

INSPECTION REPORT

STOCKSBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

Stocksbridge, Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107143

Headteacher: Mrs J Featherstone

Lead inspector: Ms J McKenna

Dates of inspection: 14-17 March 2005

Inspection number: 268471

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	980
School address:	Shay House Lane Stocksbridge Sheffield South Yorkshire
Postcode:	S36 1FD
Telephone number:	0114 288 3153
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Parramore
Date of previous inspection:	19 April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Stocksbridge High School is an 11-16 mixed school of average size situated in Stocksbridge, a small town 12 miles to the north west of Sheffield. The school's roll has grown over the past few years and it is currently over-subscribed. The large majority of students are of White British heritage, with just a small number from a range of other ethnic groups, none of whom speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs is average and most are dyslexic, have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties or moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of students with statements of special educational needs is below average. The socio economic profile of the local community is mixed but is broadly average overall, as is the proportion of students entitled to free school meals. The attainment of students on entry to the school is above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but is closer to average in other subjects. The school became a specialist maths and computing college in September 2003. It has gained a Healthy School award, three School Achievement Awards, Investors in People accreditation, Sportsmark, Careersmark and has leading department status in geography and mathematics.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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31008	P Rourke	Team inspector	Geography Religious education
30794	G Murray	Team inspector	Citizenship History
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Stocksbridge High School is a **good** school which provides an effective education for its students. Students are well taught, enjoy their lessons and the achievement of all groups of students is good. Standards in most subjects are above average and GCSE results are rising at a fast rate. Relationships between staff and students are very good and students receive very good personal support. The headteacher leads and manages the school very effectively. Main areas requiring development are well known about and are being actively tackled. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher uses her detailed knowledge of the school to lead it very well. She is strongly supported by staff who share her commitment to providing a high quality education for students.
- All groups of students achieve well during their time at Stocksbridge, making good progress in most subjects and particularly so in mathematics across the school and in music in Years 7 to 9. However achievement is unsatisfactory in religious education throughout the school and French in Years 7 to 9.
- Teaching is good in over three quarters of lessons and is very good or excellent in over a quarter.
- Students have positive attitudes towards their work and most behave sensibly and maturely in lessons and around the school.
- The school cares for students well and particularly good provision is made for those in need of extra understanding or special support.
- The assessment of students' work, the tracking of their progress and the use of performance data are not yet thorough enough which means that the advice students receive on how to improve is not as effective as it could be.
- Some aspects of curriculum organisation, such as the way the time for optional subjects in Years 10 and 11 is planned, create barriers to effective learning.
- The school does not make good enough provision for promoting students' spiritual development and does not provide a daily act of collective worship.
- Very effective use is made of community resources and personnel to enrich the curriculum and broaden the educational opportunities for students.

The school has improved well since its previous inspection in 1999 and is continuing to improve at a good rate. The quality of teaching is better and GCSE results have risen, with a higher proportion of students now gaining A*-C grades. Strengths identified then such as pastoral care have been developed further. Most of the key issues have been successfully tackled. Boys' attitudes to learning have improved considerably and they are now achieving well, provision for English has improved significantly and there is much better provision for information and communication technology (ICT). However the spiritual development of students was a weakness last time and remains so. The school has gained specialist mathematics and computing status since the last inspection which is having a positive impact on provision for students.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

All groups of students achieve **well**. Standards at the end of Year 9 are above average, as were the 2004 National Curriculum test results. Standards in Year 11 are also above average, as was the proportion of students gaining five or more A*-C GCSE grades in 2004. The GCSE results were well above average overall, due to the high numbers of students gaining A*-G grades, and the results are rising at a faster rate than nationally. Standards in most subjects are above average and achievement good, due to good teaching and provision. Students achieve particularly well in mathematics across all year groups and in music in Years 7 to 9. Achievement is satisfactory in history, art, applied business and in music and French in Years 10 and 11 and is unsatisfactory in religious education for students of all ages and in French for students in Years 7 to 9. Where achievement is less than good it is due mainly to the impact of a range of staffing difficulties in those

subjects and effective action is being taken to tackle them. The school sets challenging targets for students' attainment, most of which are met, and there is a strong commitment to raising standards even further.

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
	C	C	A	B

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

Students' attitudes to learning are good. They arrive at school promptly, their attendance is above average and they behave well in lessons and about the school. Students' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, although moral and social development is good, and spiritual development is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. Teachers have detailed knowledge of the subjects and courses they teach, use a broad range of interesting activities and tasks to engage students and have high expectations of work and behaviour. Students respond well by working hard and being keen to succeed and very good relationships contribute to a constructive climate for learning, although a small minority of students do not apply themselves to their work and disrupt others' learning. The best lessons are very stimulating and effective, requiring students to work independently and result in very good learning, but in a small number, shortcomings in approach and materials fail to engage students' interest. ICT is well used in many lessons, which motivates students and especially engages boys. Students receive regular feedback on their work and how to improve it, but the information they receive is not detailed enough and systems for tracking their progress across subjects require improvement.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Opportunities for enrichment are good. Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory. There is good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of students. Pastoral support is very good. The quality of the academic support, advice and guidance for students is satisfactory. The arrangements for seeking and responding to the views of students are good, as is the school's partnership with parents and links with other schools. Links with the local community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the leadership of other key staff is good. Management is good and governors make an effective contribution to the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think it is a good school overall and students are very positive about it.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Take further action to improve provision in religious education and French in Years 7 to 9 so as to ensure that students' achievement in these subjects is at least satisfactory.
- Improve the quality and consistency of assessment, tracking of students' progress and analysis of performance data and ensure that the information gained is used to promote improvement in students' learning in a systematic and comprehensive manner.
- Take action to remedy the weaknesses in curriculum organisation.
- Improve provision for students' spiritual development.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship.
- Ensure that all health and safety requirements are met.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

All groups of students at Stocksbridge achieve well. Standards are above average overall in most subjects across the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above the national average overall and are rising at a faster rate than nationally.
- Achievement is good overall for students of all ages due to good teaching and provision.
- Students achieve particularly well in mathematics across all year groups and in music in Years 7 to 9 because of particularly good teaching and provision.
- Students of all ages do not achieve well enough in religious education and those in Years 7 to 9 do not achieve well enough in French because of unsatisfactory provision for the subjects.
- Boys achieve particularly well relative to boys nationally.
- Students with special educational needs achieve well.
- The school sets challenging targets for students' attainment, most of which are met, and there is a strong commitment to raising standards even further.

Commentary

1. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above the national average overall. In the individual core subjects, they were highest in mathematics where they were well above average and they were above average in science and English. In relation to schools with similar prior attainment, results were average in mathematics, but below average in science and English. In 2004, results were similarly high in mathematics, and in English were higher than in 2003. The science results were lower, due mainly to the impact of staffing difficulties during the year. National comparative data for these subjects for 2004 has not been published yet. Standards seen during the inspection were well above expectations in mathematics and above expectations in English and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	n/a (34.4)	n/a (33.4)
mathematics	n/a (37.7)	n/a (35.4)
science	n/a (35.5)	n/a (33.6)

Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The teacher assessments made at the end of Year 9 in 2004 in other subjects were above the national average in ICT, history and geography. They were in line with the national average in all other subjects except for French where they were below average. Standards seen during the inspection broadly match those indicated by these figures, with just a few exceptions. In history the teacher assessments were generous; current standards are in line with expectations. In music current standards are above expectations, continuing a clear trend of improvement seen over recent years. Standards in religious education are below expectations.
3. In 2004, GCSE results were well above the national average overall, due to the high proportion of students gaining five or more grades at A*-G. The proportion gaining five or more A*-C grades was above the national average. There has been a clear trend of improvement over the past few years, greater than that found nationally. The proportion of

students gaining five or more A*-C grades increased from 54 percent in 2003 to 61 percent in 2004. Results compare well with similar schools.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	61 (54)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96 (93)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	39.4 (35.5)	34.9 (34.7)

