

INSPECTION REPORT

MAYFIELD SCHOOL

Portsmouth

LEA area: Portsmouth

Unique reference number: 116463

Head teacher: Derek Trimmer

Lead inspector: Grace Marriott

Dates of inspection: 18th – 22nd October 2004

Inspection number: 268418

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

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Terms used in the report

Key Stages

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are at Key Stage 3. Students in Years 10 and 11 are at Key Stage 4 of their education. In Key Stage 3 students take courses in all the subjects of the national curriculum and in citizenship and religious education. In Key Stage 4 all students continue to study English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, physical education, citizenship and religious education. They select other subjects from the academic and vocational courses which the school provides.

National tests and examinations

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

Standards and achievement

Inspectors judge the standards reached by students by comparing their work and results with national results, or by the levels of performance expected for students of the same age nationally. The judgements on students' achievements indicate how much progress students have made and whether they are doing as well as they could. In this report, similar schools are those whose students achieved similar standards at the end of each key stage.

Provision in subjects

The judgement inspectors make about the provision in each subject takes into account students' standard of work, their achievements, the quality of teaching and learning, leadership and management and whether statutory requirements are being met.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Community
Age range of students: 11 - 16
Gender of students: Mixed
Number on roll; 1306

School address: Mayfield Road
North End
Portsmouth
Hampshire
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Telephone number: 023 9269 3432
Fax number: 023 9269 5298

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs A Johnson
governors:

Date of previous November 2002
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Mayfield is a larger than average, mixed comprehensive school in Portsmouth. Though smaller than at the time of the last inspection it has 1306 students on roll. Many students come from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds. Most students are from white UK backgrounds. Just under ten per cent of students are from ethnic minorities, including a small number of refugees and a small number of students who speak English as an additional language. Very few students are at an early stage of learning English. Mayfield has a higher proportion of students who have special educational needs than most schools, although the percentage who have a statement of special educational need is below the national figure. Students join the school in Year 7 with well below average knowledge, skills and understanding overall and particularly in English, though slightly better in mathematics and science.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3674	Grace Marriott	Lead inspector	English as an additional language
19693	Sally Hall	Lay inspector	
24142	Sylvia Argyle	Team inspector	English
6138	Keith Page	Team inspector	Mathematics
32267	Steven Smith	Team inspector	Science
8076	Terry Bendall	Team inspector	Information and communications technology
33368	Valerie Greatrex	Team inspector	Design technology
33135	Kim Ropek	Team inspector	Art and design
25073	Stuart Jordan	Team inspector	Geography
27058	Kathleen Cannon	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
20767	Jerry Royle	Team inspector	Music
35200	Christopher Richardson	Team inspector	History, Citizenship
32269	Richard Butler	Team inspector	Special educational needs
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Mayfield is an improving school which is providing a satisfactory education. Though standards are below average, achievement is satisfactory overall, given the starting point when the students join the school. Teaching is sound with some real strengths, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The head teacher is providing very good leadership which is clearly focused on raising standards and improving the quality of education. He is well-supported by staff, governors, students and parents. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has the capacity to improve rapidly.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Students are making very good progress in religious education and good progress in English, art, design and technology and modern foreign languages
- The performing arts make a strong contribution to the life of the school; achievement in drama and dance is very good overall
- Students are not making enough progress in mathematics, particularly in Years 10 and 11
- The level of challenge and the match of work to the students' needs are not good enough in some lessons
- Literacy and numeracy skills are not well enough developed in some subjects and information and communications technology (ICT) is not used enough across all subjects
- Relationships are good and students are willing to take responsibility
- Attendance has improved but is still well below average

The school has improved considerably since the previous inspection in 2002 and no longer has serious weaknesses. GCSE results are now in line with similar schools. The curriculum is better matched to students' needs and the proportion of teaching which is good or very good has increased. The general standard of behaviour is better and the number of students being excluded has dropped considerably. Students' achievement is improving and this is beginning to be reflected in test and examination results. Past staffing difficulties have affected the rate of progress.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose students achieved similar results at the end of Year 9.

Students' achievements are satisfactory. They join the school with well below average standards in English and below average standards in mathematics. The trend in results is clearly upwards for both Year 9 tests and GCSE. The improvement is reflected in better 2004 national test results in English and mathematics, though not yet in science. GCSE results, though still well below average, are improving steadily and are now consistent with similar schools. Current standards of work are generally still below average. In English this nonetheless represents good achievement from a low starting point. Current achievement in mathematics is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, but not in Years 10 and 11 where the work is not building successfully on what students have already achieved. In science students have previously under-achieved, particularly in Years 7 to 9, but are now making much better progress though standards are still well below average. Standards in drama are well above the national average in Years 10 and 11 and achievement in both dance and drama is very good. Students are also achieving very well in RE. Boys are not doing as well as girls in English, though the gap is closing, but there is little difference in mathematics.

Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well. Attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall. Most students behave well and the school is generally orderly. Some poorer behaviour in lessons from a minority of students was mostly linked to weaker teaching but some behaviour around the school was too boisterous.

Attendance has improved but is still well below average and there is still too much unauthorised absence. Punctuality is still a problem as too many students arrive late for school and lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with nine out of ten lessons being graded as satisfactory or better and about two thirds of the teaching graded good or very good. There was more good and very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Where teaching is good, the range of teaching techniques keeps students interested and actively involved. Most teachers use assessment well to plan the next stage of work and to make students aware of their targets. The best marking also makes students aware of how to improve their work, but this was less consistent. In the unsatisfactory teaching the lessons did not always match the needs of the class and students did not know how well they were doing or how to improve. Teachers are increasingly using ICT effectively but students are not using it as much as they could. Not enough work is done on developing literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. The curriculum has been developed well to meet the needs of students, with a good range of vocational courses and good enrichment and extra-curricular activities. Some subjects have been affected by staffing difficulties but the situation is now much more stable. The school takes good care of its students. Students are consulted and involved effectively in the work of the school. The partnership with parents is good. College links are good and contribute very strongly to the achievement of the students.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The head teacher provides very good leadership and is very well supported by the leadership team and other staff. They have high aspirations for the school and are determined to continue to improve the quality of education it provides. The work of the governors is satisfactory. They are supportive and are more involved in the strategic planning to improve the school.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has worked hard to reach out to parents and their views are now generally positive, as are those of the students. Some students and parents had concerns about behaviour, though many said that it had improved. The inspection team agreed that behaviour has improved and felt that it was generally better than some parents thought. However, some students can be disruptive. The school is aware of this and is working hard with students to improve their motivation and behaviour. Most pupils are positive about the school and believe it is improving.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school is committed to raising standards further, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. Building on what has already been achieved, the most important things the school should do to improve are

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics particularly in Years 10 and 11 and improve the quality of teaching
- Where teaching is weaker, improve the use of assessment and ensure a better match of work to students' needs and a better level of challenge for all students.
- Extend the students' use of ICT across the curriculum and increase the emphasis on developing students' literacy and numeracy skills
- Continue the efforts to improve attendance and punctuality

and, to meet statutory requirements

- Implement a daily act of collective worship

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Students join the school with well below average knowledge, skills and understanding in English. Achievement is improving and is now satisfactory overall, though standards are still below average and some students are underachieving. By Year 11, students are performing at a level consistent with students in similar schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in drama, RE and dance is very good
- Achievement in English, art, design and technology, ICT, modern languages and music is good
- Year 9 test results in 2004 were much improved in English and mathematics
- GCSE results are improving and are now in line with similar schools
- Students in Years 10 and 11 are not making enough progress or achieving well enough in mathematics
- Boys are not doing as well as girls in English though the gap is smaller than it was

Commentary

Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9)

1. The results of the Year 9 tests in 2003, were well below average when compared with all schools nationally, and with those of schools with a similar intake. Some students under-achieved because of poor motivation and attendance but achievement generally in Years 7 to 9 has been affected by staffing difficulties. Girls did better than boys in English, but there was little difference in mathematics. Results in 2004 improved considerably in English and mathematics though not in science.
2. Current achievement is improving and is now satisfactory overall. Standards are improving in English and mathematics, though still below average, however given their starting point this represents good achievement in English and satisfactory achievement in mathematics. In science, achievement has been unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 because students have not made progress. They are now making better progress but there is still a legacy of underachievement to be overcome. In most other subjects achievement is satisfactory and it is good in art, design and technology, ICT, modern languages and music and very good in drama, dance and RE.

Key Stage 3

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.1 (29.3)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	31.0 (31.9)	35.4 (34.7)
science	29.1 (29.5)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 271 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Standards are slightly higher in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Achievement though satisfactory overall is also better, mainly because the teaching is better. GCSE results in 2003 were in line with similar schools in terms of the proportion of students achieving 5 or more A* to C grades. Boys and girls did better in history and boys did better in design and technology than other subjects. Boys and girls did worse in science, boys also did worse in English. The results for 2004 were slightly better, though national comparisons are not yet available. The 2004 results in drama and RE were particularly good and students also achieved well in graphics, electronics and Spanish and German. Girls did better than boys overall, and particularly in English.
4. In the current Years 10 and 11, achievement is good in English, art, design and technology, ICT, modern languages, music and physical education (PE). It is very good in RE and excellent in

drama. It is satisfactory in other subjects except mathematics where the teaching and learning are not building systematically on what students achieved in Year 9. Students have made a good start on the vocational courses, but it is too early to make a secure judgement about standards or achievement.

