with Blackfriars School, a local school for pupils with physical difficulties.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1959 9	Carmen Markham	<i>Lead inspector</i>	
9160	Keith Baker	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
3332 4	Joanna Fullwood	<i>Team inspector</i>	English
3216 9	Bob O'Hagan	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics
5714	Francis Thornton	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science
2722 6	Richard Cribb	<i>Team inspector</i>	History, physical education
1540 7	Muriel Harrison	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography, citizenship
2198 1	Anthony McDermott	<i>Team inspector</i>	ICT, vocational education and work-related learning.
8360	Frederick Peacock	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music, expressive arts and special educational needs
4474	Ian Punter	<i>Team inspector</i>	Design and technology
2053 3	David Rogers	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art and design
3183 8	Martyn Williams	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern foreign languages and religious education

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education  
 Old Garden House  
 The Lanterns  
 Bridge Lane  
 London  
 SW11 3AD

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>3</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>6</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES</b>	<b>13</b>
Work-related learning	
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>31</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Madeley High School is a good and very inclusive school.** It is very well led by the headteacher. It achieves standards that are well above the national average, and the quality of its provision is enhanced by very good links with the local community. The school provides good value for money and its strengths far outweigh its weaknesses.

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

- The quality of the relationships between all members of the school community is a strength. It enables good learning to take place.
- The curriculum is innovative and the excellent provision for enrichment enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well.
- There is inconsistency in the quality and use of marking and assessment by teachers, so the needs of all pupils are not met. However, provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good and pupils benefit from the effective setting arrangements.
- The quality of the management of subject departments is inconsistent as there is no agreed approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and support provided for pupils' learning.
- Provision for lessons in information and communication technology (ICT) and citizenship is unsatisfactory. However, provision for information and communications technology across the curriculum is satisfactory.
- Pupils are very well cared for and very well prepared for the world of work through the excellent provision for work-related learning.
- Annual reports to parents are not sufficiently informative.

#### Change in effectiveness since the previous inspection

Progress since the previous inspection has been good. The school has been awarded technology college status in a very successful partnership with a local special school for pupils who have physical difficulties. This has considerably improved resources in the school, and the school's provision for pupils with SEN has benefited from opportunities that Madeley teachers have had to work alongside very experienced teachers of pupils with SEN. The development of the work-related learning curriculum has also been very good and has strengthened curriculum provision. Religious education now meets statutory requirements and the provision is very good. There have been very significant improvements in accommodation, although in art it is still unsatisfactory. The length of lessons has not been changed, but the school has taken steps to improve the lesson structure and the resources used to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met; this is not effective in all lessons, however. The quality of marking has not improved significantly and remains a key issue for the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**Standards achieved overall are well above the national average.** Results are consistently ahead of the national trend.

#### Year 11 results

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

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

Standards in Years 7 to 9 are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science, and high in comparison with the standards attained by pupils in similar schools. Achievement is good in most subjects. In Years 10 and 11 standards overall are also well above the national average in English, science, and most other subjects. In mathematics they are average, but in ICT they are below average. Standards attained in GCSE are in line with the standards achieved in similar schools. Overall achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good, but it is satisfactory in mathematics, design technology, and ICT. All pupils with SEN and higher attaining pupils achieve well, as the provision for these pupils is good, though in a small minority of lessons their needs are not met.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** They have good attitudes to their learning. Attendance is very good and pupils usually behave well, with the result that they make good progress.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good** and there are a number of significant strengths. The curriculum is good, and provision for enrichment activities is excellent. **The quality of teaching and learning is good** but the quality of marking and the use of assessment is satisfactory. Pupils are very well cared for and they receive good advice and guidance. There are very good partnerships with the community and other schools and colleges. Pupils are very well prepared for the world of work and further education.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The school is very well led by the headteacher, who has a very good vision for the school and works hard to implement it. She is supported by a good leadership team and good governors, who share her vision and carefully consider the priorities for the school before new strategies into practice. The governors have ensured that all statutory requirements are met. The management of the school is satisfactory, as there is a lack of consistency in implementing initiatives and developments.

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

Parents and pupils are very pleased with the work of the school and the opportunities it offers. They find that the school provides a welcoming and secure environment. They recognise the level of good support and care that is provided. They are proud of the standards achieved and the good range of links with the local community.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Develop the consistency of monitoring the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- Develop the quality and consistency of departmental management.

- Continue to improve the range of teaching styles used to ensure the engagement of all pupils in lessons, particularly in mathematics, ICT, design and technology and citizenship.
- Review and develop the quality of marking and the use of assessment to ensure that pupils are clear about the progress they are making, and to provide for the needs of all pupils.
- Ensure that reports to parents are sufficiently detailed so that they can help their children to achieve.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Standards are high at the end of Years 9 and 11 in relation to the national average point score. In 2003, standards were also high at the end of Year 9 in comparison with those of schools whose pupils achieved similar results at the end of Year 6. In 2003, the standards achieved by pupils taking their GCSE examinations were average in relation to those of schools where pupils had achieved similar results at the end of Year 9. The final average point score for 2004 has not been confirmed but is likely to be similar to that in 2003.

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

- Standards are well above the national average throughout the school. They remain consistently ahead of the national trend.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Standards in literacy and mathematics are good throughout the school.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress. In 2004, all these pupils in Year 11 left school with at least five GCSE pass grades, including in English and mathematics.
- Standards achieved by higher attaining pupils at the end of Years 9 and 11 reflect the work the school has undertaken to raise standards in this area.
- There is little difference between the overall performance of boys and girls in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 girls do a little better than boys overall, but boys do significantly better than boys nationally.

#### **Commentary**

##### **Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9)**

1. Pupils in Year 7 arrive in school with above average levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science. They make rapid progress in these subjects, so that by the end of Year 9 they attain well above average standards in national tests in all three subjects. They achieve very well in relation to their standards when they entered the school and in relation to other schools where pupils achieved similar scores at the end of Year 6. Pupils enter the school with average standards in ICT in Year 7. They make satisfactory progress, so that by the end of Year 9 their standards are average. Therefore, they do not make the rapid progress that they make in the three other core subjects. Standards of work seen in geography, history, modern foreign languages, and religious education were also judged to be good.

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

<b>Standards in:</b>	<b>School results</b>	<b>National results</b>
English	35.8 (35.3)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	38.2 (37.3)	35.4 (34.7)
science	35.9 (35.5)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 137 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

##### **Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11)**

2. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen as fast as the national trend. The percentage of five A\* to C grades has risen by 23 per cent and the percentage of five A\* to

G grades has risen by 13 per cent. Standards are well above average, and achievement is good in

most curriculum areas. Of particular note is the school's success in ensuring that all pupils leave school with a minimum of five A\* to G passes, including in English and mathematics. This is a strength of the school and reflects its climate for learning and inclusion. It also demonstrates the success of target setting and the commitment and motivation of pupils.

3. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above average in English and science. In both these subjects teaching is at least good. In mathematics, standards in 2004 are closer to the national average, as teaching is not as strong. In ICT they are below average, as the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Overall standards in design technology are well above average, but this hides the difference in the performance of the different material areas. Food technology and graphic products produce high standards, but standards are lower in resistant materials. There is little significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in most subjects. In subjects like English, where girls traditionally perform better, boys do achieve better than boys nationally.

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

	<b>School results</b>	<b>National results</b>
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	74 (63)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	98 (98)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (98 )	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	41.5 (38.9)	34.8 (34.7)

*There were 122 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Throughout the school the achievement of all groups of pupils is good. The support given to pupils with SEN in many lessons, and the very good liaison between teachers and learning support assistants, enables them to achieve well. Pupils with SEN are assessed on entry to Year 7, and clear targets and teaching programmes are devised for those who require additional help. All pupils, including the most able, benefit from the comprehensive programme for raising achievement that extends their learning and raises standards. Over 20 per cent of the GCSE grades are A\*/A, and in the three core subjects at the end of Year 9 the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels is high.

#### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes to work and to the life of the school are **good**. Behaviour is **good**. Attendance is **well above the national average** and punctuality is **good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good overall**.

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

- Pupils are well motivated and keen to learn.
- Relationships within the school community are very good.
- Pupils act maturely and respect the school environment.
- The personal development of pupils is good.
- Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall, but opportunities within lessons are limited.

#### **Commentary**

5. Most pupils, including those with SEN, enjoy their work. They are diligent and hard working. They are motivated to do their best and to impress their teachers. This was typified by the care and enthusiasm shown by Year 7 pupils making biscuits in a food technology lesson, and by Year 11 pupils practising volleyball in a GCSE physical

education lesson. Many pupils take full advantage of the rich extra-curricular activity of the school, such as its debating society, and of community responsibilities such as sports matches and charitable fund raising. As a result of their good attitudes pupils are learning and developing well. Attitudes are unsatisfactory only when teaching is not stimulating enough or pupils are not well managed.

6. Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are very good. This makes for a harmonious community. Pupils work well together in mixed gender pairs or groups. They listen well and respond constructively to one another's contributions. This was clearly evident in a Year 10 religious education lesson when the pupils, several of whom have individual learning plans, prepared together a fund-raising leaflet for Christian Aid. New pupils in Year 7 appreciate the support that they receive from Year 11 pupils when they first arrive at the school.

7. The school expects pupils to behave well and generally they do. In lessons most are attentive to their teacher's instructions, act maturely and value the school's rewards for good behaviour. A few pupils at times show a lack of respect for their teachers but this for the most part is confined to instances when the lesson itself is unsatisfactory. Pupils respect the environment and the school's property. Although movement around the school is made difficult because of the narrow corridors and stairways, most pupils act sensibly. Permanent exclusions are very rare and temporary exclusions are used sparingly. Some pupils and parents were concerned about bullying in the pre-inspection questionnaires. However, in discussion with inspectors, pupils said they did not regard bullying as a significant issue, though incidents do occur from time to time. Such incidents are taken seriously by the school and dealt with effectively.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

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

### *Exclusions in the last school year: 2003/4*

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
654	6	0
30	0	0

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

8. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. The school's policy is to provide for this aspect throughout the life of the school. It is reflected well in the caring and supportive ethos of the school, and in its work on inclusion and community involvement. However, within most subject areas it is less prominent. There is too little reference to this aspect within schemes of work, especially the spiritual dimension, and opportunities to promote it in lessons are missed. Overall, the spiritual development is satisfactory. It is particularly strong in religious education, and it features well in assemblies, in tutor time and in the visits pupils make to different religious centres. Moral education is good and contributes to the well-developed sense of fairness existing within the school. Understanding of right and wrong is promoted through the personal and social education lessons and in citizenship, where some complex moral issues, such as third world debt, are discussed. The school's strong emphasis on community responsibility, demonstrated especially by the close links with Blackfriars School, has a positive influence on pupils' social development, which is very good overall. Pupils' cultural development is good. Music, dance, and drama activities are well supported. There are visits from authors and artists. Large sums of money are raised for charities, including those operating in the

wider world, such as LEPR. The pupil exchange scheme for pupils in Years 10 and 11 with a school in Slovenia is very successful.

## Attendance

9. Attendance is significantly above the national average and unauthorised absence is well below. The very good attendance makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Punctuality is also good. There are effective systems to promote and monitor good attendance.

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/3 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.8	School data :	0.2
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.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The overall quality of education provided by the school is good**, and there are a number of significant strengths. These include very good partnerships with the community, and with local schools and colleges. The partnerships make a significant contribution to the school's excellent enrichment curriculum, which improves the standards that pupils achieve. This is because this curriculum helps pupils to develop high self-esteem and the ability to transfer new skills and confidence to learning in lessons. These links with colleges and the community also help to prepare pupils very well for the world of work and further education. Pupils are very well cared for and they receive good advice and guidance. The quality of teaching and learning is good and assessment is satisfactory.

### Teaching and learning

**The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and assessment is satisfactory.** The quality of teaching is better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9, but the difference is not significant.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The proportion of good or better teaching seen in lessons has declined since the previous inspection, but the school's strategies to raise attainment through enrichment reflect good teaching and have led to good learning.
- Teachers are very successful in preparing pupils for examinations and enabling them to achieve good results.
- Some departments make very good use of a variety of teaching styles to support learning, but this is not a consistent feature in all subjects.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good; pupils behave well and are well motivated.
- Learning support assistants are effective in ensuring that pupils with SEN are fully involved in lessons.
- In planning their lessons, teachers do not make enough use of the very good information available on pupils' achievement and progress. Therefore, lessons do not always meet the needs of all pupils.
- Overall, the quality of marking is not consistent enough to make a significant contribution to pupils' progress.
- Teaching in ICT is unsatisfactory.

## Commentary

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 111 lessons**

<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very Poor</b>
1 (1%)	19 (17 %)	51 (46%)	32 (28%)	7 (6%)	1 (1%)	0

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

10. The table above indicates that 64 per cent of lessons seen during the inspection were graded good or better, compared to 73 per cent in the previous inspection. However, pupils' achievement remains good and standards overall are well above average. They are significantly higher than at the time of the previous inspection and the quality of work seen indicates good teaching. Inspectors have therefore judged that the quality of teaching has not deteriorated. In the majority of subjects the quality of teaching seen was good, but in ICT it was unsatisfactory. In mathematics, design and technology, art and design, and personal, social and citizenship education it was satisfactory.

In mathematics, two members of staff were absent during the inspection and supply teachers were therefore working in the department. This had a direct influence on the quality of teaching. The senior management team has been aware of weaknesses in ICT, design technology and art and design, and has been working with the departments to bring about improvement.

11. All teachers have good command of their subjects and most manage their classes very effectively. Teachers have high expectations in respect of the completion of work. Relationships are very good between teachers and pupils and this contributes to the good climate for learning. The school has worked hard to develop a range of teaching styles to engage pupils more in their learning. This has been particularly successful in some subjects, such as English, science and religious education, but less so in mathematics, ICT and design technology.

12. Boys and girls make good progress in their learning in most subjects. In subjects like English and design technology, where boys do not do as well as girls, they attain higher standards than boys nationally. In some subjects like modern foreign languages and history, boys achieve almost as well as girls. Pupils from ethnic minorities make the same progress in their learning as others. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress in their learning as the enrichment curriculum enables them, and other pupils, to develop their knowledge and skills and to apply this learning in lessons. This accounts for the high proportion of A\*/A grades achieved by the school, and it has been taken into account in judging the quality of teaching and learning.

13. Individual education plans (IEPs) help teachers match work to pupils' needs. Teachers and learning support assistants liaise very well, so that pupils with a statement of need receive very good support to improve their learning and personal development. There is careful monitoring of their progress and welfare, particularly by the learning support staff, to ensure that they are fully integrated into school life. However, the information collected from subject areas for the annual review of pupils with statements is not objective enough and does not provide a clear enough picture of pupils' progress. It does not include National Curriculum levels and grades.

14. Assessment is used effectively to place pupils in groups based on prior attainment. This helps them to learn and to make progress and is very effective for pupils with SEN. The school uses a full range of information to identify pupils' capability and potential as well as to predict results at the end of Years 9 and 11. Pupils have targets based on this information. Assessment is accurate and well used in this context and it has a significant effect on raising standards. However, teachers do not always understand the importance of using assessment information to plan lessons for pupils in mixed ability groups to ensure that all their needs are met.

15. The school has a whole school marking policy, but subject departments are able to interpret and implement this policy in different ways. This leads to a lack of consistency and confusion for pupils. Some departments use National Curriculum levels while others do not. The school is of the view that pupils know how to improve their work, but this is not always the case. Overall, the quality of marking requires improvement as it did at the time of the previous inspection.

## **The curriculum**

**The school provides a good, inclusive curriculum for all pupils.** The broad range of options in Years 10 and 11 prepares pupils very well for further study and employment.

There is an **excellent** range of opportunities for enrichment outside lessons. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good range of courses available.
- Provision for citizenship and ICT is unsatisfactory.
- There is a very extensive range of additional learning opportunities.
- Work-related learning is excellent.
- Curriculum innovation is very good.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good.

### **Commentary**

16. Pupils' needs are well met by the curriculum. The school has developed new courses and a very flexible approach to learning, often in co-operation with the local college. New courses include vocational courses in engineering, health and social care, applied art and applied ICT, and the short GCSE course in business studies. The programme for work-related learning is excellent. It is very innovative and benefits from the school's strong links with the community and several European countries. The school does its best to match the provision in Years 10 and 11 to pupils' preferences and interests. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection and all statutory requirements are met. This very flexible approach includes considerable after-school provision and allows a number of pupils to follow courses that would otherwise not fit their timetable.

17. In English, pupils are given good opportunities to explore a wide range of texts, to develop their oral skills, and to improve their writing abilities to suit different audiences. The Entry Level course is offered to those for whom GCSE is inappropriate. In mathematics, there is good extra-curricular provision which includes an after-school GCSE statistics course, as well as booster classes for pupils in Years 9 to 11 and an Easter holiday workshop. The booster classes in science for pupils in Years 9 to 11 help to raise standards. The well developed course in history attracts boys and girls with equal success. In geography the development of inquiry processes for Year 8 is a strength, although there are no formal arrangements for field work in Years 10 and 11. The physical education department makes good use of Keele University facilities, but health-related fitness work in Years 7 to 9 needs further development.

18. Opportunities in music for pupils to take part in choral, orchestral and instrumental work are very good. Curriculum opportunities in both art and music would be improved with better access in class to ICT equipment. The religious studies curriculum is a significant strength, as it broadens pupils' understanding of their own lives and other faiths and adds considerably to their multicultural awareness. Citizenship is still in the early stages of development, and provision is currently unsatisfactory, as there is no one teacher responsible for its management. In ICT, provision is unsatisfactory, due to the inconsistencies and lack of coherence in the curriculum provided.