There were 180 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. GCSE results in most subjects were above the national average. They were well above average in mathematics, design technology, physical education and religious education. They were only average in history, below average in art and design, French and drama and well below average in music. They were above average in all other subjects. Standards seen during the inspection in Year 11 were above average in most subjects, and in almost all cases either matched the standards indicated by the GCSE results or were higher, reflecting the trend of improvement generally within the school. Standards are particularly high, well above average, in mathematics, due to very effective leadership and management and teaching, which fosters students' understanding very well. Solidly good teaching and provision in other subjects, such as English, science, ICT, design technology and geography result in above average standards. A range of staffing problems in several subjects, including history, art and French result in standards being only average, and additional shortcomings in religious education result in below average standards. Standards are also average in the applied business course which is running for the first time this year.
5. Students achieve well overall in the school. They enter with above average standards in the core subjects but with standards closer to national expectations in other subjects. They leave with well above average GCSE results overall, although above average at the higher grades of A*-C. Students achieve very well in mathematics across the school and in music in Years 7 to 9 due to very good teaching and provision. Achievement is satisfactory for students in art and design and history, and in music, French and applied business in Years 10 and 11. Achievement is unsatisfactory in religious education for students of all ages and in French in Years 7 to 9 due to some staffing difficulties and other shortcomings in both subjects. In all other subjects achievement is good across the age range due to good teaching and provision in those subjects. Where achievement is less than good, it is usually because of the impact of the range of staffing difficulties in those subjects, and effective action is being taken to improve the situation in these cases.
6. A notable feature is that boys achieve particularly well relative to boys nationally, with much less of a difference in results between them and girls than is usual. Improving the attitudes of boys to learning was a key issue at the last inspection and the work the school has undertaken has clearly met with success. Students with special educational needs achieve well because the school makes good provision for them. In 2004, students who had been on the special educational needs register for at least part of their time in school exceeded expectations in GCSE examinations. Students with poor literacy skills are withdrawn for specialist support where they make good progress with reading and writing. Gifted and talented students make good progress overall, and benefit from a range of enrichment activities provided for them, but work in lessons is not always modified sufficiently well to ensure that they make maximum progress. The small number of students from minority ethnic groups achieve well and in line with their capabilities.
7. The school sets challenging targets for students' attainment, most of which are met, and some are exceeded. There are high aspirations for students and a strong commitment to raising standards even further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes to learning are good. They arrive at school promptly, their attendance is above average and they behave well in lessons and about the school. Students' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have positive attitudes to learning.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- The behaviour of the great majority of students is good, although a small minority misbehave and sometimes disrupt lessons.
- The school has high expectations of students' conduct and reacts promptly to any report of bullying.
- The moral and social development of students is good, but the spiritual development of students is unsatisfactory and the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship.
- Attendance and punctuality are good.

Commentary

8. Students value their schooling and appreciate the efforts that teachers make on their behalf. They are keen to learn and most are very well motivated. They collaborate effectively, co-operate willingly and apply themselves conscientiously to their work. Many are ebullient and enjoy a lively rapport with teachers, but they settle quickly and there is a sense of order about the school and in most classrooms. The large majority of lessons are conducted in a harmonious and positive manner. Students know they are there to work and generally they respond very well to teachers' high expectations of conduct and effort. There are exceptions. A small number of students are easily distracted and misbehave when they are bored. They are sometimes discourteous to their teachers, talk noisily amongst themselves and disrupt lessons to an extent which is quite disproportionate to their numbers. The policy promoting positive behaviour is clear and well understood and procedures are consistently implemented. Very effective use is made of the skills of the learning mentors who work on and off site with students who, for whatever reason, are not learning well in the classroom environment. The various strategies have proved successful in resolving problems, building confidence, and motivating students to return to work with their peers. For serious misbehaviour the sanction of exclusion is used appropriately and in accordance with the school's discipline code. However, overall, the behaviour of the great majority of students is good.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	968	53	1
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0

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

9. Relationships between students and between students and staff are very good. Mutual respect is evident, contributing to pleasant interactions in the main. Boys have particularly mature attitudes, a significant improvement since the last inspection. Students with special educational needs are well integrated, as are the small number of students from minority ethnic groups. Students are proud of their school and are keen to play a full part in daily life. This is well illustrated by the care and support shown by Year 11 students who choose to take part in the '7-11' scheme for helping younger peers. Other students choose to be involved as guides to visitors, aides on parents' evenings and chaperons on induction nights. More formally, students represent their peers on the school council, and two Year 11 students are representatives to the governing body. This range of actions helps to build students' self confidence and their ability to exercise responsibility very well. All connected with the school recognise that some bullying takes place. An independent survey carried out in the previous school year showed it to be a matter of concern to some students and parents. The school has reacted quickly and constructively, redrafting the anti-bullying policy, consulting with all parties and making it a focus of attention in class discussions and assemblies. Students strongly maintain that the procedures now in place are effective. They also express confidence that any incidence of oppressive behaviour will be readily resolved once it is reported.
10. Students' personal development is satisfactory overall. Their moral and social education is well provided for. The school aims to value the individual and promotes a respect for others. In many areas of the curriculum students consider the moral issues that are presented by life. Issues of right and wrong and of justice are explored through literature, for example. Students are made aware of the school's expectations of them through its code of conduct and these are reinforced with well-defined rewards and sanctions. Students enjoy the wide range of activities available outside of school hours, giving them the opportunity to pursue their interests. They respond well to charitable appeals, such as the recent tsunami disaster appeal and Year 7 supports the Goodwill Village, which looks after orphans in India. The cultural development of students is satisfactory. Through students' study of literature, art and music, they have the opportunity to value their own cultural traditions. Opportunities to learn about other cultural traditions are provided in some subjects such as citizenship, French and a little in art, but not in all. Opportunities to promote understanding about non-western cultures in sufficient depth are not always taken, such as artefacts in art being used in a superficial manner resulting in students having little understanding of the meaning and significance of them, and a lack of consideration of these aspects in religious education.
11. Students' spiritual development is unsatisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship, although assemblies observed during inspection were thought provoking and allowed students the opportunity to reflect upon their experience of bullying. The contribution that religious education makes to students' spiritual development is much diminished since the previous inspection and fails to engender a respect for others. Teachers do not recognise the contribution that they can make to students' spiritual development through their subjects, with the exception of music where students' love of music animates them and their creative and expressive efforts are valued and encouraged.
12. The school has worked hard and successfully with both parents and students to improve attendance. There are very good systems in place for encouraging students to attend regularly and for monitoring whether they do so, and these are having a positive impact. Attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now above the national average. Punctuality is good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.9
National data	6.9

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.0
National data	1.1

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is good. Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Opportunities for enrichment are good. Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory. There is good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of students. The quality of the academic support, advice and guidance for students is satisfactory. The arrangements for seeking and responding to the views of students are good. The school's partnership with parents is good. Links with the local community are very good and with other schools are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in most subjects and in over a quarter of lessons are very effective.
- Teaching and learning are very effective in mathematics and in music in Years 7 to 9, but are unsatisfactory in religious education and in French in Years 7 to 9.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a broad range of activities and tasks to engage students although they do not always ensure that they fully meet the needs of different groups, particularly those of higher attainment.
- ICT is well used in many lessons, which motivates students and especially engages boys.
- Teachers have high expectations of both work and behaviour and students respond well by working hard although a small minority of students do not apply themselves to their work and disrupt others' learning.
- Very good relationships contribute to a constructive climate for learning.
- The specialist teaching of students with special educational needs is very good.
- Students receive regular feedback on their work and how to improve it, but the information they receive is not detailed enough and systems for tracking their progress across subjects are under-developed.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 128 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 (5%)	28 (22%)	63 (49%)	26 (20%)	5 (4%)	0 (0%)	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.

13. Teaching and learning are good overall. They were satisfactory or better in the very large majority of lessons seen, and good or better in over three quarters. They were very good or excellent in over a quarter of lessons. Teaching is good for students of all ages in most subjects with the following exceptions. It is very good in mathematics and in music for students in Years 7 to 9, satisfactory in art and design, history and applied business, and unsatisfactory in religious education and in French for students in Years 7 to 9. Where teaching is less than good it is usually because of staffing problems that are known about and which are being actively tackled by senior management. There are additional shortcomings in religious education and French.
14. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and the courses they are teaching and they use this to give accurate and detailed input and guidance to students, resulting in students receiving high quality information. Lessons are usually well planned with a good range of

activities and tasks that engage students and keep them actively involved in their learning, although work is not always modified enough to take full account of the different needs of all students, especially the higher attainers. Skilful questioning by teachers helps students to develop their understanding well, but it sometimes does not involve a broad enough range of students, resulting in some becoming passive. Most lessons are characterised by high expectations of both work and behaviour and teachers are very committed to enabling students to succeed. Students recognise and appreciate the efforts that teachers make on their behalf and respond well by working hard. There are generally very good relationships between students and teachers and the atmosphere in the large majority of lessons is harmonious, contributing well to the constructive climate for learning evident in most classrooms. In a few lessons, a small minority of students, more commonly girls, do not apply themselves to their work and disrupt others' learning, and, while this is often well managed, it is not always dealt with effectively enough to the detriment of the learning of other students. The best lessons are particularly lively, stimulating and engaging, and in these, such as in music and geography, students are captivated and work with relish. Students are encouraged to think for themselves, such as in some history lessons, and in mathematics lessons they are required to apply their knowledge to new situations, thus make sense of their learning and in so doing developing good levels of independence. ICT is particularly well used in many lessons. This has a motivating effect on students and significantly helps to engage boys, contributing to their good achievement. Work is often marked well with some good feedback given to students, but this is not consistent and in a small number of cases work is left unmarked.