Key Stage 4

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	25 (22)	52 (50)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	72 (74)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	91 (87)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	24.5 (23.7)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 318 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Students with special educational needs achieve at least as well as other students in the school. They make most progress in specialist sessions or when supported in lessons by a teaching assistant. Their achievement in other lessons is satisfactory. Gifted and talented students also make satisfactory progress, as do students with English as an additional language.
6. Overall, students' literacy skills are below average. They have satisfactory reading skills and answer direct questions well but lack confidence when asked to give more formal or extended presentations. Basic writing skills are under-developed. In history and RE, writing skills are being developed well, but this is not consistent across subjects. Students' numeracy skills are also below average and, as with literacy, the use and development of numeracy skills varies considerably. In science, drama, modern foreign languages and design and technology some good work is being done, but this is not specifically planned in other subjects and many opportunities were missed. When given the opportunity, students use ICT competently, but this is also not consistent and in general, students have too few opportunities to use ICT.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. The school's provision for students' personal development is good. Attendance is well below average and punctuality is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although the school has successfully improved attendance, absence rates are still too high and too many students are late for school and lessons
- Most teachers have developed very good relationships with students and are skilled at developing students' confidence and self-esteem
- Most students are keen to participate in lessons and other activities, but when teaching is dull students are often reluctant learners
- The majority of students behave well, although some students are boisterous and the behaviour of a few students is sometimes poor
- Students have good opportunities to take responsibility

Commentary

7. Students respond well when teachers make learning relevant, challenging and make good use of visual aids. They listen carefully, are keen to answer questions, work well together and sustain concentration. Their attitudes, behaviour and achievement in these lessons are good and sometimes very good or excellent. However in a minority of lessons when teaching is dull or does not match their needs, or when students do not see the point of the tasks they have been set, they lose interest and are at best, passive or at worst, disruptive. Learning and achievement in these lessons are unsatisfactory.
8. The behaviour and attitudes of students with special educational needs is satisfactory. Where teachers have planned well for them to learn actively and have good strategies for positively

managing conduct, students are engaged, co-operative and make progress. Where teachers are less organised, do not understand the needs of students with special educational needs, or do not have strategies to manage and help them, students behave and engage less well. Behaviour in withdrawal and specialist sessions is good, students have positive attitudes and trustful relationships with staff and try hard to do their best.

9. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully increased its attendance rates, albeit from a very low base, and there are fewer unauthorised absences. Students say the school is a much better place and they now want to come to school. However, attendance rates are still well below the national average and these long term and sporadic absences have a detrimental effect on students' achievements. Tutors, heads of year and the educational welfare team all work hard to follow up absences which are a cause for concern, but the school does not yet have a sufficiently unified approach to improve and promote regular attendance.
10. A significant minority of students is regularly late and often drift into school with no sense of urgency. This means they do not arrive for the beginning of tutor time or assembly and miss an important start to the school day. Many lessons do not start on time as students continue to arrive up to five minutes after the bell. This has a detrimental effect on their learning, as planned tasks are not always completed in the reduced time available.
11. Spiritual development is good and successfully promotes students' feeling of self-worth. The majority of teachers have built very trusting relationships with the students. Some staff successfully establish an environment where students feel confident to 'have a go', even if initially they lack confidence. This is particularly evident in subjects such as drama and art where teachers are skilled at presenting tasks in small steps which are challenging but achievable. In RE, teachers create an atmosphere where students' opinions are valued and students contribute to discussions without fear of failure or ridicule. Achievement in these lessons is very good or excellent. Assemblies, some tutor times and lessons such as RE and life skills offer good opportunities for students to reflect on life and its meanings.
12. The provision for moral development is good. The school's consistent and firm approach to promoting good behaviour has paid off and students, parents, staff and governors all agree that behaviour has improved considerably in the recent past. Fixed term exclusions have been reduced and there were no permanent exclusions last year. Students feel safe and the majority are keen to ensure that standards of behaviour are maintained and improved. Behaviour around the school is generally satisfactory, but when students are not closely supervised a few seem determined to behave in an anti-social manner. Students say that reported incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly, and staff, students and the community police are working to improve further the school's anti-bullying strategies.
13. The provision of social development is good. Many students are now proud of their school. They are eager to make further improvements and are keen to contribute their ideas through tutor groups, year councils and the school council. Students who have been appointed as prefects, mentors and buddies take their responsibilities very seriously and are keen to support their peers. School productions, sports events and Duke of Edinburgh award scheme provide good opportunities for students to develop their social and personal skills.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	8.2	School data:	2.2
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.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1331	248	
White – any other White background	6	5	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3		
Mixed – any other mixed background	4		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	30		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	9		
Black or Black British – African	6	2	

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school is providing a satisfactory education. The teaching is sound overall. The curriculum is good and the developments in vocational learning are good. The school takes good care of students' welfare, health and safety and involves them well in its work and development. It also provides good guidance and support.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Just over nine out of every ten lessons seen were satisfactory or better, and two thirds of lessons were good or better. Where the teaching was less than satisfactory, it was mainly because the work was not well matched to students' needs. Assessment is generally satisfactory and its use in target setting is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Classroom organisation and routines promote good attitudes to learning and behaviour
- The range of teaching techniques and the lively approach maintain a good level of interest
- Clear objectives and good explanations enable students to understand the tasks and make good progress
- Some teaching was unsatisfactory because it was not well-enough matched to students' needs or because the approach was dull
- Assessment is being used well to set targets. Students are very aware of these and what the next level requires
- Marking is not always clear or precise enough about how students could improve
- Teaching is not developing students' literacy, numeracy or ICT skills enough
- Students with special educational needs receive good support in withdrawal sessions and when working in class with support assistants

Commentary

14. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages, though the proportion of good and very good teaching was higher in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. However, good teaching was evident in all year groups and almost all subjects. The teaching in drama was excellent in Years 10

and 11 and very good in Years 7 to 9. Teaching was very good in RE and good in English, art, design and technology, ICT and modern foreign languages. In Years 10 and 11 it was also good in history, music and PE. It was satisfactory in all other subjects and year groups except in mathematics in Years 10 and 11. Here the teaching was unsatisfactory mainly because it did not build on what students had achieved in earlier years.

15. Teachers generally have good knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subjects. Where the teaching was good or very good, the lively approach and good range of activities helped to motivate students and make learning interesting and enjoyable. Teachers organised their classes well and the routines promoted good behaviour and attitudes so that all students were able to learn. They used a wide range of methods to keep lessons moving at a brisk pace. In most classes in Years 7 to 9 teachers are successfully using the national strategy which is designed to strengthen teaching and learning across the curriculum for all pupils aged 11 to 14, and which provides a very clear structure for lessons. Many teachers have also adapted this approach effectively for work in Years 10 and 11.
16. Many students are not naturally well motivated or keen to learn and teachers have to work hard to engage their attention and interest. Explanation, demonstration, practical work, group discussion, and occasionally, ICT, were all used in different ways to motivate students. The work was carefully and effectively matched to students' needs. In very good RE lessons in Year 7 all the students made progress in understanding what is meant by conscience because the careful questioning helped all students to contribute. Resources were used well to stimulate discussion and students were challenged to think for themselves and develop their own ideas. In a Year 11 dance lesson, students worked successfully in pairs. The teaching challenged them to be self-critical and work together to develop and refine their performance. In a very good art lesson in Year 8 the demonstration of specific techniques helped students to improve their own skills. In science the use of practical work engaged students' interest and increased their understanding of the concepts.
17. Where teaching was less than satisfactory, this was mainly because the work was not well enough planned to meet students' needs. At times, students found the work too easy, or were repeating previous work. Sometimes, the teaching was dull in approach and did not engage students' interest. As a result they made little progress and some became disruptive which affected the learning of others. Some of the satisfactory teaching was not giving students enough scope to develop their ideas or work independently because teachers were concentrating too much on managing students' behaviour and not enough on developing their knowledge and skills. In general, teaching is not developing students' literacy, numeracy or ICT skills consistently enough.
18. Overall, assessment is sound. The school is analysing data about students' progress and attainment well and the accuracy of teacher assessments in Years 8 and 9 is improving. Teachers are using their knowledge of students' previous standard of work for effective target setting. Some departments are using this information to plan booster classes and pitch work in lessons at the right level to match the learning needs of students. The English department has used data effectively to raise students' aspirations and provide targeted support for identified Year 9 students. Assessment is also being well used in art, design and technology, music, PE and RE. In departments where assessment data are less well used there has been less effect on standards, as information about students' progress is not having enough impact in the classroom. Work is not always sufficiently challenging and in science, this particularly affects the more able students.
19. The teaching of students with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Where subject staff understand the specific needs and use effective strategies, students make good progress, particularly when supported by a teaching assistant. This was evident in lessons in art, RE and mathematics. Teaching was less effective where teachers did not understand the individual needs or where a teaching assistant would have made a significant difference. The work in withdrawal or specialist lessons is good. Teachers plan interesting, active and accessible tasks which improve students' skills and confidence. A mixed age group of younger dyslexic students were reluctant to leave at the end of their lesson because they had enjoyed the range of activities which had been carefully matched to individual needs. In a Year 11 lesson a skilfully managed discussion helped students to explore the financial implications of independent living, while still remaining focused on the main task. Occasionally teaching was less effective when teachers did not have enough

experience or knowledge to ensure that students learnt quickly, or would be able to transfer what they had learnt to another context.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 159 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7 (4%)	36 (23%)	61 (38%)	40 (25%)	12 (7%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and well-matched to the needs of the students, particularly in Years 10 and 11, though many of the developments are recent and have not yet had time to have a significant effect on standards. Provision for vocational education is good. The work related curriculum is good. Staffing is now better matched to the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation and resources are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works hard to ensure that all students have access to a curriculum which is appropriate for their particular needs
- The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 provides a good range of vocational courses in co-operation with local colleges
- Students are well-prepared for the next stage of education
- The range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities is good and a large number of students are involved in the performing arts and sport
- Some subject planning does not take enough account of the need to develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills

Commentary

20. The curriculum is broad and balanced and offers an appropriate range of courses. It is very good in RE and good in art, drama, history and modern languages. The legal requirements are in place for all year groups except in relation to collective worship. Effective use has been made of the increased flexibility of curriculum arrangements to ensure that the curriculum is now better suited to the needs of the students. Good arrangements have been made to modify the curriculum for lower attaining students in Years 7 to 9 and an accelerated curriculum has been set up for some students in Year 7. This will allow them to take some GCSEs early. This is innovative, but is at too early a stage of development to be able to judge its success. In Years 10 and 11, students have access to a wide range of option choices. The school has recently developed the work related curriculum and offers a number of vocational courses, most of which are run in conjunction with Highbury College. Early indications are that these are successful and meet the needs of the students well. Arrangements for the work related curriculum meet statutory requirements. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. The programme is carefully planned to cover the legal requirements for sex, drugs and health education and is also the main means through which citizenship is taught.
21. The curriculum for students with special educational needs is good. The school provides a wide range of appropriate courses and support for all students. The younger students are taught together for several subjects. These groups have the advantage of working with staff who know them well but sometimes struggle to concentrate for long periods without the breaks created by changing classrooms between lessons. Younger students with emotional and behavioural needs can be referred to the Lower School Inclusion Base where staff work sensitively to help them return successfully to their usual classes. In Years 10 and 11, students also have a good range of provision. They benefit from access to vocational courses and *Key Skills* qualifications. Staff deal at an individual level with work-related learning and work experience and also help them with course work. Students appreciate these opportunities and often independently seek support and guidance. The accommodation and resources for students with special educational needs is satisfactory, with the exception of the Lower School Inclusion Base where facilities are very limited. This affects the strategies that staff can adopt to support students placed there.

22. Extra curricular provision is good. The curriculum is enriched through a range of clubs for drama, music, dance, sport, computers and languages. Many students take part in sporting activities and whole school productions such as the very popular *Rock Challenge* also involve large numbers of students. The library is available for work after school and the school provides revision clubs for different subjects. The programme of visits and visitors across the curriculum is more limited and this means students have fewer opportunities than in many schools to learn through experiencing the world outside school. However, residential visits to France, Germany and Spain enhance students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as broadening their knowledge of European citizenship.
23. The needs of gifted and talented students are catered for by a range of activities. These include taking part in *Aim Higher Enrichment* activities at Portsmouth University, and extra curricular activities after school. Although these developments are good, provision for gifted and talented students is satisfactory though still at an early stage of development.
24. The use of ICT across the curriculum is too inconsistent. Many teachers make use of ICT to support their teaching with effective use of interactive white boards in several subjects, notably mathematics. However the use of ICT by students to aid their learning in other subjects is underdeveloped.
25. The match of teachers to curricular need is generally good. Special needs support staff are well deployed within the special needs department and in providing classroom support. However, there are too few of them supporting lower achieving students in main school lessons, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The provision of technician support in design and technology is not sufficient. The accommodation and resources in the school are good overall.

Care, guidance and support

Care, welfare, health and safety are good. Support, advice and guidance are good. Involvement of students is good.

Main strengths

- The support and guidance for students' personal development is good
- Students feel that they can turn to adults working in school if they have concerns
- Staff provide good guidance to students on what they need to do to improve their work
- The arrangements for first aid are very good
- The arrangements for induction of Year 7 students are good
- Students have an effective voice through the school council and the *Students as Researchers* projects

Commentary

26. The pastoral system is well managed and structured. A range of frequent and regular meetings with tutors, heads of year and assistant heads has resulted means staff plan and communicate well. Tutors make good use of tutor time to track students' personal progress and show high levels of care and concern for students. Heads of year are vigilant of students with particular difficulties and endeavour to provide them with good support through working with the counsellor, the inclusion bases and outside agencies. The students' questionnaires and interviews with students clearly show that students can turn to a number of people within school if they are worried or upset. Parents of Year 7 students appreciate the way their children settle into school through a sensitive yet rigorous induction programme.
27. Tutors keep a check on the students' academic progress and this is particularly effective at the time of the twice-annual progress review. The tutors invite parents and students to discuss how the student is getting on and how they can improve their work. In lessons most teachers are skilled at explaining to students how well they are doing and many give clear guidance on what they need to do to improve. Staff volunteer to run beneficial after school and weekend workshops to provide extra support for students preparing for external examinations.
28. Staff ensure that students work in a healthy and safe environment. A deputy head teacher co-ordinates health and safety matters and carries out her duties effectively. Risk assessments are in place and appropriate arrangements are in place for emergency evacuations and testing of

electrical equipment. Arrangements for first aid are very good. Students receive very good care and attention in a well-equipped medical room. Very good records are kept of treatment and administration of medication. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. An assistant head teacher is the child protection co-ordinator and ensures that staff receive regular reminders about school procedures. A number of key staff have received relevant training and the resident educational welfare officer manages the day-to day issues regarding child protection effectively. Staff are aware of those students who are in public care, but the school has not yet acquired the necessary personal education plans.

29. Students with special educational needs are cared for well. They have access to staff whom they know well and trust, and more vulnerable students have access to sanctuary areas during social times. Information about students is communicated through documents such as Individual and Group Education Plans, Pastoral Support Plans and the Inclusion Bulletin. These documents are carefully compiled but are not used well by some staff. Access for students with physical disabilities has improved and access to ground floors is good with an extensive network of ramps. Access to higher floors is not yet possible. Students with English as an additional language who are at an early stage of learning English, have access to well-managed and well-targeted support which enables them make progress at a similar rate to other students.
30. Students recognise that their views are taken into account. Through the school council and student research into school practice they are able to influence school life. Student mentors and 'buddies' provide support for individuals who are experiencing difficulties. This responsibility for providing help for other students is taken very seriously. Students are aware of their level of achievement in their work and are involved in setting targets for improvement.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good. Links with the community are satisfactory. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school successfully involves parents in the life of the school
- Parents have positive views of the school
- There are good opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress with staff
- The school has established valuable links with other local secondary schools and is developing partnerships with its feeder primary schools
- Students gain valuable insights into the world of work through links with business but there are few visits or visitors to enrich the curriculum

Commentary

31. The school works hard to reach out to parents and successfully conveys its improving ethos to them and the community. Regular newsletters give parents relevant and timely information about future events as well as celebrating the school's successes. Staff make frequent contact with home to congratulate students as well as to discuss problems. The head teacher holds useful weekly surgeries for parents to talk about their concerns. Parents generally support the work of the school and a significant minority are actively involved in school life. The parents' consultation group work closely with senior staff and discuss their suggestions on issues such as homework and toilets. Parents provide valuable support through their work as experienced mentors for Year 9 students. Parent governors are very supportive of the school.
32. Parents have positive views of the school. Although there is a general agreement that behaviour has improved considerably, a minority of parents still expressed their concerns about behaviour and bullying through the pre-inspection questionnaires. In general, behaviour was better than these parents believed but the school is not complacent and is continuing to work with the minority of students who can cause problems for others. It already has plans to develop its anti-bullying strategies further.
33. The school offers parents valuable opportunities to come into school to talk with staff about how their children are getting on. Through meetings with tutors at the twice-annual reviews and the annual parent consultations, parents are given frequent occasions to discuss how their children are doing and plan with staff how best their children can move forward. The students' annual reports are

generally good. They give parents clear information about what their children can do and what they need to do to improve.