19. The school provides a very inclusive curriculum for pupils of all abilities. The progress pupils make improves when they have support in lessons. The quality of this support is good. Literacy skills improve through the intensive support given to pupils with SEN in small withdrawal groups and during the lunchtime activities. Access is good for pupils with mobility difficulties, because of additional ramping and the installation of lifts.



21. Opportunities for enrichment are excellent for all pupils. This is a strength of the school. The provision is planned carefully to raise the achievement of all pupils by increasing their self-esteem and their enjoyment of school-based activities. The use of a full range of contributors for this programme, and the high profile it is given by the school, ensures that it is an important part of school life. Local colleges, business and industry all make very valuable contributions to this provision. Many pupils participate in the good range of sports and arts activities that enhance the curriculum.

22. There have been very significant improvements in accommodation since the previous inspection. Although it remains unsatisfactory in the case of art, the quality of the accommodation provided by the school is now good and it supports the curriculum effectively. Resources for learning are good in many areas and very good in religious education. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum.

23. Staffing and resources have both benefited from the school's technology college status. The status has also enabled the very good development of vocational education and funding for technology days for all pupils. It has been successful in helping the school to develop a culture that is scientific, technological and enterprising. The funding has enabled the school to raise standards, particularly in science, and to provide the enrichment curriculum that ensures that the gifts and talents of all pupils can be developed. It has contributed to improved resourcing and some improved teaching in design and technology and ICT lessons, though the impact in both these areas has been less marked.

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

The school takes **very good** care of pupils' welfare, health and safety. It provides them with **good** support and guidance. The school values pupils' views and involves them **well** in the life of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff are very good at noticing and responding to the individual needs of pupils through effective pastoral arrangements and monitoring procedures.
- Very good care is taken of pupils' safety.
- The links with external agencies are very good.
- Arrangements for the induction of new pupils to the school are very good.
- Pupils are consulted and involved in the life of the school.

### **Commentary**

24. The school is relatively small, and as a consequence all staff know the pupils very well. They consistently give pupils very good guidance, advice and support, both formally and informally. Form tutors and year co-ordinators stay with the same group of pupils as they move through the school and consequently their knowledge of individuals is very good. Teachers regularly make time available outside lessons to speak to and help pupils who need or request extra help in their subjects. All this makes a significant contribution to pupils' academic progress and good achievement.

25. The assessment and monitoring arrangements provide useful information on the personal and social development of pupils and mean that pupils' progress can be tracked

well. In their individual reviews with staff, pupils receive good advice and guidance on how to improve and on what targets should be set. Pupils with SEN are also well cared for because teachers and learning support assistants know them very well. These good relationships help to build up confidence and self-esteem. Much verbal praise and careful explanation helps these pupils to know how well they are doing.

26. Health and safety procedures are firmly established and implemented. The building is a difficult one to maintain but swift action is taken to deal with any health and safety issues that may arise. Child protection procedures are good and are overseen by an experienced member of staff who ensures that staff awareness remains high. Many pupils arrive and depart by bus, and careful arrangements are in place for their safe departure at the end of the day. Parents confirm that their children are well cared for.

27. Pupils receive sound advice and guidance on the choice of courses during Year 9 and when they move to employment, training or further education at the end of Year 11. The school gets effective professional support from external agencies, for example from Connexions for careers advice, and from the Education Welfare Service on attendance. The very good relationship with the specialist agencies also enhances the quality and guidance for pupils with SEN. Very positive links are maintained with primary schools. Transitional arrangements and the induction process are excellent and new pupils settle in very quickly to the school.

28. Pupils confirm that the school values their ideas. The school council is taken seriously and the pupils have made several suggestions which have been acted upon, such as improvements in the school environment. Its strong links with the local community help the school to be sensitive to the various issues faced by its pupils and how best to respond.

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

The partnership the school has built with parents, other schools, and the community is **very good** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have a high opinion of the school and it is oversubscribed.
- The quality of the annual reports to parents on their children's progress is unsatisfactory.
- Parents find the school very approachable, and their views are acted upon.
- Parents give very good support to their children's learning.
- Links with the local community enrich pupils' education.
- There is a very active partnership with other schools and colleges.

### **Commentary**

29. Parents are very positive about the school, which is popular and oversubscribed. They approve of the good teaching and the high expectations of the staff, and believe that their children make good progress. Several parents commented on how approachable the school is, and on its readiness to resolve any question or concern raised.

30. Very good details about the school are provided to parents in the governors' Annual Report and through the regular newsletter and other communications, including the website. Useful information for parents on how their children are getting on is provided through interim assessment sheets, and at the organised parents' meetings, which are very well

attended. In addition, senior staff are quick to get in touch with parents if it is clear that a pupil's progress is not as good as it should be. However, the overall quality of the annual reports to parents is unsatisfactory. Although they follow a common format, annual reports lack a clear evaluation of the quality of pupils' work in subjects or of what should be done to improve their work.

31. Parents are involved in many aspects of the school and are encouraged to support their children's learning at home. Homework is generally used well to reinforce and extend the work in the classroom. Pupil planners are being used reasonably effectively to communicate with parents. The appointment of a home-school liaison worker is proving to be very effective in keeping in touch with the families of pupils who are experiencing difficulties at school.

32. Very good links are maintained with the local and wider community. This greatly enhances pupils' learning and personal development. The curriculum is enriched by the extra-curricular activities, the overseas and residential visits, and the links with community groups such as Rotary, the Lions and sports clubs. The school is very well regarded by local businesses and services, and this enables the work experience programme for Year 11 pupils to match their preferences well. The local community makes good use of the school's facilities.

33. The joint Technology College status shared with Blackfriars School means that the co-operation between the two schools and the sharing of resources and good practice are excellent. The schools' joint technology programme includes provision for community development, and this is already providing useful technical help for Madeley's feeder primary schools and for others in the local community. Excellent opportunities for work-related learning exist with local colleges, particularly at the Newcastle FE College, where the school's Young Engineers' Club has successfully built a 'Greenpower' electrically powered car in association with the College. Post 16 pupils proceed to a range of schools and colleges and the school is taking some useful steps to improve the transition arrangements with them.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **very well** led by the headteacher, who has a very good vision for the school and works hard to implement it. She is supported by a **good** leadership team and **good** governors who share her vision and carefully consider the priorities for the school before implementing new strategies. The management of the school is **satisfactory**; there is a lack of consistency in implementing initiatives and developments.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governors and other key staff, led by the headteacher, have a clarity of vision, sense of purpose and commitment to inclusion and high standards, all of which are effectively shared by all staff.
- The school's approach to financial management and best value principles is very good.
- The governors and the school leadership team know the school's strengths and areas for development.
- The school's strategic planning is good. It correctly identifies areas for development but departments do not always link their action plans to whole school issues.
- Very effective strategies ensure that the local community and the school work very closely together.
- Management systems and structures are not rigorous enough to ensure consistency in teaching, the use of assessment and marking, and the development of the role of subject manager.
- The day-to-day organisation of the school is very good.

### Commentary

34. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She knows staff and pupils very well and is passionate about the quality of education she envisages for Madeley High School. She has been successful in enabling all members of the school to share the common goals and values of an inclusive community school where the aim is for all pupils to achieve well. The headteacher's vision for inclusion extends to all members of the school community, who are encouraged to engage in open debate on issues and strategies. This is good, as it gives staff responsibility for initiatives, but the policy of allowing departments to interpret new strategies independently has led to the lack of consistency across departments and difficulties in the effective monitoring of provision.

35. The leadership of other key staff is good overall. It ranges from excellent in religious education and work-related learning to unsatisfactory in ICT and citizenship. Members of the senior leadership team work closely together and responsibilities are effectively delegated. This team has produced a good strategic plan for the school which responds to the identified needs of the school and national initiatives. The senior leadership team effectively supports departments in school and is already addressing perceived areas of weakness which were identified before the inspection. Steps have already been taken to improve provision in ICT, design technology and mathematics. Additional support has also been provided by line managers for ICT and design technology. Some progress is evident in the development and use of resources, but progress in relation to teaching has been slower. However, the senior management team has been very effective in improving the science department over the last two years so that from a department with falling standards it is now one of the strongest in the school.

36. The governance of the school is good. Governors work in a strong partnership with the headteacher to ensure that all statutory requirements are met and that financial

management is strong and allows the school to provide the facilities that the curriculum requires. The chair of governors in particular acts as a critical friend to the senior management team and supports the climate of open debate within the school. The governors are aware of the strengths and areas for development within the school but they have few direct links to curriculum departments. They acknowledge that their monitoring role is not sufficiently developed.