15. There are some weaknesses in teaching in specific subjects, usually related to staffing problems. In history, although teaching by permanent specialist teachers is good and sometimes very good, a succession of supply teachers to cover a vacancy has had a negative impact on those students affected. The non-specialist teaching in geography is not of the very good standard of that by the experienced specialist staff as subject knowledge is weaker and there is also some non-specialist teaching in art. In religious education and French, although students are enabled to learn well in some lessons, this is not the case in all due to some shortcomings in approach and materials which fail to engage students' interest.
16. Students with special educational needs are enabled to learn well, especially when they receive specialist support. Students with poor literacy skills are withdrawn from French lessons for such specialist support which is very effective and as a result they make good progress with reading and writing. However, their progress in French is limited by their regularly missing lessons. Teachers have very good information about individuals' specific problems and requirements and in subject lessons students are helped by teachers and by learning support assistants who understand their difficulties. Most teachers use this information well so that students make good progress. However, the short term targets identified in students' individual education plans are not always precise enough to help students understand the progress they are making. Gifted and talented students receive appropriately challenging or enriching work in some subjects, but not all. The small number of ethnic minority students are well integrated in lessons and have a similar experience as their peers.
17. Assessment is satisfactory overall. There is some good practice such as in mathematics, English, science, music and physical education, but practice is not consistent. All departments have systems in place for regularly assessing and recording students' attainment and students receive regular feedback on their work through marking, test results and other assessments. They are usually informed about how well they are doing and how to improve their work but this is not always detailed enough or informed by reference to course or National Curriculum criteria, which limits its effectiveness. Assessment information is used to set some targets for students but this is not comprehensively done and targets are not always specific and precise enough to promote maximum improvement. The tracking of students' progress across subjects is under-developed, especially in Years 7 to 9. Some systems are in place but most are either new or not yet systematic and comprehensive

enough. The school holds a great deal of assessment data on students, but, while some analysis of it is undertaken, it is not carried out in way that enables maximum benefit from it to be gained. Assessment information is not yet used well enough to inform specific and targeted support and intervention, although some mentoring of students recognised as under performing takes place. The school recognises assessment as an area requiring development and is taking effective action to address this.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, with strong features but some significant weaknesses. Opportunities for enrichment are good. Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The introduction of some vocational and applied GCSE courses has improved the capacity to tailor the curriculum to meet the wide range of students' needs, although as yet they are limited in range.
- Enrichment opportunities are good and there is very good support for learning outside the school day.
- Specialist status is having a positive impact on the development of the curriculum, particularly in promoting the use of ICT for teaching and learning.
- The total teaching time per week is below national recommendations.
- The allocation of teaching time for optional subjects in Years 10 and 11 is unevenly distributed over the two years and the imbalance creates barriers to effective learning.
- Some students on vocational courses miss lessons in other subjects.
- The organisation of teaching groups for French in Years 8 and 9 impedes learning and achievement.
- Specialist provision for students with special needs is very good.
- Provision for careers education and work experience is very good.

Commentary

18. In Years 7, 8 and 9 the curriculum meets students' needs. All National Curriculum subjects are taught, along with religious education, personal social and health education and citizenship. Every student studies a modern foreign language as required, although French is the only language offered. However grouping arrangements for the subject in Years 8 and 9 are unsatisfactory. Groups in Year 8 contain students of a wide a range of ability whose needs are not adequately met and Year 9 groups are often too large.
19. In Years 10 and 11, statutory requirements are met and some vocational and applied GCSE courses have been introduced alongside the traditional academic provision. Although fairly limited in range, this has nevertheless increased the breadth of the curriculum and improved the capacity to tailor the curriculum to meet the wide range of students' needs. However the organisation of the curriculum has some significant weaknesses which present unnecessary barriers to learning. A different amount of time is allocated to optional subjects across years 10 and 11 in alternate years. This results in an imbalance of overall time across subjects for each year group of students as there is less teaching time available in Year 11 due to the timing of examinations. This time factor is further exacerbated by the weekly curriculum time being fifty minutes less than national recommendations. The way that vocational courses taught off-site has been organised results in some students having to miss lessons in other subjects each week, and if it is one of the subjects allocated a smaller amount of time, this can be half of their subject lessons each week. Students are expected to catch up with work missed. Many of those affected are least able to cope with this extra demand, and despite some strategies in place to help them, it is an unsatisfactory state of affairs. All students study a design and technology course which is commendable, but the time allocated is below that usually seen. The shortfall is compensated for by staff providing extra-curricular activities out of lesson time. This is successful in that students achieve well in the subject but it is not an ideal situation.

20. There is an extensive programme for developing students' personal, social and health education, taught to all students through weekly lessons, which includes all formally required aspects including drugs, sex, relationships and careers education and as well as parts of the citizenship curriculum. Citizenship is also taught through other subjects and specific activities and provision overall is satisfactory. The promotion of work related learning is good and provision for careers guidance and work experience are particular strengths.
21. The specialist mathematics and computing status of the school is having a positive impact on students' learning. Enhanced ICT resources are being used innovatively in many subjects to broaden the range of teaching and learning styles used which are engaging and motivating both all students and especially boys. Provision for ICT as a specific subject is good and is improving at a good pace. Provision in mathematics is very good.
22. Students with special educational needs are well provided for overall, and specialist provision is of a high quality. In Years 10 and 11, alternative courses to GCSEs are offered. They can choose work related subjects which offer realistic pathways for some into continuing education or training. The school also offers the ASDAN course with a nationally recognised qualification. Students respond very well to the challenges included in these lessons and gain in confidence and self-esteem. A designated centre is available to support students on a short term basis, for example, following a period of absence from school or during a time of personal difficulty. Students are very well catered for by trained mentors, learning support assistants and teachers who work as a team to ease students' reintegration into full-time learning in mainstream lessons. There is a programme of enrichment for gifted and talented students and provision for them is generally good although work in lessons is not always modified specifically for them.
23. There is a good range of opportunities to enrich the curriculum and teachers give very generously of their time to provide extra-curricular activities. There is a good level of student participation in these opportunities and students' involvement in extra-curricular music is particularly strong. A good programme of intra and extra sporting activities and links with local sports clubs and recreation centres promote students' participation in sport.
24. The match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. They have an appropriate range of relevant experience and subject expertise and the majority are deployed well. This makes a significant contribution to the good provision in many subjects. However, in history and art it has been necessary to use temporary teachers, which is limiting the progress of some students, exacerbated in art by some non-specialist teaching. In geography there is some non-specialist teaching, and in spite of these teachers' efforts to prepare well, their lack of subject knowledge reduces the quality of students' learning in the classes they teach. Specialist special educational needs staff are well qualified and effective use is made of visiting specialists such as education psychologists. Technical support in ICT, design technology and science is very good.
25. The quality of accommodation is very mixed but is satisfactory overall and the school displays drive and initiative in its efforts to improve it. The newly built ICT suite provides a very positive environment. Art rooms are large and the art gallery is a positive feature, broadening the range of activities provided. Some older areas have been successfully refurbished. The reception area provides a welcoming entrance to the school. Music rooms have been adapted well to provide a stimulating environment and enable the curriculum to be well delivered, although some music is taught in non-specialist rooms. Indoor accommodation for physical education is good. While accommodation in most subjects is adequate, some classrooms are small and worn and, despite teachers' best efforts, do not provide very positive learning environments and place some limitations on teaching activities. Accommodation in science and technology is unsatisfactory with laboratories in need of refurbishment to provide an environment more suited to current learning practices, and tired and worn workshops in technology along with the use of a corridor as a teaching space compromising standards of safety and hygiene. Funding for providing better access to

the school has been effectively used despite some difficulties caused by the site spanning different levels. The school has created its own cleaning and maintenance workforce and has established good, cost-effective practices with cleanliness of a high standard. The school works very hard to make best use of the accommodation despite its deficiencies.

26. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall, and are adequate or better overall in all subjects except in religious education where there is a limited range. Text books are in short supply in some subjects with students having to share or not being able to take them home to support homework. Provision for ICT is being systematically developed. There is good access to ICT resources enabling them to be well used by students in many subjects, but not all, and access to ICT in design technology is unsatisfactory. The school has established a rolling programme for the installation of interactive boards and the current provision means that most subjects now have regular access and teachers use them effectively, for example, to explain new work.

Care, guidance and support

There is good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of students. The quality of the academic support, advice and guidance for students is satisfactory. The arrangements for seeking and responding to the views of students are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know students well and provide very good personal support and guidance for them.
- Particularly good arrangements are in place to care for vulnerable students and those in need of special support.
- The arrangements for the induction of students into the school are very good.
- The views of students are sought and valued.
- The advice students receive on how to improve their work is not systematic and comprehensive due to weaknesses in the tracking of students' progress.
- Procedures for ensuring that risk assessments are carried out in all subject areas are not rigorous enough.

Commentary

27. The commitment of Stocksbridge High School to the welfare of its students is strong and all staff take their responsibilities very seriously. The leadership team and governors take a clear lead, ensuring that proper policies and procedures to promote students' well being are in place in the main staff implement these well. However, although governors have established procedures to protect the health and safety of the school community with regular risk assessments on the building and on whole school activities carried out and monitored, there is a lack of rigour in ensuring that risk assessments for each subject area are completed and routinely checked. This is a weakness which needs to be rectified. Appropriate advice and guidance on child protection is provided. Ensuring a healthy and safe lifestyle is promoted through the curriculum and other activities.
28. The school is a very caring and inclusive community. The personal support provided for students is of a high order. At all levels, relationships are warm, friendly and supportive. Tutors generally retain responsibility for the same group of students as they move through the school and so they know them well and are aware of the changes and challenges faced by individuals. Teachers are generally approachable and accessible. Most students speak very well of them, although a small minority indicated in a recent survey that there is not an adult they felt they could talk to about problems. The same survey, however, indicated near unanimity that this is a good school. Particularly good provision is made to cater for those students, who, for whatever reason, are in need of extra understanding or special support. The work of the learning mentors play a key part in this and their work is highly regarded by both the school and the students. The Support Teaching and Re-integration (STAR) unit on the school premises is a valuable and effectively used resource, and through it students are helped to re-integrate successfully into mainstream lessons. Other good work carried out by

the learning mentors includes a project for Year 9 students at a nearby youth centre, and another for vulnerable Year 7 students which has recently been recognised in the wider community by an award for outstanding achievement.

29. The quality of academic support and guidance is satisfactory overall. Some tracking of students' progress takes place within subjects but across the school as a whole it is under-developed, especially for students in Years 7 to 9. There have been recent improvements for those in Years 10 and 11 such as the introduction of performance tutoring for some students, and there are plans to develop systems further. The weaknesses mean that, although there is some good feedback, advice and support given to students on how they are performing and how they can improve their work, it is not yet comprehensive and systematic enough.
30. The school meets the requirements of the revised Code of Practice for students with special educational needs. Information provided by pyramid schools and the concerns of parents, as well as that provided by appropriate specialist reading and spelling tests where necessary, are all taken into account when identifying student' particular needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator is well qualified and together with visiting specialists makes good provision for students with dyslexia. Class teachers contribute to reviews of progress made by individuals. Parents participate in reviews and most have good contact with the school.
31. The induction arrangements for students new to the school are very good, helped by the extremely good relationships with pyramid schools. There are effective social and academic links which serve to ensure a smooth transition to secondary education, and good attention is paid to ensuring that students are welcomed and supported when they enter Year 7 by both staff and older students, through, for example, the '7-11' scheme. Careers education and guidance is well organised and very popular with students and their parents. The school works very effectively with the connexions service and with other schools and colleges which offer post-16 choices. Students are well prepared for the next stage of their academic or vocational education.
32. The school is interested in and values students' views, and has good arrangements in place for seeking and responding to them. At an individual level, for example, students are involved in setting personal targets. Students can influence whole school issues through the school council where, for example, the revised behaviour policy was recently discussed and proposals made about seating in the school grounds, and through representation on the governing body. Students have responded sensibly to the two surveys conducted within the last year. The results have been discussed in several different forums and students' views and comments about whole school issues are now incorporated into the school improvement plan for consideration. The seriousness with which the school regards students' views is recognised by many students, but has not been effectively communicated to all as a significant minority of older ones feel their views are not considered and question the effectiveness of the school council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is good. Links with the local community are very good and with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school consults with parents in a well structured way and is committed to working in partnership with them.
- Reports to parents on their children's progress have some weaknesses.
- Very effective use is made of community resources and personnel to enrich the curriculum and broaden the educational opportunities for students.
- Close links with other schools contribute much to the education and development of students.

Commentary

33. Parents show much interest in the school. They responded in large numbers to the independently conducted survey in 2003/4 and to the questionnaire sent out before this inspection. The many written comments returned with the questionnaires show that parents are keen to know about the school and to be involved. They reflect a strong sense of community, a high level of expectation and confidence that their views will be taken into account by the managers of the school. The inspection evidence confirms that the school is committed to working in partnership with parents and seeks to respond promptly and constructively to any issues or concerns that are raised. This objective is made explicit in the current school improvement plan.
34. Views on other issues expressed through the questionnaires are largely positive, particularly about the management of the school and the quality of teaching. However, a significant minority are concerned about behaviour, do not feel well informed on their children's progress and are unsure how they can provide better support in the home. Students' behaviour on the whole is good although the concerns are warranted in the case of a small minority of students. Information for parents has many good features. A half-termly newsletter, Stoxpress, keeps parents well informed about school activities and achievements. There is much helpful documentation such as the booklets explaining performance tutoring and option choices for students entering year 10. Reports are prepared with care, largely in accordance with the guidance provided for teachers by the school, and provide for input from parents and students. However there are some weaknesses in the reports. Information on students' attainment is not referenced to National Curriculum levels and targets are not phrased in a way that allows for later evaluation. The school is aware of these shortcomings and is currently reviewing the format and procedures for reporting to parents. Evidence indicates that most parents generally contribute well to their children's learning, by ensuring that students attend school, showing interest by signing the planner weekly and being prepared to discuss any problems. Where parents have difficulties the school is active in seeking to give support, for example by providing breakfast and homework clubs and by liaising with other agencies which may be able to help.
35. Links with the community are very good. Teachers make very effective use of resources and personnel in the community to enrich the curriculum and broaden the educational opportunities for students. Notable examples are the Science, Engineering and Technology day for Year 8 students which drew on the expertise of a wide range of outside experts, and the Sex Education day for Year 9 students when specialists in the field delivered a programme on relationships. A board set up to validate students' 'Progress Files', comprised of local business and professional people pooling their knowledge and experience, adds much to the status of the documents. The learning and personal development of students are substantially enhanced by their involvement in competitive sport and in many musical events in the community. Their awareness and understanding of life in the wider community is raised by their very active fundraising for national and international charities. The school has a community development plan, related to its specialist status, which is detailed and its implementation is carefully documented. It aims to provide courses in mathematics and ICT skills for parents, the local business community, students from other schools and students in higher education. The links with infant and junior schools are long standing and fruitful. As well as aiding smooth transition, the fact that some teachers from Stocksbridge go to the other schools to teach lessons helps in the forming of the very good relationships seen later when the younger pupils join the school. Newer links are being forged with other secondary schools through involvement in local and national initiatives and through specialist status. Staff from another secondary school have been into Stocksbridge to learn from the very good practice in the mathematics department, for example. This whole area is one of strength.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the leadership of other key staff is good. Management is good and governors make an effective contribution to the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a strong sense of purpose, a commitment to providing a high quality education and has established a positive ethos within the school, and she is well supported by staff.
- The headteacher has very good knowledge of the school, enhanced by her active involvement in monitoring.
- The recent expansion of the senior leadership team and reallocation of responsibilities has had a positive effect on promoting improvement within the school.
- Management systems and process are clear, well established and implemented consistently in the main, although there is some variation between departments.
- Governors are committed to the school's development and take advantage of training opportunities to enhance their good knowledge and understanding.
- The statutory requirements for the provision of a daily act of collective worship and some health and safety matters are not met.
- Financial management and control are good and principles of best value are rigorously applied.