34. The school has forged valuable links with local employers and these partnerships have enhanced the students' understanding of the world of work. Through the educational business partnership, students are offered beneficial work experience placements and mentors from the Inland Revenue provide a helpful guidance. However students studying some vocational courses have very limited opportunities to visit local businesses. The school has developed a very close partnership with local police officers and this has resulted in successful campaigns to reduce crime and promote the police as advisors.
35. By establishing strong and beneficial partnerships with local secondary schools, staff have worked successfully with colleagues from other schools. They share ideas and offer mutual support, particularly in the areas of management, the curriculum, training and sharing of equipment. The school has good links with local colleges through its work related programmes. Until recently the school has had very little contact with local primary schools, but staff are building firm foundations for future links by providing a very successful series of workshops for Year 5 students and by inviting primary students to attend school productions. Staff work with their primary colleagues and Year 6 students to ensure that the transfer from one stage of education to the next is as smooth as possible.
36. Links and liaison with parents of students with special educational needs, and with support and community agencies, are good. Parents contribute to statutory procedures such as the Annual Review of Statement meetings, and often make contact with the school if they are concerned. Multi-Agency meetings are regularly scheduled which allows a coherent approach and is time efficient. The working relationship with the local education authority is harmonious.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the head teacher is very good and he effectively promotes the vision of the school
- Monitoring of the school's work by senior managers is systematic and closely linked to the priorities of the school improvement plan
- The teams created to lead and manage all aspects of school life, particularly the coaching initiative, are effective
- Most departments are well led and managed and the leadership and management of drama and RE are excellent
- The monitoring of the impact of teaching and learning on achievement is by middle managers is satisfactory but not always consistent, particularly in relation to literacy, numeracy, and ICT

Commentary

37. The head teacher provides very good leadership. He shows great understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is very clear about its future direction. He has effectively transmitted his vision, and staff, governors, parents, and students are determined to support him in the creation of a school held in high esteem by the local community. His skill, energy, and commitment are major factors in the school's rapid improvement since January 2004. His restructuring of the senior leadership team, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, including the effective line management of pastoral systems and subject departments, has made it more effective and improved the provision for students. Throughout the school day senior leaders, including the head teacher are very visible around the school corridors supporting teachers and students should they need assistance. This has had a very good impact on behaviour. Strong links have been forged with local schools and the LEA, and external expertise informs the development of policy and practice.
38. Leadership and management show good improvement since the last inspection and are led by a strong professional desire to act in the best interest of students. This has been achieved by an increased emphasis on ensuring staff are well informed and a strong focus on improving the quality

of teaching and learning. The senior leadership team and heads of department and senior leaders observe lessons, often assisted by LEA advisers. This systematic monitoring informs a very good coaching initiative where teams from different subjects work together to share best practice. Teachers are provided with good feedback on their strengths and areas for development that will be re-visited next time. Consequently, the school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses. However, at the level of middle management, the provision of feedback focused on the impact of teaching and learning on achievement though satisfactory and sometimes good, is inconsistent, particularly in literacy, numeracy, and ICT.

39. The school improvement plan provides a strong basis for effective action. The plan emphasises the significance of leadership and management and teaching and learning in ensuring that standards rise. These priorities are replicated in departments, most of which use the wealth of available data effectively to prepare their provision carefully and meet individual needs. Departments are generally well led and managed. Inspirational leadership and excellent management in RE result in the higher attaining students in Year 9 successfully completing the short-course GCSE early. The outstanding leadership and management of the drama department benefit the whole school, especially in large scale productions. The impact of good and very good leadership and management on teaching and learning in English, art, ICT, modern foreign languages, PE, design and technology, history and special educational needs was very evident.
40. Governance of the school is satisfactory. The governing body contains a good mixture of long-standing governors and newer appointments. Governors are very supportive of the head teacher and committed to the school's further development. They exercise their critical role in a constructive way. Now that they are better informed as to the schools' strengths and weaknesses, they are more able to challenge the head teacher and hold him to account. They understand their strategic role and make a satisfactory contribution to the planning. They understand that they will need further training before extending their monitoring role within the school. Governors have carried out their statutory duties in all respects except for ensuring that the school provides a daily act of collective worship.
41. The recruitment and retention of good teachers is given high priority and is well linked to school priorities. The school has largely resolved its previous staffing difficulties through a comprehensive and well monitored programme of teacher training through the Graduate Teacher Programme. This is linked to local schools and colleges and overseen by Portsmouth University. Systems for the induction and mentoring of trainees and newly qualified staff are well managed. These help to ensure that the school's students are taught well. All staff have good opportunities to attend courses and for advisory input from local authority specialists. Performance management targets are closely linked to raising standards. Additionally, the school's comprehensive workforce reform (in line with current national requirements) ensures that teaching and classroom support staff are well deployed. The appointment of five cover supervisors makes for a more effective and efficient teaching team by creating a more even workload for all staff. The training of administrative staff is less well developed and some have not yet been included in the overall planning for staff development.
42. The leadership and management of the provision for students with special educational needs is good. The head teacher offers good support and key staff are influencing the school's overall strategy and vision. An innovative and inclusive approach has created a broad range of support and services for the students with special educational needs. The structure of the current provision is still new, with some arrangements and procedures only very recently in place. These developments are already starting to make a difference to students' achievement and attendance. The school is aware of the need to ensure that the developments are evaluated and fully co-ordinated. The special educational needs team is well led and feel supported. Statutory requirements are met and the administration is efficient.
43. Financial management is good. The recently revised systems are secure, transparent and understood by the finance committee that briefs the governing body regularly. Spending is prioritised in line with the improvement plan and the school applies the principles of best value in all it does. The deficit budget, a major barrier to development, is being managed carefully and monies available are spent wisely. Given the funding received and the quality of education, the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,506,609	Balance from previous year	-140,013
Total expenditure	4,924,644	Balance carried forward to the next	-418,035
Expenditure per pupil	3,518		

WORK RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work-related learning is good and statutory requirements are met. The school is building on its existing good practice to develop an effective approach to work-related learning for all students. The range of vocational opportunities open to students has been considerably extended through the provision of courses, taught in local colleges, in engineering, hair and beauty, catering, construction and hairdressing as well as the courses in leisure and tourism and business studies which are taught in school. This means that a high proportion of students in Years 10 and 11 are taking courses which are clearly work-related. Other subjects are in the process of identifying their potential to contribute to work-related learning either through activities which develop understanding of business or work, or using work as a context for learning. All students in Year 10 have the opportunity to take part in work experience. This area of the school's work is well led and the planned strategy for the programme is appropriate and manageable.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

Most subjects were not reported in detail in the last inspection report so a judgement for progress cannot always be made.

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is good.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are achieving well and standards are improving
- Clear assessment targets help students know how well they are doing and how to do better
- Teaching is well planned and structured to enable students to progress
- The department is well led and managed with a strong team commitment
- Students' weaknesses in basic writing skills affect their work in many subjects

Commentary

Examination results

44. Students enter the school with standards that are well below the national average and lower than their standards in maths and science. In 2003, results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were still well below the national average for that age group. 2004 tests showed much improved results. By the end of Year 11 in 2003, GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature results were well below national averages but there was a slight improvement in 2004. Girls did better than boys.

Standards and achievement

45. Standards seen during the inspection were below the national average but are improving. Students read to find information, using the well stocked library or the Internet. In speaking tasks, students are keen to answer direct questions and take part in informal discussions, but are less willing to take the initiative or give more formal presentations. However, it is in writing that students show the greatest weakness. Too many students in Years 10 and 11 face the demands of GCSE with under-developed literacy skills in which spelling and punctuation errors persist. When teachers give step by step support, students can develop their ideas into a piece of extended writing of which they are proud. For example, in a Year 10 class, meticulous attention to detail in drafting an essay on *Romeo and Juliet* resulted in well structured essays with opinions supported and explained. Many students now write their essays on computers at home or at school which allows them to amend their drafts, correct any mistakes and produce a neatly finished piece.
46. Students make good progress with their English as they move through the school, particularly in Years 7 to 9 where there is very good extra support and well directed teaching. Most students work conscientiously and appreciate and act on guidance given by their teachers. In Years 10 and 11, higher attaining students approach set texts and poetry for GCSE with increasing confidence and are helped by clear examination criteria and targets. Progress for middle and lower attaining students in Years 10 and 11 is patchy, especially for those who are poorly motivated or who, until recently, were taught by a succession of temporary and supply staff.

Teaching and learning

47. In all lessons seen, teachers had clear objectives which they explained to the students. When classroom routines are well established, students behave politely and show respect for each other, for their books and for their work. Relationships are good and, with a focus on the work, there is generally a positive atmosphere for learning. Lesson planning is good but makes too little allowance for students learning in different ways and at a different pace. A strength is the emphasis teachers give to what students can do and the grades or levels they are working towards. Students have these targets in their books and review them regularly with their teachers. A variety of activities and working styles in each lesson ensures students remain interested and active. At times, however, teachers do too much for the students. This weakens the challenge of the work so that students remain over-dependent on the teacher and too passive in response.

Leadership and management

48. After a period of severe difficulties in recruiting staff, all students now have a permanent English teacher. Good leadership, staff training and professional development have raised morale and introduced a consistent approach to issues like marking and tracking students' progress. Teachers and teaching assistants share a common purpose and work as an effective team. With higher expectations, there is a strong drive to raise students' achievement although the full impact of recent changes has yet to be felt. The suite of teaching rooms is well organised with attractive wall displays and artefacts. There has been good improvement over the two years since the last inspection and every indication that rapid improvement can continue.

Literacy across the curriculum

49. Overall, students' competence in literacy is below expectation. Students have satisfactory reading skills. Too few read for pleasure although the attractive library provides a very welcoming resource. Orally, students answer direct questions well but lack confidence when asked to give more formal or extended presentations. Basic writing skills are under-developed. Although there are pockets of good practice, for example, in history and RE, there is no specific programme to improve writing styles or promote good writing across all subjects. A school literacy policy is inconsistently implemented and not monitored.