37. The day-to-day management of the school is very good. The requirements for work force reform have been implemented successfully, and HMI on a monitoring visit in 2003 commented on the effectiveness of this development. Systems for communication are good, and good job descriptions ensure that staff know their responsibilities within the school. However, the flexible approach to interpreting structures and strategies within departments means that new heads of department are unsure of what is required of them, and there is a lack of consistency between departments. This lack of consistency also applies to arrangements for monitoring provision and to the professional development of staff, which does not reflect the needs of the school's strategic plan. Departmental action planning is also of variable quality and is not always good enough to support whole school or departmental development. Therefore, whole school management is judged to be satisfactory overall.

38. Although the value the school gives to the importance of open debate has led to inconsistency, it is just this approach that has strengthened its links with parents and the community. Members of the community firmly believe that the school is their school and that they can work with it to bring about change and improvement. Some of the most significant strengths of the school, including those linked to work-related learning, derive from very good links with local business, industry, schools, colleges and parents. They provide significant curriculum enrichment which strengthens overall education provision within the school.

39. The learning support co-ordinator is a very good leader who has a clear vision of support for learning. Her work has helped the school to gain the Inclusion Quality Mark this year and staff are now working hard to gain recognition as a dyslexia friendly school. The learning support co-ordinator's management skills are very effective, and good practice is shared with the team of learning support assistants and with the teaching staff.

40. The headteacher manages the school budget very effectively, with the support of the governors. The school's low income in relation to the national average requires principles of best value to be implemented at all times to ensure the school is able to continue to recruit good staff and improve resources and accommodation. The school has made considerable progress in these areas since the previous inspection and has plans to improve the accommodation in art next summer with the anticipated budget carry forward. The school therefore provides good value for money.

### ***Financial information***

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

<b><i>Income and expenditure (£)</i></b>	
Total income	2,197,160.00
Total expenditure	2,113,181.00
Expenditure per pupil	3,212.00

<b><i>Balances (£)</i></b>	
Balance from previous year	99,267.00
Balance carried forward to the next	84,246.00

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **Work-related learning**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is an excellent range of activities.
- Very good use is made of visitors from business and industry.
- The curriculum is very innovative.
- Leadership and management are excellent.
- There is a good partnership between the school and Connexions (a careers and guidance service).

### **Commentary**

41. The development of the provision for work-related learning is a current priority for the school, in response to the national initiative aimed at ensuring that pupils are well prepared for the world of work.

42. The school has built upon its good and well established links with local business and industry in order to meet the new requirements. There is an excellent range of activities; many are partly funded externally. A good example is technology challenge day, where a large number of industrial visitors worked with pupils engaged in activities designed to develop personal qualities such as team working, planning and decision-making. Pupils' evaluations show that they enjoyed the day and all were able to say what they gained. All Year 11 pupils have a very good work experience as teachers work hard to match work to pupils' aspirations. In 2003 the school took a party of pupils to Slovenia, where they taught some of their new technology skills to local pupils. A new feature planned for this year is an industry day, when Year 10 pupils will set up and run a model company. In a separate initiative Year 10 pupils will work with staff from Barclays Bank to prepare a CV and to apply and be interviewed for fictional jobs. The statutory requirements for work-related learning are fully met, by way of the very successful Young Engineers group, vocational education, careers and educational guidance, and elements of the curriculum that contribute to pupils' personal development. The leadership and management of the provision is excellent.

43. The partnership agreement between the school and Connexions sets out clearly the planned input from both partners. The agreement is flexible enough to meet the changing demands of pupils. A very good programme of careers lessons is taught in personal, social and health education (PSHE) from Years 9 to 11. Lessons often have a contribution from the Connexions adviser, which benefits pupils. Pupils with statements of SEN are offered an interview with the Connexions Adviser with their parents present, and pupils value this. Individual careers guidance is offered in Year 11, and this too is valued by pupils. The preparation for the next stage of life is done very effectively, and careers education and guidance is a very good aspect of the school.

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

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

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

##### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching, especially of transferable skills, produces standards that are well above average.
- A lively and energetic team enthuses pupils and helps them to enjoy learning.
- Teachers' marking and comments do not give pupils enough help in knowing how to improve their work.
- Teaching does not always provide the best opportunities for lower attaining pupils.
- Pupils are often given responsibility for their own learning through independent study which prepares them for the next stage of education.

##### **Commentary**

44. Pupils enter the school with above average attainment. They demonstrate good achievement by Year 9, and national test results are well above average. Boys do not perform quite as well as girls but they outperform boys nationally. Standards seen during the inspection were above average, and well above average in speaking and listening.

45. By Year 11 achievement is good, with pupils' results in both literature and language well above the national average. Boys do better than boys nationally but not as well as girls.

46. Teaching and learning in all years are good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen and several were very good. Teachers' planning and organisation are very good, and they usually structure lessons to cater for different learning styles and concentration spans. They use a variety of methods and resources to stimulate interest and devise well-timed tasks to keep pupils motivated. The best lessons are lively and interactive, giving pupils responsibility for their learning and using good supporting materials to ensure success. In a minority of less effective lessons there is too much talk by the teacher, which slows the pace and does not present enough challenge. However, in other lessons, the pace can be so challenging that it leaves some pupils behind and their understanding is not as good as it should be. Teachers make good use of learning assistants and provide them with plans beforehand to enable them to be more effective. However, there is little evidence of programmes of work being adapted to suit different abilities, so a minority of pupils are not benefiting from the lessons as they should.

47. Pupils are offered a good range of ways in which to use and improve their speaking and listening skills. Many are very confident speakers who enjoy asking questions and debating. They are particularly good at understanding the problems of other people and show good attitudes to learning as well as a developing social and moral conscience.

Teachers set a good variety of tasks. Pupils use evidence well to support their ideas and arguments. There are plenty of opportunities to investigate texts closely in a number of innovative ways, and pupils are effectively taught to plan and organise quite sophisticated extended essays. Pupils have good opportunities to



use computers to research the historical and social backgrounds of the literature they study. This, together with wider independent reading, enhances their understanding of the texts and prepares them for the next stage of their education. Relationships in the classroom are good and pupils respond with enthusiasm to the lessons.

48. Teachers mark all books carefully in Years 9, 10 and 11, but their comments are often not detailed or thorough and marking is not regular enough in Years 7 and 8. Pupils are therefore not well enough informed about how to improve, especially as targets are too vague to be helpful. Marking and ongoing assessment do not inform teachers' lesson planning.

49. Leadership of the department is good and has resulted in the creation of an effective team, good planning, clear uncomplicated policies and the initiation of some good systems. A central database, for example, is being created to enable the tracking of pupils' progress, and assessment is beginning to inform some teaching; self-assessment is underway, and a media club and debating society have been initiated. Management is satisfactory. Some monitoring takes place in the form of the scrutiny of work and observation of lessons book but, as the post holder is new, policies have not been fully implemented yet. A good degree of consistency exists amongst the team, which helps pupils to make progress.

50. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Lessons are now well structured. Accommodation and resources are good. There is good curriculum provision, with enrichment activities and opportunities for pupils to follow a different syllabus if they require it in Year 11. This includes the Entry Level certificate for lower attaining pupils.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

51. Pupils' literacy skills are good. They are mostly confident speakers and listen to each other with consideration. They demonstrate a good range of vocabulary, which some subject teachers enhance when they insist on precise use of appropriate terms. Pupils collect important words from all areas of the curriculum and learn how to define and spell them in English lessons. Some subjects display and emphasise these to improve pupils' understanding. Pupils express opinions thoughtfully and are capable of some excellent performances in public speaking, which the school promotes through its debating society and assemblies. Some subjects, for example art, geography, science and religious education, offer opportunities to write at length in a variety of ways, but there is little, if any, correction of errors to improve accuracy. Religious education uses support materials to help pupils in their writing. Geography also uses poetry and knowledge of adjectives to describe landscape. Pupils who find reading a challenging process do paired reading in the library with an older pupil or a learning assistant. The library is well stocked with attractive material for all readers and contributes to the development of literacy. There is a whole school policy on literacy but it has not been updated since 1999 and there is therefore no consistent approach to this area of expertise.

### **Modern foreign languages**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All groups of pupils achieve well in French and German.
- Teaching and learning are good overall but with some inconsistencies.

- There is a clear vision for future development but practical steps to bring about change are less sharply focused.

## Commentary

52. Pupils start French in Year 7, and all but the lowest attainers take German as a second language from Year 8. They build up their skills well and by Year 9 are above average in listening, reading and writing in French. Their speaking skills are not as effectively developed.

The great majority of pupils make their meaning clear but lack confidence in taking the initiative in conversations and in keeping up exchanges without prompts. Skills in German build up rapidly in the shorter time available, so that by Year 9 they achieve good standards.

53. GCSE results in French in 2003, the latest year for which comparisons are available, were above average and indicated good work in all skills. Girls did better than boys, as they do in England as a whole. However, the difference was much smaller than is usual nationally, as boys did particularly well. The results in 2004 suggest a similar picture. Despite their good achievement in earlier years, few pupils choose to take German as an additional language in Years 10 and 11. Examination statistics are too small for valid comparison, but every candidate attained at least grade C, building well on earlier achievement.