Commentary

36. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She has a strong sense of purpose, a commitment to improving standards and providing a high quality education, which have been communicated to and are shared by staff. She has created a climate of mutual respect in which staff are valued and relationships are very good. With support from staff she has established a positive ethos in the school, marked by good care for students and a strong commitment to inclusion resulting in students' good attitudes and behaviour and them feeling secure and well cared for. The headteacher has very good knowledge of the school, enhanced by her active involvement in the monitoring of teaching and learning and in the performance management process. Areas requiring development, such as assessment and provision in French and religious education, are well known about and are being actively tackled. Recently she has successfully expanded the senior leadership team and reallocated responsibilities, which has had a positive effect in strengthening and more clearly defining areas of leadership and management. She and the senior leadership team have worked well together to continue to improve standards.
37. Management is good. School improvement planning is clear and detailed, identifying appropriate priorities and showing good awareness of the factors affecting the school. Progress in achieving the priorities is monitored thoroughly and systematically through relevant information, regular meetings and an annual residential meeting of the leadership group. The clearly defined responsibilities in the new management structure give members of the senior leadership team the opportunity to manage teams of staff and focus on their specific areas, each team reporting to the linked committee of the governing body. Well established policies guiding many aspects of school life are applied consistently. There is a well established programme for monitoring teaching and learning through lesson observations and a thorough procedure for reviewing the work of subject departments. There is a regular focus through the school's meeting calendar on promoting improvement, for example of teaching and learning. The line management arrangements provide a good framework for monitoring while at the same time providing good support to staff.

38. Leadership and management in subject areas are variable, though mainly good and in some subjects very good. There are difficulties at middle management level in several subjects for a variety of reasons including vacancies and illness, although there is good support from senior management for relevant subject or acting subject leaders. Nevertheless, there are some variations in departmental practice. The monitoring of teaching and learning is generally good but not totally consistent across all subjects. The practice of assessment, equally, varies between subjects in its quality and use.
39. Leadership and management of special educational needs provision are very good. Leadership is knowledgeable and skilful so that appropriate provision for students is well targeted. The co-ordinator ensures that staff are well informed by providing in-service training linked to identified needs such as behaviour management or medical conditions. Long term planning is very good so that particular needs such as specialist provision for wheelchair users or rare medical conditions can be accommodated and students' needs met to the best possible standard.
40. The well established performance management process fully meets statutory requirements. It carefully balances school and individual needs in providing good professional development of staff. There are good in-house arrangements for the induction of new staff, supplemented by involvement in the programme offered by the local authority. There is a well established link with a local university and the school takes in up to five students each year with many others making short term visits. Temporary teachers are well supported.
41. The governance of the school is good. Governors, many of whom are or have been parents, have a strong commitment to the school but are prepared to challenge where necessary. A revised committee structure based on the new senior leadership structure has been adopted to enable closer focus on associated aspects of the school to inform decisions in full governors' meetings. The school's senior managers keep the committees well informed by regular reports from the new staff teams they lead. The governors are committed to the school's development and take advantage of training opportunities to enhance their good knowledge and understanding. They make regular visits to the school to keep abreast of developments and are mindful of their responsibilities. The statutory requirements for the provision of a daily act of collective worship and for some health and safety matters such as ensuring risk assessments are carried out in appropriate subjects are, however, not met.
42. Financial management and control are good, with clear procedures for allocation of funds and monitoring the effectiveness of spending decisions. The finance manager produces the school's budget which is overseen by the finance and co-ordinating committee of the governing body and audited regularly by the local authority. Income per student is relatively low, but the specialist college status brings in welcome additional income which is being used well. The school currently has a contingency sum that is within recommended limits, which is being held to counter an anticipated reduction in income due to falling rolls in the next three years.
43. Expenditure per student is below the national average. Funding to subject areas is adequate to maintain a satisfactory level of teaching resources overall. Expenditure on staffing is above average, reflecting the current age and experience profile of the school's staff. However, expenditure on supply staff is lower than average due mainly to lower than average rates of staff absenteeism. The school recognises a number of impending items requiring major expenditure, such as refurbishment of all the laboratories and re-roofing of the sports hall and gymnasium. Appropriate tendering procedures are operated for all major expenditure projects and principles of best value are rigorously applied.
44. The school gives good value for money, reflecting the good quality of education provided and the steadily rising standards achieved against the school's low unit costs per student.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3,052,797
Total expenditure	2,918,650
Expenditure per pupil	3,053

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	8,258
Balance carried forward to the next	142,405

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

WORK RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work related learning (WRL) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good leadership and management of a whole school programme of WRL activity.
- Very good programmes of work experience and careers education contribute positively to students' personal development.
- Some vocational and applied GCSE courses and work placements are offered, but the range is not extensive.
- There are good business, community and partnership links to support WRL but weaknesses in applied business.
- Students taking the NVQ catering course are motivated by the practical and relevant work related approach to teaching and learn well, but opportunities for students on the applied business course to learn through a work related approach are limited.
- The monitoring of the cross-curriculum delivery of WRL requires improvement.

Commentary

45. Although not statutory in Years 7 to 9, all students engage in a good programme of WRL activity enabling them to begin to learn and understand the skills and attributes relevant to the work place. In Years 10 and 11 students' understanding of the world of work is further developed through more WRL and increased cross-curriculum activity, and for some, through taking a specific vocational course.
46. A very well planned and organised programme of careers education for students in Years 7 to 11 is delivered through personal, social and health education lessons and in form time. Good links with the connexions services enables students to gain an understanding of employment, training and education opportunities for when they leave school. Students' knowledge of post 16 routes is further enhanced through a well planned Careers Day for students in Years 9 to 11. Work experience is very well planned, organised and reviewed with all students taking part in a two week placement. The placement enables the student to experience the work place through a valuable practical learning environment and enables them to develop and demonstrate the skills and attitudes relevant to future employment. The support of the business education partnership in supporting the programme is greatly valued. Students respond very well to these activities and value the opportunities they provide.
47. The school offers some vocational and applied GCSE courses and work placements, but the range is not extensive. This is partly because of the relative geographical isolation of the school from other institutions offering such provision. However, the school recognises that it offers reasonably limited opportunities for students to take courses that enable them to benefit from a practical approach to learning and 'real work' situations and plans to review its provision.

48. A small amount of teaching of vocational courses was observed. In the NVQ catering course teaching was good, resulting in students learning well. Extended learning styles, practical activities and the use of ICT to support learning were all positive features. Students enjoy the course and are fully and actively involved in their learning. This was epitomised by the students preparing and serving a delicious two course meal to visiting guests. They responded well to the practical approach to learning and the responsibility that the real task imposed on them and their work was of a high standard. Teaching on the newly introduced applied business course was inspected and was satisfactory. Again, practical activities and the good use of ICT were positive features of lessons, but there were not enough opportunities for students to learn through experiencing either the real or a simulated business environment. Nevertheless, students were interested and engaged in their learning and worked well in groups and independently.
49. Assessment of WRL is good overall. All WRL and education business link activity is assessed and evaluated. Students' work is recorded and monitored through personal career files. Subject work is assessed in accordance with course requirements, but in the applied business course the information gained is not yet used sufficiently to promote improvement in learning. WRL activities are enhanced by effective links with employers, colleges and partnership organisations. They support a few students who attend a weekly college placement to study NVQ level 1 courses in vocational areas and a similar number of students who benefit from extended work experience and community placements. The programmes open doors to future employment opportunities.
50. Leadership and management of WRL are good. A whole school policy has been disseminated to staff through in service training. There has been an audit of provision and further development features in the school improvement plan. The monitoring of the delivery of cross-curriculum WRL is at present underdeveloped and there is not a comprehensive overview of the contribution that other subjects are making to students' learning. Staff with direct responsibility for WRL have the vision and commitment to develop WRL for the benefit of all students.

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

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above the national average and were better in 2004.
- Results in GCSE in 2004 were above the national average and maintained the steady improvement of recent years.
- The quality of teaching is good so students learn well, although the targeting of questions is sometimes too narrow and strategies used do not always meet the needs of all students.
- Relationships in the classroom are good. Teachers relate well to students who are consequently encouraged to work hard.
- Assessment practice is good, helping students understand how to improve.
- Very good leadership and management have brought about a steady improvement in standards in recent years.