Modern foreign languages

The overall provision for French, German and Spanish is good.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	No judgement

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject expertise
- Examination results in German and Spanish are good
- The introduction of GNVQ courses has improved the curriculum for Years 10 and 11
- Not all students have equal opportunities to enhance their learning through the use of ICT

Commentary

Examination results

50. Students enter the school in Year 7 with little or no previous experience of modern languages. By age 14 their standards in French are broadly average. Over the last four years, GCSE examination results for French have been below the national average. However, their results are in line with

similar schools. Higher achieving students study German as a second foreign language. By age 14 their standards are above average. The number of entries in GCSE examinations is too small to compare with national averages, however, in 2004, unconfirmed data indicates that over half of students gained A*-C grades. Student in Years 10 and 11 who study Spanish do well in GCSE examinations. Since 2004, lower achieving students take a GNVQ language module in Year 11. The first results of these indicate that almost half gained a pass.

Standards and achievement

51. In all languages, students make good progress. They respond to everyday greetings and phrases and participate in simple role play situations. For example, Year 7 pupils in French classes sing songs about the months of the year or ask each other simple questions, such as birth dates. By Year 9, they use regular and irregular verbs in the present tense and match nouns and verbs accurately, using conjunctions to turn simple sentences into compound sentences. Their written work is dated and titled in French and is mostly well presented. Older students in Years 10 and 11 draft and redraft essays on holidays and aspects of their life. Higher achieving students begin to use past and conditional tenses in written work. They conduct surveys and prepare role play situations as part of their examination preparation.
52. Higher achieving students in Year 7 make rapid progress in German. In one very good lesson, students were introduced to colours and clothing. By the end of the session they used their new vocabulary confidently in unprompted sentences. By age 14, students use three tenses accurately in speech, such as when describing their likes and dislikes. They participate well in whole class word games. In order to raise standards, students of German in Year 10 and 11 are taught in single sex groups. Their achievement is good, with some high powered discussions on topical news items. They show a sound understanding of printed texts and use complex grammar well in their written work.
53. Older students following Spanish GCSE courses make good and sometimes excellent progress. They participate very well in oral sessions, using compound sentences to discuss for example, the furnishings of a house. They read aloud, taking care with their accents and expression, which indicates their understanding of the text. They discuss careers, and use dictionaries to perfect their spelling.

Teaching and learning

54. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. All staff have very good subject expertise, which is reflected in their teaching. Lessons are imaginatively planned, lively and fun, which retains students' interest. In all years, relationships are very good, which is a reflection of the teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour. Teachers make good use of resources to enhance and consolidate learning, and students are fully aware of their knowledge levels and how they can progress. Lessons are well matched to students' abilities and offer an appropriate degree of challenge. Where the lesson was unsatisfactory, the work was too easy and students quickly became bored and distracted. Literacy skills are well promoted through written and grammar work and there are good links with other subjects. However, in some lessons, teachers use too much English which prevents students from hearing or responding in the target language. Although teachers use videos, overhead projectors and cassette recorders to promote learning, computers are insufficiently used. Teachers keep effective records of their students work, and marking is positive and encouraging. Homework, which is regularly set, consolidates work completed during lessons.

Leadership and management

55. The department is well managed with good schemes of work for each language. However, not all teachers follow the agreed schemes, which leads to inconsistencies in the approach to French. The curriculum and its teaching are monitored and assessment is used well to inform further development. The needs of all students are met through a range of approaches which include single sex groupings, GNVQ language units and accelerated learning. One Year 9 French class, disaffected through staffing problems, have had their interest in languages rekindled by changing to German. The language department has two computer suites, but a lack of co-operation between staff means these computers are inaccessible to students based in the other classrooms. This does not ensure equal access to ICT. The curriculum is enriched through several well attended after school language clubs. Residential visits to France, Germany and Spain enhance students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as broadening their knowledge of European citizenship.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is unsatisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below	Well below
Achievement	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved by the end of Year 9 have improved significantly
- Early intervention in Year 7 and targeting in Year 9 raises the attainment and achievement of many below average students
- Effective support ensures students with special educational needs make good progress
- Standards and achievement are unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11
- Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are unsatisfactory
- Students work is regularly assessed but the feedback does not always tell students how to reach the next level of attainment

Commentary

Examination results

56. GCSE examination results in 2003 and since the last inspection in 2002 were well below the national average. End of Year 9 test results in 2003 were also well below the national average compared with all schools and below those for similar schools. The 2004 results for Year 9 show a significant improvement on 2003 though national comparisons are not yet available.

Standards and achievement

57. Recent results in national tests and standards being attained in lessons show that achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Increasing numbers of the below average ability students quickly improve their level of numeracy by achieving a greater understanding of place value. However, the progress and achievement of average and lower ability students is not maintained in Years 10 and 11. Consequently standards in Year 10 and 11 lessons and the proportion of GCSE A* to C grades are well below the national average. The

majority of students with special educational needs make good progress in Years 7 to 11. In all years good intervention by support staff using practical activity improves the involvement and achievement of students with special educational needs. There is no difference in the standards and achievement of boys and girls and the progress of students with English as an additional language is line with those of similar ability.

Teaching and learning

58. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and has improved since the last inspection. There is more good and very good teaching and less unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers use mental and oral activities and calculators efficiently to overcome students' low levels of confidence and literacy and improve their numeracy skills. Furthermore, the efficient and innovative use of ICT motivates students to work together. Most teachers apply the national Key Stage 3 Strategy which provides a good structure for lessons. Data is used well to track students' progress and help teachers set targets for the attainment of different groups. Consequently, the vast majority of students know their current and target level of attainment. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory staff had under-estimated what students could do in shape and space and statistics and had limited strategies to improve attainment. Too often students recognised that they were repeating previous work without learning something new. When this happened they were less interested in the lessons, did less work and the standard of presentation deteriorated.
59. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. There was some good and very good teaching, when teachers matched the activities well to the needs of all students. In these lessons standards and achievement in number, algebra, trigonometry and statistics improved. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is, however, too high and has not improved since the last inspection. In the unsatisfactory lessons expectations of what students can achieve are low and the work is not sufficiently relevant and active to capture their interest. In Year 10, the average and lower ability students' knowledge of shape and space and their previous gains in number, are seldom used to provide appropriate challenge. Students lose interest, behaviour deteriorates and standards drop.

Leadership and management

60. Leadership and management are satisfactory and have led to satisfactory improvement in the provision for Years 7 to 9 since the last inspection. The links with the LEA are supporting this development well. The intervention policy is effective in raising the attainment of the lower ability students in Years 7 and 9 and the gifted and talented students have opportunities to attend local master classes. However, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has not rigorously emphasised raising attainment and achievement and the mapping of the curriculum has not sufficiently identified the progress required between Years 7 and 11. As a result, there has been unsatisfactory improvement in the provision for Years 10 and 11 since the last inspection. The provision in Years 10 and 11, particularly for the average and least able, does not continue the best teaching and learning strategies in Years 7 to 9 and does not take enough account of what students have already achieved. Across all years important policies relative to improving standards, such as those on marking and assessment, are not being applied consistently. Consequently, the majority of students do not know what they need to do to reach the next level of attainment.
61. The inspection evidence, and developments already planned, show that the department clearly has the capacity to make further improvements and is well supported by the head teacher and LEA. The effective professional development for staff and on-going

improvements to the accommodation and resources are clear indicators of the school's commitment to building the reputation of the department amongst students.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. The development of mathematics as part of the teaching and learning in other subjects has commenced with a policy statement produced as part of the school's successful bid to acquire the Basic Skills Quality Mark. There is high mathematical expectation in science when the average and least able use chemical equations and atomic structure and some innovative ideas related to stage management in drama. In modern foreign languages younger students learn to count in several languages and in design technology older students use mathematical skills as part of their evaluations. However, staff have not had access to the national numeracy training and the provision across the curriculum is not fully co-ordinated. As a result many subjects have not identified what they can contribute and many opportunities to develop students' mathematical capability are missed.

SCIENCE

Students in Years 10 and 11 take either single award (one GCSE) or double award (two GCSEs) examinations.

Provision in science is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information about how well students are doing is starting to be used more effectively to target further support for their learning
- Schemes of work are being revised to improve the match between the curriculum, teachers' planning and the learning needs of students
- Work is not planned effectively enough to meet the needs of all students and to ensure there is sufficient challenge for the more able
- In a few lessons, poor teaching and low expectations lead to disruptive behaviour and unsatisfactory learning
- The relationships are good in many lessons
- Students are not getting enough opportunities to develop their literacy and ICT skills

Commentary

Examination results

63. In tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, standards were well below the national level. The number of students obtaining a GCSE A* to C grade of was well below the national level. Overall, girls did better than boys, which is in line with the national picture. The school's data indicate that results improved in 2004.