54. The quality of teaching and learning is good, so all pupils achieve well. Teachers' good planning produces the necessary variety of activities in lessons in both languages so that the different skills develop in a balanced way. This approach appeals equally to boys and girls and results in very good attitudes to learning. An effective assessment system helps teachers to focus well on the strengths and weaknesses of individuals. This enables pupils with SEN to achieve as well as everyone else. In the great majority of lessons teachers use the foreign languages consistently for all activities. This encourages pupils to do the same. Where there are too many instructions and lengthy explanations in English, pupils have few opportunities to use the foreign language for any useful purpose and gain little.

55. Subject leadership is good because areas for development have been recognised and are being addressed. Management is satisfactory because monitoring of lessons takes place, but it is informal and lacks the rigour to ensure that best practice is followed consistently throughout the department.

56. GCSE results have improved since the previous inspection, when they were average in French. Since the last inspection issues of lesson time and classroom organisation have been better managed. This has contributed to a continuing rise in standards, which demonstrates that improvement has been good.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average, boosted by coherent, well-focused revision programmes.
- The management of the subject is unsatisfactory.
- Assessment is not used effectively to help pupils to improve their work.
- The limited range of teaching methods reduces pupils' natural inquisitiveness.
- Technology college status has brought a range of benefits, including an innovative GCSE statistics course.



## Commentary

57. When pupils enter the school, their mathematical knowledge and understanding are above national expectations. The standard of pupils' current work is also above average. National tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average in 2003 and higher in 2004. GCSE results were above average in 2003 but not so high in 2004. Pupils' skills are equally strong in all areas of mathematics. The achievement of boys and girls, those from various ethnic backgrounds, and those with SEN is satisfactory.

58. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, even though the school was unavoidably using two temporary supply teachers during the inspection week. Teachers are knowledgeable and give clear explanations and good quality support to individuals in difficulty. Expectations are consistently high and in some lessons the interactive whiteboard is used very skilfully to extend teaching possibilities. Pupils are well motivated and diligent. They are particularly well prepared for external examinations through carefully honed teaching techniques, skilfully combined with computer-aided learning. Homework is also used well to reinforce routines and extend classroom learning. However, work is not always well matched to pupils' varied stages of development, and some previous learning is repeated unnecessarily. Most teachers use a limited range of teaching methods, relying heavily on teacher-directed verbal exchanges, textbooks and printed worksheets. There are few opportunities for pupils to learn visually, practically or collaboratively, or to discuss, conjecture and explore mathematical principles for themselves. The use of ICT and graphical calculators to speed and expand learning is at an early stage.

59. Grouping arrangements for pupils work well, and group composition is reviewed regularly. This allows most pupils to progress at a rate suited to their talents. Mathematics receives a good allocation of time, and extensive extra-curricular lessons and clubs help boost standards further. High attaining Year 10 pupils are able to take GCSE statistics in one year, and the first set of results in 2004 was very impressive.

60. The use of assessment is unsatisfactory. Pupils are tested regularly and accurately, and their work is marked promptly. However, teachers rarely write evaluative comments or suggest ways to improve pupils' learning. Only pupils in Year 11 know the standard they are working at or have clear personal short-term or long-term targets to aim for; they are involved in self-assessment when preparing for examinations. Annual reports to parents are neither informative nor helpful in harnessing the full potential of parents to contribute to their children's learning.

61. Leadership is satisfactory. The head of department has a sense of mission and a pride in the department's successes. There is a relentless focus on raising standards for all and ensuring that pupils with SEN are well supported, but there is no reference to a wider vision for the subject within the technology college or the local area. Schemes of work and plans for development lack the detail needed to secure consistency and to ensure that they are put into practice. Management is unsatisfactory. The department collects information of high quality containing considerable detail of pupils' performance, but this information is not yet properly analysed and used to identify areas for further development. Monitoring of teaching is not used to ensure that department policies are implemented consistently.

62. Since the previous inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. In recent years standards in Years to 9 have continued to rise in line with the national trend, and technology college status has yielded many benefits such as good ICT resources. Schemes of work follow the national Key Stage 3 framework but elements of the national strategy concerning

teaching methods are not yet well established. Weaknesses in teaching and marking which were identified in the last report have not been addressed in a determined way.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

63. Pupils have a good grasp of numeracy skills. This enables them to engage fully with other subjects and improves their general learning. The school's provision for developing mathematical skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. In 2002 the school completed an audit of the mathematical skills needed for other subjects and subsequently developed a whole school numeracy policy. However, there is no plan showing how skills should be developed further in all subjects and opportunities are not identified in departments' schemes of work to aid teachers' planning. Best practice can be found in geography, where pupils are expected to conduct higher order data analysis.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement in science is good because teaching and assessment are good.
- Standards at GCSE and in Year 9 tests are well above average.
- Rigorous testing and tracking of pupils' progress helps teachers to identify their strengths and weaknesses.
- Day-to-day marking does not always help pupils to improve their work.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Split classes make management of some pupils more difficult.

### **Commentary**

64. Standards in science are well above average. This represents good achievement from the time the pupils arrive at the school. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 were well above average in 2003 and 2004, both for boys and for girls. Achievement for these pupils was good. In 2003, results in GCSE science were significantly above average for all pupils. The proportion of boys and girls obtaining A\*-C and A\*/A grades was significantly higher than nationally. The GCSE results in 2004 follow the same pattern. The school enters more pupils for double award science than other schools, and all gained a result. This indicates good progress made by pupils with SEN. Overall, pupils do better in science than in other subjects in the school and achievement is good.

65. Standards of work seen in Year 9 are well above average and achievement is good. Higher attaining pupils are starting to balance symbol equations. Other pupils can make predictions about the reactivity of different metals. In Years 10 to 11 pupils continue to develop their knowledge, understanding and enquiry skills in all aspects of science. Standards of work seen in Year 11 were well above expected levels and overall achievement is good. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with SEN achieve well because they are well supported in lessons and in revision classes. Higher attaining pupils achieve well because they have many opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding in a range of scientific topics, and to develop scientific skills. Pupils' achievement is good because it is closely monitored and teachers follow up any key weaknesses identified in tests.

66. Teaching and learning are good. In the teaching there are several strengths that underpin the good quality of pupils' learning. Work is matched to the requirements of the curriculum and to pupils' needs. All teachers have good specialist knowledge which they use to plan lessons that interest pupils, and they set homework to build on work completed in lessons. In the best lessons observed during the inspection teachers shared clear learning intentions with pupils. They asked questions that probed pupils' understanding of such topics as how to write symbol equations. As a result, higher attaining pupils in Year 9 learned how to balance equations. Good learning occurs when the teaching is innovative and pupils are interested. For example, lower attaining pupils

learned effectively because they were asked to write stories about strong and weak metals and present these to the rest of the class. In this lesson, pupils with learning difficulties were well supported by teaching assistants and learned effectively. In other lessons, ICT was used to motivate lower attainers and to challenge higher attainers. In two satisfactory lessons, the teaching methods did not engage or interest the pupils, or the pace was slow and there was limited challenge for a few higher attaining pupils.

67. The department's assessment procedures are good. Frequent tests and follow up work ensure that both pupils and teachers know strengths and weaknesses. This information is used to plan work for lessons and to target extra support for pupils who are underachieving. The quality of marking is satisfactory, but some teachers do not give enough detailed guidance on how pupils can improve their work.

68. The leadership of the department is good. There is strong and experienced team with a good plan for improvement. Teachers have worked together to develop a good detailed curriculum, which supports non-specialists in the teaching of science in Years 7 to 9. Action was taken when standards were falling in Years 10 and 11, with the result that standards are now significantly above average. Management is good. Teachers set targets and monitor progress on a regular basis. There are effective systems of tracking pupils' progress and using the information to guide teaching. However, there is not enough monitoring of teaching itself. The timetable arrangements for science mean that some classes are split between two teachers, which makes the management of behaviour of some groups of pupils more difficult.

69. The technician works very efficiently and effectively and provides very good support to teachers. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Standards have improved in Years 7 to 9 and the achievement of the highest attaining pupils has improved in Years 10 and 11. The specialist technology college status has provided additional funds for a new science laboratory and a new ICT room. These resources have led to improvements in the use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool, and all science lessons are now taught in laboratories. The technology finance has also provided funds to help curriculum continuity from primary to secondary school and to improve extra-curricular provision.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Responsibilities for leadership and management of the ICT department are unclear and this has led to unsatisfactory standards.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory for pupils in Years 10 and 11 although they are satisfactory for pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning lacks rigour because it is unstructured and informal.
- Assessment and marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory and does not help them to understand how to improve.
- Insufficient curriculum time is given to the teaching of ICT in Years 7 to 9.
- Teachers of some other curriculum areas are making good use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning.