Commentary

51. Results in the national tests in Year 9 in 2003 were above the national average. Results were higher in 2004. Current standards are above average. Most students in Years 7 to 9 listen well to teachers and their classmates. They are happy and often eager to contribute in class. Some responses are brief but most students answer questions articulately, engage actively in pair and group talk and improvise dialogue quite confidently in drama. Reading skills are generally good and students have the capacity to respond in detail to their reading. Students write well. Students undertake a range of increasingly extended pieces of writing and many write capably at length. There are few problems with correctness of expression, although spelling, punctuation and grammar are not always accurate. Students use ICT with confidence.
52. GCSE results in 2004 in both English and English literature at grades A* to C were above the national average. Results have improved steadily in recent years. Results at grades A* to G were also above average. Current standards are above average. Students in Years 10 and 11 are mostly very attentive and their contributions in class are articulate and often extended. They engage readily in discussion. Reading and writing skills are secure, although some students still have difficulty with aspects of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students have good recall of previous reading and they respond thoughtfully, though students of lower prior attainment do not always produce detailed responses. Students produce a wide range of well planned and revised extended writing for coursework and show sensitivity in their analysis of poetry.
53. Achievement is good by the end of Year 9. National test results for Year 9 in 2003 were in line with the average for similar schools. Comparisons for 2004 are not yet available though the results were higher than in 2003. Students with special educational needs have good support in the classroom from learning support assistants which enables them to follow the same curriculum and achieve as well as their classmates. Achievement is good by the end of Year 11. The proportion of students entered for both English and English literature is above average. GCSE results in 2004 were above the average for similar schools and all students obtained a pass grade in English. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

54. Teaching and learning are good. All lessons were at least good and some were very good. Teachers have a good range of experience and detailed knowledge of the requirements of the National Curriculum and the GCSE, which informs lesson planning well. Classes are very securely managed and good relationships with students encourage them to work well. Teaching is purposeful and a good range of strategies and materials engage students, including good use of educational technology, though there is insufficient use of strategies to meet the range of needs in some lessons, especially higher attainers. On occasions, teachers do not target questions sufficiently to ensure a broad enough range of students are actively involved in answering. Students' work is thoroughly marked, with targets set and guidance given on points for improvement, and students have a clear understanding of the way in which work is assessed.
55. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has considerable professional expertise and a clear vision, which is shared with colleagues. A distinctive subject ethos has been established. There is a strong sense of direction and a concern for standards. Teachers share a common purpose. There is good teamwork with appropriate delegation of responsibilities and the sharing of good practice in regular meetings. Good record keeping and analysis of data ensures that students' progress is well monitored. There is thorough monitoring of teaching and learning. The scheme of work which has been developed gives good coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum and the GCSE including good use of information and communication technology. However, it does not give enough guidance to teachers on planning for meeting the needs of students of all levels of prior attainment.
56. Progress since the previous inspection is very good. The shortcomings identified in the previous report have been very effectively dealt with and there has been a significant and steady improvement in standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Standards of language and literacy skills across the curriculum are good. There is very good awareness of the need to improve skills, reflected in a comprehensive school policy ratified by the governing body. Practice in the school has been audited and developments very capably managed by a literacy coordinator. There is good provision at whole school level. A weekly registration period is identified for literacy work, there is a designated weekly literacy period in English in Year 7 and a variety of library-centred activities promote reading. There is evidence of good practice in subjects across the curriculum. All departments have received training and have identified priorities for development of appropriate strategies to promote literacy. The understanding and use of key subject vocabulary is reinforced. Students undertake a range of writing tasks for different purposes and correctness of written expression is monitored. The provision of guidance to help students structure their writing is developing. There is good promotion of speaking and listening skills through encouraging students to develop oral answers and through pair and group work.

French

Provision in French is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 7 to 9, standards are below average, and students' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Grouping arrangements in Years 8 and 9 are unsatisfactory.
- Departmental planning and the schemes of work do not provide strong leadership for improving standards.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 10 and 11, but are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
- The interactive whiteboard is used effectively to support students' reading and writing skills.

Commentary

57. Year 9 teacher assessments in 2004 were below average. Current standards in Year 9 are below average. Students can understand and analyse texts, but in writing and listening, most are dependent on reminders or worksheets as support. Speaking skills are poor; most students have difficulties phrasing language from memory, and many speak with very poor accents.
58. In 2004, GCSE results in French were below average; this continues a trend of below average results over recent years. Students' results were lower in French than in most of their other subjects. In Year 11, standards are average overall. The improvement from last year is because of more after school revision lessons being provided for students by teachers keen to help them improve their work, the good teaching for students of this age and the fact that there are slightly more able students in this group. Standards are average in reading and writing. Most students having a sound topic-based vocabulary, and can use a range of tenses competently. They can understand recordings of native speakers using familiar language. However, many students' speaking is below average, despite the very good work of the French assistant.
59. Students' achievement by Year 9 is unsatisfactory. Students of average and higher prior attainment do not reach high enough National Curriculum levels. Students with special educational needs and lower attaining students achieve satisfactorily in the main; however, some are regularly withdrawn for literacy support, which leads to poor continuity in their French. Several factors contribute to students' underachievement. Groupings in Years 8 and 9 are unsatisfactory. The mixed ability Year 8 classes present a challenging teaching and learning situation, because of wide differences in students' rates of progress, and the wide ability Year 9 groups are often too large. Additionally, students' progress in these groups is limited because teachers do not provide systematically for all students' learning needs. In Years 10 and 11 students' achievement is satisfactory overall, but some average and higher attaining students do not aim for high enough GCSE grades, and underachieve. Other students' achievement is satisfactory, and, in contrast with national expectations, boys achieve as well as girls. This is because boys are more forthcoming in lessons than is often the case and they respond particularly well to the good use of ICT within the department.
60. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are good, because teachers link lesson planning clearly to GCSE requirements. Teachers cover the different elements of the course systematically and use strategies that promote a secure understanding of the work. This has contributed to the improving standards and better achievement for students in these year groups over the past year. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory; although some lessons seen were satisfactory or better, most included recurring weaknesses. Although teachers plan lessons according to national guidelines, and use the interactive whiteboard effectively for presenting work there is too much emphasis on grammar and texts, limiting students' progress in remembering language, and speaking naturally, independently and enjoyably. Teachers' own use of French in lessons is too limited. Teachers' expectations are not high enough, especially in Year 9, and lesson pace is often slow, leading to a lack of interest and concentration and to underachievement over time. In all years, lack of textbooks limits homework opportunities. Testing is regular, with results linked to National Curriculum levels. However, marking is inconsistent, with little guidance on how to improve. Students use ICT well, especially for written assignments.
61. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Teachers are committed to improvement, for which new schemes of work provide an appropriate general framework, although they do not yet provide enough guidance on how students' knowledge and understanding will be systematically and progressively developed or on how tasks should be adapted to meet the needs of students of different prior attainment. The departmental improvement plan does not clearly express a vision of how high standards will be achieved for students. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. GCSE results and standards in Years 7 to 9 have fallen, and most teachers' use of French in lessons is still insufficient.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the head of department provides the subject with clear educational direction and generates a shared, positive ethos amongst the team of mathematics teachers.
- Very good teaching and learning results in students achieving very well from their starting points. Consequently, standards are well above the average.
- Most students have a positive attitude to the subject so that lessons are conducted in a harmonious and productive atmosphere.
- Students' written work often lacks structure and this impedes their ability to retain their learning.
- Students are not sufficiently involved in the development of ideas and exploration of new topics in discussion sessions.