Standards and achievement

64. The well below average standards seen at the end of Year 9 represent unsatisfactory progress over time, as students join the school in Year 7 with below average standards. The legacy of under-achievement will take time to overcome but achievement is starting to improve because the staffing situation is more stable and teaching is better. In an effective Year 9 lesson on acid rain small groups of students collaborated well in carrying out the research needed to answer a question. Each group had a different question and they reported their findings back to the whole class. Good speaking and listening skills increased the understanding of the issues for all students. Students in Years 10 and 11 make satisfactory progress. In a Year 11 lesson on the impact of greenhouse gases on global warming very good teaching and high expectations helped all students in a low attaining group to make good progress.

Teaching and learning

65. The quality of teaching and learning in science is satisfactory. Some good and very good teaching was seen in almost all years. Scrutiny of students' books indicates that teaching over time is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons seen the learning was well structured, students' interest was maintained through the use of a range of appropriate activities, carefully structured questions increased students' confidence, their answers were used well to develop knowledge and extend their learning. Teachers also managed behaviour well and. In these lessons students work hard. This was not always the case and resulted in the disruption of learning in some lessons. The national strategy approach is being

effectively carried out in some lessons in Years 7 to 9. Staff are aware of students with special educational needs and make effective use of the other adults in lessons. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Teachers set targets which they share with students and they plan to use them to inform the next steps in learning. The marking of students work does not consistently indicate how they could improve.

Leadership and management

66. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory. The department is making progress which reflects the school's success in recruiting high quality science teachers who are revising the schemes of work to increase the match between the curriculum and students' learning needs. Staff are aware that more needs to be done to develop students' literacy and ICT skills. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, though the single science course is not well matched to the learning needs of many students. This has been recognised and alternatives are being considered. The accommodation for the science department is satisfactory and the department has adequate resources. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is satisfactory.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations are below average
- Standards are improving because of the efforts of knowledgeable and well led teachers
- The use of the National Strategy for the subject is good and is helping to raise standards
- There is very good provision of ICT resources which aids learning since students can have access to their own computers
- Negative attitudes from some students, and insufficient additional support in some lessons impedes progress
- The use of ICT in other subjects is underdeveloped

Commentary

Examination results

67. In 2003, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 showed that about half of the students gained a level 5 or above which is below the national average. The results for 2004 improved and show that significantly more than half gained a level 5 or above. In the GCSE examinations in 2003, only a short course in ICT was offered. In this course, less than one fifth gained grades A*-C which is also below the national average. In 2004 the school offered full and short GCSE courses in the subject. The unconfirmed results show that about one third of those entered for the full course gained grades A* - C, and than in the short course less than one fifth gained grades A*-C.

Standards and achievement

68. Students come into the school with limited previous experience of ICT and below average attainment. In the work seen during the inspection, standards are improving and were average in Years 7 to 9, though still below average in years 10 and 11. Achievement is now good overall. Some students underachieve mainly because they show a negative attitude to the subject and do not make sufficient effort with their work.
69. Teaching is good overall, but ranges from unsatisfactory to good. The quality of the learning is also good overall, but in some lessons, the students' attitudes meant that learning was not as good as teaching, despite the best efforts of the teacher. Strengths in teaching are the use of the National Strategy materials for ICT and the good planning of lessons. Two good lessons were seen with different Year 7 classes who were using multi-media software to make presentations. Both groups had previously used the software and in the lessons extended their knowledge well through the use of more complex software effects. Their interest and enthusiasm, combined with good teaching ensured success. Teachers are committed, knowledgeable and work hard to help students to have success. Because of a lack of teachers in the recent past, many students in Years 10 and 11 have had a very poor experience of the subject and as a result some have negative attitudes and very limited knowledge of basic ICT skills. This means that progress is slow, even though teachers make every effort to overcome the problems. In some lessons, the lack of any additional support makes the problem worse.

Leadership and management

70. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a good department handbook, with clear objectives in the development plan to move the subject forward. The introduction of the National Strategy materials and the recently introduced vocational GCSE course have greatly improved the curriculum offered. The scheme of work is coherent and ensures that the subject is properly organised. Further work is required to ensure greater consistency in marking students' work and of progress through the scheme of work. Important issues such as the use of literacy, numeracy and how the subject contributes to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students have yet to be considered. Technician support in ICT is good.
71. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The department is now fully staffed by able and hard-working teachers. The quality of teaching and learning has much improved as has the quality of teaching materials used, mainly because of the hard work of staff. The quality of the curriculum is now better, and work is now more closely targeted towards the ability of the students. The provision of hardware is much improved. The main area where improvement has been insufficient is standards of attainment which are still below average.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. When given the opportunity, students use ICT confidently and with reasonable competence but this does not happen often enough to ensure that they make good progress. Some good work is being done in mathematics and also in modern languages, but this is not consistent across teaching groups. The provision of hardware and software is improving but most subjects are still at the stage of making too little use of ICT.

HUMANITIES

Provision in geography is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
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Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising in both Year 9 and 11
- Expectations are not consistently high enough and not enough is done to encourage independence
- Marking is inconsistent and too often does not tell students how to improve their work
- Geography makes a good contribution to students' moral, social and cultural development and understanding of citizenship
- Too little emphasis is placed upon the development of ICT skills

Commentary

Examination results

73. In 2003 GCSE results were well below the national average. Girls outperformed boys by a margin similar to that reported nationally. Unconfirmed results for 2004 show a marked improvement. In 2003, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were well below the national expectation. Results in 2004 were much closer to national expectations; a continuation of the upward trend of recent years.

Standards and achievement

74. Standards are below national expectations. Students make sound progress in developing subject skills but have too few opportunities to apply these, for example in mapping and constructing graphs. They have a satisfactory factual knowledge of the places and themes studied, but experience some difficulties in understanding how processes effect change, for example population growth in developing countries. Students with particular learning needs are taught geography as part of a humanities course. They make sound progress; teachers and learning assistants giving effective support as they know students' needs. A particular weakness of all learning is the acquisition of those skills necessary for enquiry work that allow students to work independently. Achievement was not as good in all lessons as it was in students' books.
75. Year 10 students have a good understanding of the relationship between physical and human aspects and have completed some promising work on the impact of hurricanes on the economy and society of devastated areas. This could have been developed further through a more extended enquiry. The standard of work of current Year 11 students is below expectations at this stage in the course, but in line with their previous achievement. Lessons missed through poor attendance results in under-achievement by a significant minority of students, both boys and girls.

Teaching and learning

76. Overall, the teaching observed was unsatisfactory. However, when the evidence of student's previously completed work is considered, teaching over the longer term is satisfactory. In weaker lessons the work did not meet the needs of students or challenge them sufficiently. When behaviour was good, teachers were able to maintain the pace of learning and ensure that students could build upon existing knowledge and extend understanding. In a Year 7 lesson where students prepared for their school-based fieldwork, they were successfully challenged by the need to make decisions about how this was to be done. The explanation and subsequent understanding of process is not always effective, as when Year 8 students studied the structure of the earth and failed to appreciate the importance of convection currents in the earth's mantle; essential to their proper understanding of earthquakes and volcanoes. Marking frequently does not tell students how they might improve their work as the departmental policy is not implemented consistently. The teaching fosters literacy and teachers encourage students to use subject terms accurately. More could be done to improve the organisation and presentation of work. Students have too few opportunities to apply their ICT skills.

Leadership and management

77. A good start has been made to update schemes of work in the light of more recent requirements. The recently formed team work well together, for example in supporting non-specialists who teach the subject. Management is satisfactory, though there is a need for more rigorous monitoring to achieve further improvement in teaching and learning.

History

Provision in History is satisfactory.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	No judgement

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership provides a clear sense of direction
- Relationships between staff and students are good
- Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good
- Work is not always matched well-enough to students' needs, particularly in Years 7 to 9
- Students' ability to make use of historical evidence is under-developed
- Students have limited opportunities to develop independence & initiative

Commentary

Examination results, standards and achievement

78. GCSE results are below average with girls outperforming boys in line with results nationally. The most able students achieve well. At Years 7 to 9 standards are below average although the department is working hard to raise levels of performance and students, whose ability is low at entry make progress across the key stages. As a result achievement is satisfactory at both Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11.

Teaching and learning

79. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. In all years the teachers' good subject knowledge is seen in planning, preparation and presentation. Lessons have clear objectives and a sound structure. The relationship between teachers and students is very good and students enjoy history. In Years 7 to 9, the students are given fewer opportunities to use their own initiative and this inhibits progress. In Years 10 and 11, students are allowed more discretion and make faster progress. Students have a limited opportunity to develop their skills at analysing historical evidence. Although historical sources are used in lessons such as the work on Mary Tudor or the Churches in Nazi Germany, not all the students are able to make judgements about their origin, reliability or bias. Most students are simply required to describe the information contained in the source.
80. A good range of different learning techniques are on offer and this helps students to progress. Work has begun to vary the approaches between students of differing abilities but this needs more refinement. The more able students are encouraged to incorporate detailed responses into their work. The less able are often restricted to short answers which makes progress at GCSE more difficult. The marking of students' work is thorough and, as well as being encouraging, gives advice on how to improve. Students are also encouraged to assess their own work against level descriptors. These both make a good contribution to achievement. The potential of ICT to improve learning is not yet being realised.