### **Commentary**



70. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 is in line with national averages, as the majority of pupils' work is of Level 5 standard. Pupils arrive in Year 7 with average levels of attainment, and by the end of Year 9 their attainment is in line with national expectations. Therefore, achievement for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Progress is hampered by insufficient teaching time and not enough computers for pupils to use on their own in one of the main teaching rooms. In some classes pupils have to work without a computer for half of their lesson time.

71. The standards attained by the end of Year 11 are difficult to judge because of recent changes made to provision, but overall they are below the national average. In 2003 just over a quarter of the year group took GCSE as an optional subject and their results were broadly in line with national averages. In 2004 all pupils in the year group took a GCSE ICT course, whether a short course (half GCSE) or an optional full GCSE course. The results for 2004 show that in both courses standards were below the national averages.

72. The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is judged to be unsatisfactory overall. Overall, pupils are not achieving as well in their ICT GCSE courses as in other GCSE subjects. Lessons and work seen during the inspection demonstrate that standards in Years 10 and 11 are below national expectation, though the small group of pupils in Years 10 and 11 currently studying for the dual award applied ICT course, in partnership with the local college, are achieving well. There are no differences in achievement between boys and girls but the achievement of some pupils with SEN is limited by a lack of in-class support. However, master classes for a few high attaining pupils are helping them to achieve well

73. Overall, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. It is at least satisfactory and sometimes good for pupils in Years 7 to 9. These pupils can use the Internet with confidence and carry out advanced searches. In one lesson the security implications of chat rooms were sensitively dealt with and teaching resources used to good effect. Lessons sometimes lack the pace required to cover the National Curriculum in the time available. Teaching of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. Lessons lack challenge and direction from the teacher. In most lessons pupils use work sheets which give a series of instructions to guide their work, and there is little opportunity for independent thinking or learning. Instead of creating their own databases they are required to copy data from one table to another. Pupils who do not have access to a computer write in exercise books, making notes which do not develop their ICT skills. Teaching styles often lack the variety required to suit pupils' preferred ways of learning or to create enthusiasm for the subject. In all lessons observed in all years, there was little evidence that work is matched to pupils' individual needs and abilities. Teachers help pupils on an individual basis during the course of lessons as problems arise.

74. Assessment is unsatisfactory in all years. It is too reliant upon test results and end-of-unit grades. The measurement of pupils' progress is too infrequent. The marking of all pupils' work is very brief, and lacks helpful commentary on how to improve. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, marking concentrates too much on marking individual points and does not take sufficient account of the overall scope of the project being undertaken.

75. The leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory but the technical management and development of the network are satisfactory. The ICT department lacks direction, as responsibilities are shared by several teachers. Monitoring of the standards of teaching and learning is not undertaken. Planning and decision making is by consensus and is made on an informal basis, thus lacking rigour.

76. Since the previous inspection ICT facilities for the whole school have improved significantly, although some restrictions remain in the ICT department. The school is justifiably proud of its introduction of a good and varied range of ICT courses in the last two years to meet the needs of all pupils. This includes pupils following a double GCSE vocational course at a local college and master classes in ICT are held during the year to boost the performance of higher attaining pupils. However, standards attained, teaching, learning, leadership and management have deteriorated, so progress since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.

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

77. Information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum is satisfactory. The school is aware that more work needs to be done in this area, which is currently identified for development in the school improvement plan. Although some teachers in some departments are using ICT well to enhance their teaching, there is neither a co-ordinated approach nor any evaluation of the overall effect of ICT on teaching and learning. However, there has been significant investment in ICT equipment across most departments as a result of the school's technology college status. All teachers have laptops and have been trained to use computers. Pupils can access the school network from home and use specialist software programmes for revision and self-testing. Pupils' prior learning in ICT is built upon through links with local primary schools.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

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

- GCSE results in 2003 were well above average and they improved further in 2004.
- Consistently good teaching enables pupils to achieve well.
- A good variety of tasks is well planned to develop pupils' history skills and understanding of the past.
- Work is not always adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of individual pupils.

#### **Commentary**

78. Teacher assessment in 2003 showed that pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 were above average.

79. GCSE results were well above the national average in 2003 and improved further in 2004. Pupils enter the school with average knowledge, understanding and skills in history. Standards in the present Year 9 are above average, so pupils are achieving well. In Years 10 and 11 standards of pupils' work are well above average and achievement is good.

80. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils quickly realise when they enter their lesson that history is not only hard work but also fun. The teaching strengthens pupils' knowledge and gives them very good opportunities to research history in their homework. Teachers ensure that GCSE pupils have a good understanding of examination technique. Teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and good subject knowledge are key factors that encourage pupils to respond enthusiastically in lessons. Pupils work very well in pairs and groups and are often encouraged to be independent researchers, talking about and analysing source materials. They develop their ideas successfully and are good at explaining why events occurred, both orally and in writing. Year 11 pupils capably

explained attitudes in Britain and France towards Germany after 1918, showing clearly where sources were biased and unreliable. Pupils also develop a good understanding of why people's views are often changed by both circumstances and time. For example, Year 9 pupils considered why people might support or oppose slavery in the eighteenth century. Pupils' historical vocabulary is well developed in lessons.

81. Teachers know their pupils well, mark their books carefully and show them how they can improve their work. The monitoring of class and homework is very good. However, there were several occasions when the tasks and the materials used to support pupils' learning were not adapted to individual needs, and a small number of pupils under-achieved as a consequence.

82. Leadership and management are good overall. There is a clear determination to maintain high standards. Thorough monitoring of work ensures that pupils' success in public examinations remains well above average. The day-to-day activities of the department are very well managed. However, the vision for the development of the department is not clear, and development planning does not sufficiently address whole school policies, particularly the use of ICT within the programme. Leadership is, therefore, satisfactory,

83. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, with particular improvement in examination results and teaching.

## **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results are above average and enquiry skills are well developed for all pupils.
- Teaching is good and marking informs pupils on how to improve.
- There is good practice in fieldwork in Years 7 to 9 but no provision for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Assessment information is not used for lesson planning and work is sometimes unsuited to the needs of individual pupils; this limits pupils' progress.

## **Commentary**

84. Pupils come to the school with average attainment in geography and very variable geographical skills and knowledge. On the evidence of most lessons, and of work seen, by the end of Year 9 pupils' work is above average, and there is good achievement. By the end of Year 11, GCSE results are above average, and work seen in files and in lessons is above average. This represents satisfactory progress for pupils in relation to their performance at the end of Year 9. However, in relation to standards on entry to the school, achievement is good.

85. Teaching and learning are good in most lessons. The varied tasks, paired activities and use of a variety of resources encourage pupils to remain motivated throughout the lesson. In a Year 8 lesson, group work on a photograph jigsaw, paired work on postcards, sketching, and a word chart were all well used to ensure that pupils learned the correct geographical terms for describing places in detail. The requirement for pupils to produce summary reports on a series of lessons develops good writing and analytical skills and is well used by pupils in Years 10 and 11. In some lessons, lower attainers do not always finish work as it may be too complex or lengthy, and this limits pupils' progress. The provision of open-ended tasks in most lessons enables higher attaining pupils to develop good understanding and gives them additional challenge. Pupils with SEN make good

progress when support is available and the work is well suited to their needs. In satisfactory lessons, the teacher explains too much in the early stages of the lesson, so that pupils lose interest in the subject. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are well prepared for their individual coursework, and the highest attaining pupils show very good research, data collection and analytical skills, with detailed yet concise writing. There is good use of ICT in geography for all year groups.

86. Leadership of the department is good. The provision of lesson plans and resources for non-specialist members of the department is good and promotes consistency across lessons. Marking is monitored, and both formal and informal meetings are used to share ideas. Management is satisfactory. Assessment procedures are good but the information is not used to plan for pupils' needs in lessons. The head of department does not monitor the teaching of non-specialists.

87. Since the previous inspection there has been good improvement. There is more support for lower attaining pupils, open-ended tasks are often provided for the more able pupils, standards have improved in Years 7 to 9, and ICT is used regularly.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because teaching and learning closely match pupils' needs.
- A very well balanced approach to all strands of the subject makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Subject leadership is excellent and underpins high standards.

### Commentary

88. When pupils come to the school, the knowledge, skills and understanding of the great majority are broadly in line with the expectations of the Staffordshire locally Agreed Syllabus. By the end of Year 9 pupils achieve very well and go well beyond the expectations of the Syllabus. This high level of achievement is sustained over their time in school, and by Year 11 they continue to do much better than expected. Those who take GCSE generally achieve very well, gaining at least grade C. In 2004 almost half the candidates obtained grades A\* or A.