Commentary

62. In 2003, results in the Year 9 national tests were well above the national average and in line with those from schools with students of similar prior attainment. Similar results were obtained in 2004. There has been a significant rise in results in recent years. Current standards of work in year 9 are also well above the national average. Common topics are studied by all students at appropriate levels. For example, all students demonstrate competency in data handling skills. Lower attaining students fully understand the various measures of average, middle attaining students construct and use frequency distribution tables, whilst higher attaining students' work includes the use of grouped data and cumulative frequency distributions. The highest attaining students are on target to attain the higher National Curriculum levels. Some lower and average attaining students have difficulty with retaining their knowledge and skills and this sometimes adversely affects their overall performance in tests and examinations.
63. In 2004 GCSE results at all grades were well above the national average, with a much higher proportion than nationally attaining either a grade A* or A. Overall, both boys and girls produced significantly better results in mathematics than in their other subjects. GCSE statistics results, obtained by highest attaining students taking this as an additional subject, were very high, with every student gaining a grade C or above and almost half gaining an A* or A. Standards of work in the current Year 11 reflect GCSE results and are well above the national average. There are no specific areas of weakness in different aspects of the subject. With few exceptions students are producing standards of work that are consistent with their ability. For example, all students construct algebraic graphs. Lower attaining students accurately plot coordinates to draw straight line graphs; average attaining students competently draw the graphs of quadratic functions, whilst highest attainers have a range of trigonometrical functions in their repertoire. However, some lower and average attaining students continue to have difficulty with the recall of knowledge and skills.
64. Students make very good progress in lessons and over time. In Years 7, 8 and 9 students' progress reflects the quality of improved schemes of work and teaching strategies. Students sustain the very good progress into Years 10 and 11 so that the cumulative effect results in very good achievement, generally exceeding that typically observed. There are no discernible difference in the work of boys and girls and students with special educational needs make similar progress as their peers.
65. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have high expectations of conduct and work and with just a few exceptions students relate very well to them. As a result there is mutual respect and lessons are conducted with a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere. Students' understanding is fostered well in most lessons because teachers

encourage the application of their prior learning to the investigation of new ideas. In some lessons, however, there is limited involvement of students in discussion so that learning for the majority becomes passive. This weakness is most pronounced in the final stage of lessons when opportunities are missed for teacher and students to jointly assess the extent to which lesson objectives have been met. Thorough preparation and planning, which include the promotion of correct vocabulary, are characteristics of all lessons and reflect teachers' very good subject expertise. Work is well matched to individual needs and this enables students to sustain very good levels of interest and concentration. Just occasionally some students do not pay full attention and are discourteous to teachers. Teachers do not always insist on written work being presented in a structured, logical format and this exacerbates the difficulty that some students have with retaining their learning. The good use of ICT by both teachers and students enhances overall performance and directly reflects the positive impact of the school's specialist status. Marking of students' work is generally thorough. Although there are some inconsistencies between teachers in the degree to which marking gives indicators of strategies for improvement, assessment is used well to track students' progress.

66. The department has deservedly been given lead department status. The leadership of the head of department is very good and promotes a positive team ethos. It provides a clear sense of direction to other staff. Consequently, there is enthusiasm and a shared commitment to raising standards. These features are enhanced by the recently achieved specialist status. Appropriate short and long term targets are in place and examples of good practice are routinely shared. Monitoring and evaluation of performance, both formal and informal, are used well to identify strengths and weaknesses. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good, particularly in relation to the increasingly effective use of ICT and the significant improvement in results, both in National Curriculum tests and GCSE.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Students' competence in mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum is also well above average. There are no instances of weaknesses in mathematics impeding progress in other subjects. Training for teachers has heightened awareness of the potential for using mathematical skills across the curriculum and an agreed approach to methods is in place. Although the promotion of mathematical skills does not have a high profile in every subject, students' facility to accurately construct and interpret data and graphs is a particular support to learning in science and geography.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All students achieve well in the school and standards (generally) are above average by the end of both Years 9 and 11.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good, and results in national tests have risen during a period of instability in staffing.
- Teaching is good overall and teachers have high expectations of students.
- Very good use is made of the ICT facilities in developing teaching and learning styles.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory; all the laboratories are in urgent need of refurbishment.

Commentary

67. Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9 were above the national average but below average in comparison with similar schools. Results for 2004 were lower due mainly to the impact of staffing difficulties during the year. However, results over the last four years have shown a sustained improvement. Standards seen on inspection are above average. Most students have a secure general knowledge of topics covered and higher attaining

students are able to apply their knowledge well, such as offering a carefully reasoned explanation as to why sound travels faster through solids than through air. Students understand the reactivity series of metals and make accurate predictions about displacement reactions, whilst higher attainers link the rate of the reaction to the relative positions of the metals concerned.

68. GCSE results in 2004 were above the national average with the proportion of students gaining the highest A*/A/B grades 50 percent above the national figures. The results have improved markedly over the last four years, with the proportion of students achieving the highest grades doubling in that time. Boys achieve particularly well relative to boys nationally, in part because they respond well to the structured nature of the modular course. Standards seen on the inspection are above average. Higher attaining students display confidence in tackling challenging concepts such as genetics, the mole concept, energy and forces. They understand there are limiting factors in the rate of photosynthesis and use a computer simulation well to test out their ideas. Lower attaining students benefit from well-modified approaches to topics and tasks and reach standards in line with their potential, such as developing sound understanding of relationships between current and voltage measurements in series and parallel circuits through a carefully structured practical lesson.
69. Attainment in science by students on entry to the school is slightly above average. All students achieve well in Years 7 to 9, although higher attaining students are not consistently challenged enough for them to achieve the higher standards they are capable of reaching. All students develop sound practical and investigative skills. Overall students achieve well in Years 10 and 11, and higher attaining students achieve very well, displaying a very mature attitude to their work. Setting arrangements cater well for the needs of all students and virtually all are on target to achieve a GCSE grade in line with their set targets.
70. The quality of teaching overall is good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons with clear objectives and a variety of appropriate activities. Teachers have high expectations of students and often plan tasks that challenge them well, although planning for the mixed ability sets in Years 7 and 8 does not always ensure that higher attaining students are provided with extension work when required. Resources are well used, particularly the good ICT facilities and learning in lessons is good. Lower attaining Year 9 students gained sound understanding of DNA fingerprinting from a very good computer presentation. Homework is well used to reinforce and extend work in lessons.
71. Procedures for assessing and tracking students' progress are good and well used by teachers to target students in need of additional support. However, students generally are not routinely as well informed about their progress in respect of their target grades. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. All the laboratories are in need of total refurbishment to provide an environment more suited to current learning practices. Resources are generally good and very well maintained by the technical staff in the very cramped preparation rooms.
72. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of department has a very comprehensive and analytical overview of the subject. Key decisions on curriculum planning, assessment and the development of teaching and learning styles have produced good improvement since the previous inspection, during a period of instability in staffing. Standards have improved, particularly at GCSE, teaching has improved and assessment data is being used well. Computers are regularly used to good effect in lessons and the department is pioneering the use of a programme to build up a comprehensive bank of lessons and teaching materials for use with the interactive whiteboards that are also available to students outside lessons. Detailed computer records of students' assessments are regularly updated and made available to all teachers. All issues on health and safety identified at the last inspection have been successfully addressed, but accommodation remains unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and students achieve well.
- Teachers are knowledgeable, have high expectations and good relationships with students resulting in good learning.
- The department is well led and managed.
- There has been recent good improvement to provision.
- Work is marked thoroughly but targets for improvement are not always set for students.
- The range of courses available to students in Years 10 and 11 is too narrow.

Commentary

73. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate that standards were above average in 2004. In work seen, standards are also above average. Students have good knowledge of spreadsheets and use them to model costs associated with managing small businesses. Lower attaining students struggle to understand calculations and receive significant help from teachers to complete work. Students gain good understanding of the principles of data protection and speak confidently about why there are laws to protect people using computers. Study of these matters also contributes to work related learning and citizenship effectively because students learn about them in the context of using ICT. By Year 9, students are confident and competent users of ICT and have good understanding of a range of applications to present their work effectively. They use the internet well for research.
74. In the half course for GCSE in 2004, more than half of students gained grades A*-C and almost all gained grades A*-G. There are no national comparative figures available. Standards in work seen are above average and a significant proportion are on course for Grades A*-C in the full course that students are being entered for, for the first time, this year. As in earlier years, students approach challenging work confidently and, because they have a good grounding in basic applications, they quickly grasp the principles of data validation and use them in their databases. Lower attaining students complete tasks but often do not explain their work in sufficient depth, for example when they evaluate their projects. They use testing systems effectively for developing spreadsheets and have a good understanding of page layout when they communicate information using desktop publishing techniques.
75. Students' achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good when compared with earlier attainment. This is largely because teaching is well focussed to enable students to learn the principles of the work, for example when creating and using spreadsheets. This leads to better understanding and students are able to approach problem solving confidently and work independently. Students in Years 10 and 11 continue to achieve well because they are well taught, are enthusiastic about the extended option and work hard to improve their grades. Students with special educational needs in all years are provided with challenging work and are well supported by teachers who understand their needs. This results in their making good progress. Boys' achievement is similar to that of girls.
76. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is often very good and never less than satisfactory. Teachers have very good knowledge of their subject and communicate it enthusiastically. They establish very good classroom routines and expectations of good behaviour so that a good climate for learning is the norm. Teachers plan work to suit the wide range of ability in their classes and modify some tasks to suit lower attaining students. Although tasks are usually potentially suitably challenging for the most able, expectations of what they will do are not always specified in planning and instructions that would enable pupils to see how they could work at higher levels are not always given. Teachers mark work thoroughly and assess it accurately but do not make enough use of assessment information to set targets for improvement and so students do not

always know what to do to improve in sufficient depth. Technical staff are well qualified and fully integrated into the work of the department. They are very effective when supporting students and teachers in lessons. There are very good relations between staff and students that lead to good levels of cooperation and consequently good learning in lessons.