Leadership and Management

81. Leadership of the department is good and there is a clear vision and commitment to improve standards. Management is satisfactory with a sound analysis of what needs to be done to improve and high levels of support and co-operation between staff. A good start has been made at implementing plans. History makes a good contribution to citizenship and to spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

Religious education

The quality of provision in religious education is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Inspirational
Management	Excellent
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students respond to the very good teaching with interest and enthusiasm to make very good progress
- In lessons students feel supported, their views are valued and respected so that they contribute confidently and learn from each other
- The subject makes an excellent contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their understanding of citizenship
- Students do not have sufficient opportunities to apply and practice their ICT skills in their learning
- Good use is made of homework and the very good library resources

Commentary

Examination results

82. Results in GCSE examinations have risen since the last inspection. Students are entered on a voluntary basis for the short course in this subject. In 2004 the proportion of students achieving the higher grades A*-C was in line with the national average; they do better than in almost all other subjects. The smaller number of students who completed the full course in Religious Studies did very well indeed, four-fifths achieving a higher grade.

Standards and achievement

83. Students make very good progress both in investigating world religions and exploring and responding to human experiences. They are able to do this because they return to issues at increasing levels of sophistication over the five years. They give balanced consideration to a range of issues, including controversial and sensitive topics so developing their own patterns of values and beliefs and supporting their personal development. Students understand that values and beliefs can be shared between the main faith groups, so that when reviewing differences they empathise with ideas and viewpoints that differ from their own. All have an increasing understanding of factual information relating to selected faith groups. In Years 10 and 11 a greater emphasis is placed upon social and moral issues that students can consider from different perspectives.

Teaching and Learning

84. Students learned well because lessons had been planned carefully to include a range of learning activities and teaching strategies. They are challenged to seek meanings, for example of symbols, as when Year 7 students learned about Amnesty International and interpreted the meaning of the candle and barbed wire in the logo. Lessons required their active participation as they considered

dilemmas similar to those they might face. Year 10 groups of widely differing levels of attainment gave serious consideration to such topics as marriage and divorce. This was possible because teachers have very good subject knowledge and excellent class management skills. In all lessons, trust and supportive relationships gave students the confidence to learn from each other and to express their views. Attitudes and behaviour are good. Resources were well-chosen and stirred students' interest. Exercise books show that tasks almost always meet the needs of all, though some did not challenge the higher attaining students sufficiently. Learning objectives are shared at the beginning of lessons and evaluated at the end and this, together with good assessment, ensures that students know what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. Teachers know the needs of individual students and have high expectations of them.

85. A strong emphasis is placed on developing literacy skills. Group and whole class discussions, for example on the teaching of religions on right and wrong, develop students' speaking and listening. Higher attaining students have frequent opportunities for extended, most often discursive, writing.

Leadership and Management

86. The management of the curriculum is excellent. RE is a continuous experience over five years wherein students build upon their achievements to extend their knowledge and understanding. The leadership is inspirational, providing the vision and direction that has resulted in further improvement. Over three-quarters of lessons are taught by the team of experienced and very talented specialist teachers. Very good support is provided to ameliorate the impact of the use of non-specialist teachers on standards in the humanities courses in Years 7 to 9. The subject is a significant strength of the school.

TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is good.

Design and technology consists of food, textiles, electronics, graphics and resistant materials courses taught throughout years 7 to 11. GCSE courses in all five areas are offered plus Double Applied Engineering. During the inspection lessons were seen in all areas.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership provides a clear vision supported by strategies to raise standards in all areas of design and technology
- Assessment successfully monitors progress and identifies areas for students to improve
- Teaching is good overall which results in high level of motivation and good achievement
- The use of ICT is limited and restricts design work and folder presentation skills
- Access to and resources for computer aided design and manufacture are limited

Commentary

Examination results standards and achievement

87. Results in the 2003 Year 9 examinations were slightly below the national average and in 2004 improved again and were even closer to the national average. Bearing in mind that students enter the school below average this shows good achievement.. 2003 GCSE results showed a rise and unconfirmed results for 2004 show this trend continuing although they are still below average for all

schools nationally. Design and technology was one of the best performing subjects in the school although the different areas are achieving at different rates which is being addressed.

88. Current standards in Years 7 to 9 are in line with the teachers' assessment. In Year 7 students were making good progress as they learnt to finish products to a high standard in resistant materials. In Years 10 and 11 students continue to make good progress.

Teaching and Learning

89. Teaching and learning are good. They showed particular strengths where the pace of lessons was rapid and students' attention was focused on the variety of tasks set. An excellent textiles lesson was seen where the excitement and level of work achieved when making felt for a design project reflected the teacher's enthusiasm and knowledge of the subject. Relationships with students are good and they enjoy design and technology. Teachers are committed to the students and lunch and after school sessions are offered to enable them to work on their projects to improve their grades. Currently there is insufficient use of ICT, including computer aided designing and making. The prescriptive coursework booklets used in all years limit flair in coursework design folders. Some projects need to be more challenging to raise standards.

Leadership and management

90. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The department is well led and works well as a team. There is a clear vision of where the department is going and how it will get there. Assessment is in place to provide and record levels of achievement. Teachers' assessment sheets track students' progress through each module and parents, staff and students have an accurate view of their ability in design and technology that allows students to aim for higher grades. A range of exemplar work is used for teacher assessment purposes and for students to see what they can strive for.
91. Accommodation and resources are good and good use is made of technician time. More teaching assistants are needed in food technology. The department needs to provide more computer aided design and technology to cover the national curriculum requirements fully.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

The courses in art and design, music, and drama were inspected in depth. Work in dance was sampled and in the Year 11 lesson seen the students' achievement was excellent.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is good.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	No judgement

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise enable all students to achieve well
- Departmental planning, use of assessment and monitoring are good
- Art is a popular subject, with many students choosing it as an option in years 10 and 11
- Students have good attitudes and work well independently and collaboratively
- Students have too few opportunities to use computers

Commentary

Examination results

92. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were above average. Results for 2004 have not yet been confirmed, as the school has appealed for the exam to be remarked. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 showed that standards were just below average.

Standards and achievement

93. Students enter the school in Year 7 with attainment that is well below expected standards. They achieve well during years 7 to 9, so that by the end of Year 9 standards have improved. Students make progress in learning new skills and using different media. These skills are built upon from year to year. In years 10 and 11, students are making good progress, and benefit from a variety of projects and clear guidance from teachers in meeting the examination requirements. Standards of work seen in the current Year 11 appear to be average, and are higher in Year 10. Students with learning difficulties are well supported in lessons and achieve well.

Teaching and learning

94. Teaching and learning are good in all years and in some cases very good. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and expertise, enabling students to do well. They offer a range of specialisms, including ICT. Lessons are well structured and are closely linked to GCSE assessment objectives and National Curriculum levels. Marking and assessment are informative, enabling students to understand clearly how to improve their work. Homework is used effectively to reinforce learning. Drawing is taught in a variety of ways in Year 7, giving students the opportunity to work from imagination, memory and observation. In Year 9, students studying *Surrealism*, and the artist *Magritte*, worked in pairs to make three-dimensional sculptures of room interiors. They presented their work maturely to the rest of the class, showing a thorough understanding of the concept of surrealism. In Years 10 and 11, students are developing good observational drawing skills and work with a variety of media. They relate their work well to the work of other artists. Demonstrations of practical tasks by teachers give students a thorough understanding of what is expected of them. Students and teachers relate very well to each other. Students are supportive of each other and have a positive attitude towards their work. The department offers much in the way of extra-curricular activities, in which the students are keen to participate. Attractive displays in classrooms and the wide variety of different resources stimulate students' interest. ICT is currently under-used in the department, but a new computer suite offers new opportunities for future development in this area.

Leadership and management

95. There is a strong sense of teamwork within the department, with shared teaching values. Departmental documentation is thorough and there is a clear understanding of the strengths of the department and what needs to be done to move forward.

Music

The provision for music is satisfactory.

	Years 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	

Progress since last inspection	No judgement
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Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have well established rhythmic skills that are contributing positively to their performance
- Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are not high enough
- The profile of the subject has improved recently and students are now beginning to value the subject
- The use of ICT is undeveloped and not supporting students' composing skills

Commentary

Examination results

96. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 indicated that standards were below average. These results have shown a downward trend over the past three years due mainly to inaccurate assessment procedures in the past. These procedures have now been revised and recent assessments are now an accurate reflection of students' attainment. In the 2004 GCSE music examination results were below the national average. These are an improvement on last year's results. Boys' attainment was significantly better than girls.

Standards and achievement

97. The present Year 9 entered the school having had a varied previous experience and were generally well below the standard expected. Although students do not reach the expected standard, achievement over time has been good. Students' performance skills are well established performing a range of musical styles with confidence and that are rhythmically secure. An example of this was in a Year 8 *Blues* topic. Here students improvised on a theme skilfully capturing the style of the music and performing with enthusiasm. Listening and appraising skills are not as well established and students experience difficulty recalling music they have listened to. Students' creative skills have not been developed. This is due to the lack of emphasis on this particular element in the past. This omission is being remedied and is now included in future programmes of study.
98. Standards of the students in Year 11 studying the GCSE course are below the level expected at this point in the academic year. Standards however are higher in Year 10. The reason for this variation is that students in Year 10 have benefited from the revised schemes of work that now include all the strands of the curriculum. Although students in Year 11 have produced at least one composition these are generally brief and lacking in structure and development. Performance skills are well established.