89. The key to the success of all groups of pupils is very good teaching. This makes everyone think hard, reflect and apply their learning. The pace of lessons and the quality of questioning are better on some occasions than others but, overall, teachers' excellent subject knowledge means that tasks challenge and stimulate. They include aspects of many different subjects. Information and communication technology (ICT) plays a full part as pupils of all ages navigate through websites, and research and present their findings very well. A very good assessment system gives teachers and pupils a clear idea of what they have achieved and what to do next. The high quality of all relationships helps pair and group work, and class discussions go very well. Sensitive support means that pupils with SEN do as well as everyone else.

90. A very effective scheme of work covers the required range of faiths. Very good resources include those produced by the head of department, an acknowledged contributor to materials published by the local education authority. At the last inspection, provision in Years 10 and 11 was unsatisfactory. This issue has been resolved by using a short GCSE course for all pupils, with an option to take the examination at the end. Pupils may also take a full course as part of the school's option package. Important contemporary issues such as medical ethics, natural disasters, and international politics provide challenging themes which pupils explore and review from Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Hindu perspectives. They offer reflective and often well argued defences or criticism of different stances, including their own. The work of examination and non-examination candidates is indistinguishable.

91. Pupils are very well behaved and show respect for other opinions. This is because they learn to appreciate what major religions teach, why they do it, and with what effect. Their own sense of right and wrong develops in consequence. A wide range of visits and visitors helps pupils grasp something of the cultures of places where certain faiths predominate. Year 7 pupils meditated upon the significance of a burning candle, exploring in stillness the spiritual meanings of light and demonstrating the vitality of this aspect of their lives.

92. Very good management maintains the quality of teaching and learning, although this is done informally and without a structure that would assure continuity in the event of any change of staff. Excellent leadership, based on knowledge, enthusiasm and concern for pupils has meant that the many strengths identified at the last inspection have been sustained and the weaknesses addressed. Improvement has been good.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes are positive and working relationships in lessons are good.
- Overall GCSE results are very good.
- Leadership of the department is unsatisfactory because there is a lack of formal monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Inconsistencies in teaching and delivering the curriculum, particularly in Years 7 to 9, lead to low standards.
- Assessment is not well used in planning lessons.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge is a strength of the department
- The enrichment opportunities in the subject are a significant strength.
- The use of ICT is developing well.

### Commentary

93. Standards of attainment on entry in Year 7 are below average and pupils come from their primary schools with varied experiences of design and technology. By the end of Year 9 standards of designing and making remain below national averages and are uneven across the different material areas. Standards of pupils' design work are much lower than their making, particularly in textiles and resistant materials. These standards are also well below those indicated by the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 which the department has reported to parents in recent years.

94. Attainment at GCSE in 2003 and 2004 was well above the national averages, both for boys and for girls, but overall was lower than the same pupils' attainment in other GCSE subjects. Although boys do not achieve as well as girls in terms of actual GCSE grades awarded, careful analysis of the results when compared to national results and the national gender adjusted data indicates that girls perform only slightly better than boys, which is in line with the national trend. However, nearly three-quarters of the A\*/A grades across all four specialist courses were achieved by girls. There are uneven results across the different specialist material courses at GCSE, with the highest attainment shown in food technology and graphic products in 2004. However, in 2003 standards in resistant materials were higher than in graphic products.

95. In Years 7 to 9 pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of materials and acquire a range of practical skills. In this area of the subject they make satisfactory progress, although standards by the end of Year 9 are still below average. Their achievement in the development of designing skills, however, is well below expectations, and by the end of Year 9 this important aspect of the subject is considerably underdeveloped. This is particularly significant for more able pupils who are underachieving.

96. In Years 10 and 11, within the structure of the GCSE specialist courses, pupils' achievement improves and is good overall. Progress is particularly strong in food technology and graphic products. Pupils show good levels of application in their chosen GCSE areas and teaching is more focused within the guidance of the course requirements. Able pupils have more opportunities to work independently, particularly in Year 11 when working on their final projects. Pupils with SEN across the age range are well supported in class by teaching assistants and achieve well. Many pupils benefit from links with local colleges to support their studies, including those studying GCSE engineering.

97. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching is more consistent in Years 10 and 11 across the different specialist courses, but in Years 7 to 9 there are significant differences in approaches to the subject, and this leads to a lack of coherence in pupils' experience. The quality of lessons in these years varies from very good to unsatisfactory. Teachers' expectations are often too low, particularly for designing, and this leads to inadequate challenge for more able pupils and too few opportunities for pupils to work in more imaginative and creative ways. However, the department recognises this weakness and has recently introduced the national 'Young Foresight Initiative' in Year 9 to improve pupils' designing skills.

98. Teachers have good subject knowledge of making processes and of the working properties of materials or ingredients, and the use of tools, utensils and equipment is a strength. The planning of lessons, however, is an overall area for development and teachers often do not give enough attention to the learning needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers are making inadequate use of the National Curriculum assessment criteria in Years 7 to 9 to support their planning, expectations, target setting and marking. As a result, pupils do not know how well they are doing in comparison with national expectations and what they have to do to improve their work. Most pupils across the full age range of the school show positive attitudes in design and technology lessons; they behave well and enjoy good working relationships with each other and with their teachers. Teaching often fails to make good use of this potential.

99. The leadership of the department is unsatisfactory because the department's documentation and development planning are weak and do not indicate a clear vision for taking the subject forward. Not enough action has been taken to tackle the relatively weaker teaching in the subject. The inconsistencies in practice across the department in the different material areas are the direct result of a lack of monitoring and evaluation of the provision.

100. However, management is satisfactory, as the department runs smoothly and the working environments are well organised. Curriculum requirements are met, although the schemes of work are inadequate to secure consistency of approach and appropriate learning opportunities for all pupils. However, this is balanced by the good management of the very good enrichment provision in the department. Pupils have had the opportunity to be involved in a range of national competitions and events and to have contact with industry. Many of these opportunities arise from an active Young Engineers' Club and technology days, but other opportunities have been organised in the context of food technology. Vocational courses at the local college also contribute to rising standards in technology. This range of provision contributes to good overall standards at the end of Year 11. The use of ICT is developing well with the recent acquisition of new equipment, including CAD/CAM, which has proved successful. Technical support for the subject is sufficient.

101. Overall provision has been judged to be satisfactory as there is a balance of strengths and weaknesses in the department. The inspection has taken account of the strengths in graphic products and food technology and has balanced these against the relative weaknesses in resistant materials. It has also recognised the department's contribution to the enrichment curriculum. Standards of attainment at GCSE have improved in overall terms, and 95 per cent of pupils leave school with a GCSE pass in a design and technology subject. Standards are lower at the end of Year 9 and the quality of teaching is less strong than at the previous inspection. Therefore, improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.



## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Art and design

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good relationships and positive attitudes.
- The pace of work and level of challenge is not demanding enough in some classes.
- The monitoring and evaluation of work is not rigorous enough in all years
- Poor accommodation still affects the quality of pupils' learning.

#### Commentary

102. Pupils enter school with average standards. By the end of Year 9 standards are in line with national expectations and therefore achievement is satisfactory. Pupils learn to improve their range of drawing techniques in a variety of media and to explore the creative properties of ICT and three-dimensional materials, including clay and papier maché, with enjoyment and success. Pupils with SEN make similar progress to others as a result of the effective use of visual aids and demonstrations. Their progress is more marked when they are closely supported by learning assistants. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and work well, but there is no planned provision to extend them.

103. GCSE results in 2003 were broadly in line with national expectations in the higher grades A\*-C and above expectations in grades A\*-G. Results in 2004 declined, due to protracted staffing difficulties that have now been resolved. Predicted grades in Year 11 indicate some improvement for results in 2005. In Years 10 and 11 some pupils have learnt to use drawing and painting techniques imaginatively, whilst others manipulate a variety of three-dimensional materials with varying degrees of confidence and success. Pupils are encouraged to pursue personal responses to a common theme and take increasing responsibility for their own learning. In many cases the level of research and preparatory work is low and results in work that lacks refinement and imagination. As a consequence, achievement overall is no more than satisfactory.

104. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall; on occasions they are good. The more successful lessons make a prompt start and use time effectively. Learning is reinforced by questioning, and there are good expectations of pupils' active involvement. However, in many lessons, the pace of work and the level of challenge are undemanding. In the one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory more time was devoted to behaviour management than to teaching. However, almost all pupils have good attitudes to their work, as relationships are good. Homework, linked to coursework, is set regularly, although marking frequently fails to record ways of improving standards. Overall opportunities for spiritual development and for celebrating multicultural diversity are few.

105. The quality of assessment in the subject is unsatisfactory. Although pupils' work is regularly assessed, the results are not used to identify underachievement and pupils are not involved in identifying targets for improvement. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are not aware of the National Curriculum levels of attainment. In Years 10 and 11 there is no structured or consistent procedure for recording targets and monitoring progress.

106. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a good team spirit and the capacity to bring about improvement now that staffing issues have been resolved. The

department is aware that its priority is now to focus more critically and consistently on the evaluation of teaching styles, the monitoring of outcomes and the effectiveness of assessment procedures, as part of a shared commitment to raise standards, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

107. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory, though poor accommodation still affects the quality of pupils' learning.

## **EXPRESSIVE ARTS**

108. The new course of expressive arts was sampled in Years 10 and 11. This GCSE course focuses on drama, dance and the verbal arts. Pupils are innovative and use their ideas well because of the very good teaching. Achievement is high, particularly as there have been no discrete drama lessons in Years 7 to 9 as an introduction to the course. The present standards suggest that many pupils are likely to gain the higher grades A\*-C at GCSE. In the first examination in 2004, all pupils achieved a grade, but there was a wide range of attainment, including a number of pupils who gained the lower grades.

### **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

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

- The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is very good.
- Good teaching encourages pupils to learn.
- Since pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, they achieve well.
- There is good use of ICT in Years 10 and 11 but limited resources are restricting its use in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not familiar with National Curriculum levels.

### **Commentary**

109. The 2003 and 2004 teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 show that standards are above average. The GCSE results in 2003 were high but dipped slightly in 2004 when more pupils were entered, though 41 per cent did gain an A\* or A grade. Girls achieve a little better than the boys.

110. The standards seen are broadly average in Year 9 and this represents good achievement, since many pupils enter Year 7 with underdeveloped musical skills. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good because of the high standard of teaching. Those pupils who learn a musical instrument or regularly attend musical extra-curricular activities achieve particularly well. As all pupils, including those with SEN, work well together this contributes towards their personal development.

111. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 learn well because teaching is good. The pace, challenge and management ensure that pupils are motivated and work hard. Consequently, they have a firm foundation for examination work later on. By working in pairs and groups, pupils establish good attitudes and behaviour that support learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is being introduced and the department is working hard to replace its small stock of ailing computers. Assessment is much more effective than at the previous inspection. However, National Curriculum levels are unknown to the majority of pupils and these could be used to raise standards further.

112. Very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 leads to a higher standard of work from pupils. They understand music software and use ICT well to realise their compositions. There is

emphasis on coursework and regular revision to ensure that pupils are well prepared when the examinations come round. A number of talented pupils give good support to younger pupils in the choir and orchestra.

113. The department is well led and managed, and there is a clear vision for moving the subject forward. To make music more accessible the scheme of work has been rewritten, the GCSE examination board has been changed, and the accommodation has been improved. Consequently, the length of lessons is no longer an issue as at the previous inspection, and lower attaining pupils are now achieving well. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well.
- There are high standards and excellent achievement in the Year 11 GCSE volleyball module.
- There is a good programme of extra-curricular activities, with a good take-up.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of health-related fitness is insufficiently developed during warm-up sessions.

### **Commentary**

114. Most pupils enter the school with average skills in performance but their knowledge of the theory is below average. By the end of Year 9, pupils' performance has improved and is average for their age. These pupils have made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the theory element and that too is now average. Their achievement is therefore good. For pupils at the end of Year 11, GCSE results were below average in 2003, but following a change in curriculum structure they rose in 2004. Standards seen on the GCSE course are high in the volleyball module, and the pupils' knowledge and understanding of sport theory is above average. This represents good achievement. Standards in core (non-examination) physical education in Year 11 are average because these pupils do not have a thorough knowledge of sport theory. Moreover, Year 11 girls who do not take GCSE physical education are not well motivated. The achievement of these pupils is satisfactory. Overall, pupils' achievement in physical education is good throughout the school.

115. Teaching and learning are good. 'Burning off energy and improving skills, whilst enjoying the active learning', is the way in which most pupils describe their lessons. This is certainly the case for Year 11 GCSE pupils taking volleyball. The pace of the work is relentless and each task fully stretches them, even though they are highly skilled. The teacher uses high quality demonstrations extremely well to challenge them to perform at the same high level, which the great majority do. They analyse and improve their own exceptional skills very well, and two are now international players. Attitudes in Years 7 to 9 are very good and where teachers keep up the pace of work, the effort pupils put in helps them to learn well. This was particularly seen in dance when routines were well structured and the pupils thoroughly enjoyed working together on motifs. Their final performance was of a very good standard. Where the teachers build well on the skills pupils have learned previously, achievement and learning are generally good, as was seen in Year 7 netball. However, in most lessons the warm-up sessions are insufficiently linked to health-related fitness. As a result pupils often lack the vocabulary to describe how their performance benefits their fitness. Although pupils' standards are recorded regularly, records are not always used by teachers to plan tasks and pupils are not always aware of just how well they have done.

116. The leadership of the department is satisfactory. There is awareness of areas that need developing, particularly the interest and participation of girls in Year 11. The management of the department is good and day-to-day organisation is effective, providing the pupils with a good range of activities. The wide range of extra-curricular sports activities provides well for all pupils. Skilled sports players have opportunities to play at international and county level and at local sports clubs.

117. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, as more emphasis has been given to pupils' knowledge and understanding of physical activity.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

The new business and vocational courses were sampled in Years 10 and 11.

118. Good working relationships between the school and the neighbouring further education college have resulted in a good range of courses being provided. Some of these courses involve pupils working for two hours one evening per week at the college. Courses provided by the college are applied ICT, applied art, engineering, and health and social care. Business studies is provided at the school.

119. The inspection included a visit to the college to evaluate the provision for pupils. In engineering, pupils' attention was totally engaged, as learning objectives for the lesson were shared and understood. They also used an industrial computer aided design tool to work on a very good variety of problems. Pupils were set performance criteria and had to evaluate and grade their success in a task. In health and social care, pupils were working in groups, sharing and extending their knowledge and understanding of smoking and alcohol. They were able to share their knowledge and were learning to think objectively. Pupils worked very well in the session.

120. In all the classes seen pupils said they enjoyed the ways of working on the courses and they showed very high levels of motivation. Achievement and personal development on the courses are good. Health and social care pupils were seen a work during a self-study session at school. For assessment towards a double vocational GCSE, they had produced an extended piece of work on factors affecting health. All the work seen made very good use of a high level of ICT skills. All pupils are enjoying the course. A business studies lesson was sampled in which teaching was good, with a good structure for revision and work effectively varied to suit different levels of attainment. Thus, good learning took place. Pupils showed good skills for analysing businesses and achievement was good.

121. The courses all make a valuable contribution to progression to the work-related curriculum and prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

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

122. There is good planning for PSHE. The course is integrated with citizenship and taught by form tutors in one lesson each week. This results in variable expertise in the subject; teaching seen during the week varied from unsatisfactory to good. All staff have been provided with teacher guides and have received some in-service training. Pupils use prepared booklets for each topic and these provide information and space for recording their work. Overall teaching and learning in PSHE is satisfactory. Progress files have been introduced for pupils to record their personal achievements, including out-of-school activities. Sex, health and drugs education is included in lessons, with additional input provided by the science department and the school nurse. Moral issues such as bullying, racism and prejudice are included in the course. Currently, the course is co-ordinated by five individual year heads and lacks clear leadership and co-ordination.

## Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is no overall subject coordinator.
- There is insufficient monitoring of both teaching and assessment. Therefore, teacher assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and reporting is inconsistent.
- Provision for pupils' self-assessment is good and is well used by pupils.
- The curriculum, which is linked to PSHE, is well planned; teacher guides are provided to assist non-specialist staff.
- The achievement of lower attaining pupils is unsatisfactory.
- Active citizenship in the community is a strength of the course.

### Commentary

123. Standards seen in lessons were average, but the pupils' topic booklets show evidence of below average work. The work done by pupils in their progress record booklets is average. Overall standards are average throughout the school and, for most pupils, achievement is satisfactory. However, lower attainers are underachieving and achievement is inconsistent across the ability range.

124. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The course is mainly delivered by form tutors who are non-specialists with some in-service training. The basic resources provided are good and enable teachers to provide sufficient guidance for pupils to make satisfactory progress in understanding. The opportunity to add further resources to engage and motivate pupils is underused. Group and paired work is a feature of most lessons and is sometimes good, but it is not always used by teachers to enable pupils to see the relevance of their work. There is very little evidence of teachers marking or checking pupils' work.

125. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There is no overall co-ordinator and no formal monitoring of teaching or assessment in the subject. The well planned teacher guides were provided by the former subject co-ordinator. The curriculum provision for Years 10 and 11 includes the use of commercially produced progress files and booklets, and citizenship worksheets designed by teachers in the school. These are satisfactory but planning is not tight enough. The self-assessment carried out by pupils is often good but is not used by teachers for reporting, and there are no formal records to contribute to end-of-year assessments. Annual reports to parents make only minimal reference to progress in citizenship.

126. The provision for pupils' to take part in active citizenship is developing into a strength. Two year groups are linked to a local home for elderly people and a local hospice. Sponsored activities in some years help to raise pupils' sense of self worth and of their wider responsibilities. An active school council and opportunities for pupils to be mentors and prefects successfully promote pupils' abilities to become involved in wider community activities.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</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	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
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	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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