Teaching and learning

99. The overall quality of teaching and learning are good. A particular strength of the teaching is teachers' management of students, dealing sensitively with any potential problems allowing lessons to proceed with a minimum of disruption. Teachers have good practical expertise and use their skills effectively to demonstrate styles of music to students which contributes positively to learning. Relationships are good and the positive environment means that students are confident to seek help when needed and, with encouragement, are self assured in performances. Teachers move around the class effectively helping and advising students and keeping students on the task contributing to the pace of the lesson and learning. On the occasions where teaching is less effective, the planning of lessons is muddled and the objectives unclear. The outcome of this is that lessons lack clear learning steps with a tendency to move on to the next activity before establishing students' understanding consequently slowing learning. Learning tends to slow during practical sessions when students are practising on keyboards and are not using headphones. On these occasions the noise level is excessive, students experiencing difficulty hearing accurately what they are playing.

Leadership and management

100. The leaderships and the management of the subject are satisfactory. The revised schemes of work are having a positive effect on raising standards. Students are now experiencing success resulting in a raised profile of the subject with an increased number of students choosing the subject as one of their options. Teaching has not been monitored to track students' progress. Examination results have not been analysed to establish any gender differences and the achievement of gifted and talented students. The use of ICT to support students composing skills is underdeveloped. Although there is the appropriate hardware and software, the use of ICT is not included in the schemes of work and is generally underused which affects their overall achievement. The keyboards do not have any facility to record or save students work.

Drama

Provision in drama is excellent.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Very high
Achievement	Very good	Excellent
Teaching and learning	Very good	Excellent

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Excellent
Progress since the last inspection	No judgement

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students enjoy drama; they behave very well and perform with flair and skill
- Teaching is inspiring and consistently challenging
- Students learn by analysing and evaluating their work very effectively
- Clear assessment targets help students know how well they are doing and how to do better
- The annual production is ambitious and promotes the school very well
- Students have few opportunities to see professional theatre

Commentary

Examination results

101. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate students' standards are well above the national expectation. GCSE results in 2003 very high compared to the national average. Results were slightly higher in 2004 with the majority of students achieving the highest grades. Boys and girls do equally well and most do better in drama than in any other subject.

Standards and achievement

102. Standards seen in drama lessons reflect the results. Most students achieve well above their target grades as they move up through the school. In Years 7 to 9, students learn to apply a wide range of drama techniques to their devised pieces. They respond with enthusiasm to both scripted and improvised work. In a lesson based on 'Hamlet', groups of Year 8 students were successful in creating a sense of anxiety through slow motion and mime, each group managing to hold the complete attention of the rest of the class. Drama is a very popular subject at GCSE. By Year 11, students take drama very seriously and show an unusual degree of self-confidence. Skills and terminology are learned and revisited so there is a good basis on which to build and make progress. In a Year 11 class, students' representations of King Lear's conscience in rejecting his most loved daughter, Cordelia, were very well thought-out and later evaluated with remarkable maturity. Students watched each others' performances with enjoyment, offering supportive praise and suggestions. Excellent teaching challenged them to think for themselves and go beyond the superficial.

Teaching and learning

103. Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships, respect and a strong focus on challenging work. Teachers use varied approaches taking into account students' different needs and this gives students a sense of success and self-worth. The extra effort students are prepared to make is an indication of their interest, independence and good personal development. Teachers' high expectations are apparent in the detailed feedback and

guidance given in class so that students learn quickly and know what they must do to improve. Clear understanding of the examination criteria helps students feel confident about meeting and, frequently, exceeding targets.

Leadership and management

104. The department is led with commitment and energy. Less experienced teachers receive very good support so that everyone in the department feels valued and works as a team. Courses are very well managed and examination results analysed. Drama makes a strong impact on the whole school in assemblies and in ambitious annual productions which offer good links with parents, primary schools and the locality. Students have, however, few opportunities to see professional theatre. Strengths recognised in the last inspection report have been maintained and results have improved. The department is paying close attention to ways in which they might develop further and have an even greater impact on the creative life of the school and community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Good
Achievement	Satisfactory	Very good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	No judgement

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm are helping to motivate students and raise participation rates
- Good use of assessment criteria focuses teaching and helps to raise standards
- A wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities enhances and enriches the provision
- The teaching and learning in dance are very good
- A lack of clear learning objectives and detailed planning in some lessons leads to some unsatisfactory learning

Commentary

Examination results

105. Teacher assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were average. GCSE results in 2004 show an upward trend.

Standards and achievement

106. Students' standards on entry are below average and by the end of Year 9 standards overall are average and at the end of Year 11 are above average. This represents very good achievement. By the end of Year 11 their physical skills and understanding of principles in different sports is very good. For example, in a boys' football lesson, students understood how to use a variety of skills to beat an on-rushing goalkeeper and how to apply them to a competitive situation. In a Year 11 badminton lesson most students were able to demonstrate the short serve and smash to a good standard and use the drop shot effectively. In Year 11 dance the achievement of a small mixed group of higher attaining students was excellent when evaluating their own and other students' work and giving critical feedback on the performance duets.

Teaching and Learning

107. In the good and very good lessons teaching is clearly linked to learning objectives which are shared with the students at the start, and are evaluated at the end, of lessons. This leads to focused teaching and students having clear expectations. Teachers ensure that there is a thorough understanding of assessment during the lessons and good questioning at the end of lessons helps students to understand what they need to do to improve.
108. Teachers are knowledgeable and give good demonstrations. Most teachers use technical terms, including muscle names, as part of the warm up and plenary activities. This helps students to develop their knowledge and is sound preparation for GCSE PE. When learning is unsatisfactory, students are not quickly engaged, the pace is slow and teaching does not use specialist terms. A lack of learning objectives and limited teaching of skills leads to unsatisfactory learning.

Leadership and management

109. Leadership of both girls' and boys' departments is good. Staff work closely together and have a clear, shared vision of the direction for improvement and the contribution the department makes to whole school improvement. Both departments run smoothly and consequently lessons run well and students have clear understanding of teachers' expectations. The girls PE staff work as a particularly effective team with detailed lesson planning which leads to consistently good and very good teaching. The introduction of GCSE PE short course, in Year 10, in the core lessons should help to motivate and support positive attitudes to fitness and recreational sport in the future.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Vocational

110. The main focus for the inspection was the **ICT** course taught in Years 10 and 11 and this is reported on in the ICT subject section. Vocational provision in the school is well received and plans for expanding this area are under way. A third of Year 10 go off site to college each week to study NVQ level 1 subjects including **engineering, hair and beauty, catering, construction and hairdressing**. It was not possible to observe work in all these courses but students studying GCSE **engineering** were observed in school and at the college and were interested in their work and behaved in a mature manner, enjoying the added responsibility for their own learning this course offers. Some of these students will do extended work placements next year. **Leisure and tourism** is studied at GNVQ within the school. Work in this area was sampled. In 2004, the small number of students involved achieved grades broadly in line with the national average. In the Year 10 lesson observed, students achieved a clear understanding of changes in the leisure industry, through the consideration of female attendance at football matches, as a result of well-informed teaching. The teacher in charge has ensured that the course meets all requirements and that links with the business community are increasing. Some students will be able to complete work experience in the leisure industry. **Business studies** was also sampled and in a good lesson in Year 11, the level of expectation and challenge in the discussion helped students to achieve well and gain a sound understanding of the main methods of distribution and the relevant specialist vocabulary.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and citizenship are taught through a rolling programme of lessons and through assemblies and tutor time. No lessons were seen, but several assemblies and tutor sessions were observed. These were generally productive sessions which enabled students to explore the meaning and importance of friendship in a supportive atmosphere.

Citizenship

Not enough first hand evidence was available to make a judgement on overall provision.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The whole school framework clearly identifies the contributions of other subjects to citizenship, though these could be developed further
- The school is committed to giving students a voice through the School Council and the use of the *Students as Researchers* project
- Good leadership provides direction and enthusiasm
- Assessment processes are not robust enough

Commentary

111. Statutory provision is in place and a comprehensive programme is emerging. Examples of citizenship were seen during lessons in other subjects, particularly in history and geography. The evidence for judgements is based on attendance at the School Council, discussions with students, review of documentation including the development plan, School annual assessment documentation and an interview with the citizenship co-ordinator and line manager.
112. The school has a clear strategy for delivery of citizenship. It is delivered across the curriculum, in specific lessons held once a half-term and through *Student Voice*. All these elements are in place although cross curricular provision is still under-developed. Use of the ACE logo to identify citizenship in other subjects is not widely in use.
113. The School's commitment to involving and consulting students is good, with an effective School Council, which discusses important issues and has access to senior management and the governors. A cross section of students reported that they have a voice through their class reps. A programme for researching school practice using student researchers, trained by university tutors, is innovative and ambitious.
114. Leadership in citizenship is good with clear vision for the development of the subject area. Management is satisfactory with sound planning in place but still a lot to do. The current assessment arrangements are embryonic and the plans to extend them need to be implemented urgently. In particular assessment in subject areas needs to be explicit and robust.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	6
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the head teacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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