77. The department is well led and managed. The new head of department has made a very good start to improving provision and there is a strong team spirit between those who manage different aspects of the work. Leadership has vision and clarity of purpose and the head of department is energetically tackling issues such as the use of assessment and has well prioritised and sustainable plans for future development. More students now have opportunities to follow the full GCSE course. However, no vocational courses in ICT are available yet, although they are planned. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. The good and often very good use of ICT by both students and staff to promote effective learning is a positive feature in many subjects and reflects the impact of specialist college status. In music, for example, provision for ICT is very good and all students benefit from using special software for composition. In geography, new technology has been exceptionally well embraced to engage students and provide challenging activities. It is used well in history to develop independent study. In drama, the good use of video-editing helps develop pupils' understanding of the effective use of ICT in media. Students with special needs have their progress enhanced by using special software to improve their literacy skills. The use of ICT motivates most students to engage with their learning, especially boys. While some subjects have good access to ICT facilities and use them well, other subjects have insufficient access at times to suit curriculum needs. These include design and technology where students do not use computers enough to research or present their examination coursework. In physical education ICT is under-used in helping students analyse the development of skills. Although satisfactory use is made of new technology by teachers in religious education, access for students is difficult. The school recognises the difficulties and plans to improve access. Nevertheless, most students have good skills and knowledge of ICT in all subjects of the curriculum helped by the good provision in specialist ICT lessons and statutory requirements. Co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has introduced systems to record contributions to support the development of skills and knowledge in ICT in other subjects and a booking system is in place to provide access to the specialist facilities. The number of interactive whiteboards has been increased so that most subjects now have regular access and use them effectively, to, for example, explain new work.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision for geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching overall is good and much is very good because stimulating lessons from experienced staff encourage students to learn well.
- Exceptionally good use is made of ICT in many lessons to engage students' interest and provide challenging activities.
- As a result of what students perceive as consistently good teaching, large numbers choose to study geography in Years 10 and 11.
- Leadership is very good and clearly focused on continual improvement.
- There are weaknesses in staffing as a whole timetable is taught by non-subject specialists or teachers who mainly teach other subjects and this limits the achievement of students in those classes.
- Although the attitudes and behaviour of most students are very good, those of a small minority are only satisfactory and reduce their achievement.

Commentary

79. Standards in the 2004 national teacher assessments in Year 9 were above average and have risen consistently over the last four years. Current standards in Year 9 are above average. Students have a very good geographical vocabulary, which they use well orally and in written work to describe and explain their good understanding of a range of geographical processes. The standards of many students are lowered by missing or incomplete work in their books and by careless presentation and drawing.
80. In 2004 GCSE results were above the national average. Current standards in Year 11 are above average. Students have a good sense of place and have consolidated their previous good map skills and use them well for purposeful analysis. Their coursework is of a very high standard. Many students of low prior attainment understand geographical processes well but have a limited capacity to explain them in writing.
81. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good overall. Many students' achievement is very good but the achievement of a significant minority who are taught by non specialists is only satisfactory. Some students with special educational needs do not achieve as well as they could because written tasks are not sufficiently modified for them. Gifted and talented students taught by subject specialists achieve very well as they are set challenging work. Achievement in Years 10 to 11 is good. Higher attaining students achieve very well as they are taught in ability related sets and are appropriately challenged. The achievement of some students of lower prior attainment is only satisfactory because they are unwilling to work hard. The achievement of students with special educational needs who are taught in mixed ability groups is only satisfactory because work set for them is not sufficiently well modified.
82. Teaching and learning are good overall and in lessons seen ranged from satisfactory to very good. Most lessons are taught by teachers of very considerable experience who combine their very good subject knowledge with an enthusiastic embrace of new technology. Their teaching is lively, stimulating, engaging and challenging. It captures students' interest and imagination well so they are attentive, thoughtful and hard-working and their learning is very good. Tasks are not always modified enough for students with special educational needs, however. Exceptionally good use is made of ICT in many lessons. The interactive whiteboard is used imaginatively for stimulating whole class teaching, whole classes use computers effectively for research and enquiry tasks set by teachers and power point presentations are used in many lessons. Very large numbers of students choose to study geography in Years 10 and 11 as the result of what they perceive as very good teaching. The behaviour of most students is good but some have challenging behaviour and are reluctant to learn. Occasionally, managing this diverts too much of teachers' time from teaching. In spite of the efforts of the non-specialist teachers to prepare well, their lack of subject knowledge reduces the quality of students' learning in the classes they teach.
83. Assessment is improving and is good in years 9, 10 and 11. Students' work is corrected in Years 7 and 8 but they are not given enough guidance on how to improve. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory. Students have to share textbooks, however. There are four dedicated classrooms, although they do not adjoin each other and one of them is very small. Most of the teachers in the department are appropriately qualified and experienced specialists but a whole timetable of geography is taught by teachers from outside the department.
84. Leadership is very good. The head of department is forward looking, enjoys the challenge of change and is ambitious to achieve the best for students. He leads an enthusiastic team and the department has lead department status. Management of the department is good. Performance is monitored but some aspects of practice, such as the Year 7 curriculum, have not been sufficiently rigorously evaluated.

85. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. GCSE standards have risen from below average to above, there has been considerable improvement in use of ICT, more enquiry work now takes place and leadership which was satisfactory then is now very good. However, students' presentation skills are still unsatisfactory.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership and management of the acting head of department is raising standards and improving achievement.
- Some good, innovative teaching requires students to think for themselves and results in good learning.
- Some very good relationships mean that students work cooperatively and respond well to the high expectations of their teachers.
- ICT is used well to promote independent learning. Explain further in commentary.
- Assessment procedures are in place but not yet used consistently across the department.
- Over the last year serious staffing difficulties have had a detrimental effect on the learning and achievement of some classes.

Commentary

86. The teacher assessments made at the end of Year 9 in 2004 indicated that standards were above the national average, but these were generous. Current standards are in line with the national average. Students generally understand bias and some are able to select and use evidence effectively to make their own decisions about controversial historical issues, such as Year 9 students writing accounts of the assassination at Sarajevo slanted towards the Serbian or Austrian viewpoint. Students understand historical controversy because they are introduced to it early, and as a result, learn quickly that there are two sides to every argument. The understanding of some students is less well developed. Where students have not had regular specialist teaching, their knowledge and skills are below average.
87. GCSE results in 2004 had recovered from the decline of the previous three years and were in line with the national average. Standards of work seen are also average as a result of the emphasis on the teaching of examination techniques and because of the new strategies for learning introduced by the acting head of department. Students in Year 11 are able to use their sound knowledge and understanding to make intelligent links between different historical periods, for example, to make comparisons between public health problems in Roman and 19th century England. Students generally display independent thinking skills as seen when Year 11 students studying Bloody Sunday were able to consider the problems of conflicting evidence. While some give detailed and reasoned explanations to back up their views this is not true of all and some written accounts in particular can lack depth.
88. Overall, students' achievement is satisfactory across all year groups. The achievement of those students who have been taught regularly by permanent specialist teachers is good but some have been affected by staff absence and the resulting disruption to their teaching has had a negative affect on their achievement. Students with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers because teachers and teaching assistants provide appropriate support and resources are well adapted for them. Gifted and talented students achieve well because they are stretched by more difficult questions in class and are given opportunities to extend written exercises. Underachieving students, especially those affected by the staffing difficulties, are given extra help such as extra revision classes for Year 11 students.

89. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall across all year groups. Staffing difficulties have had a negative impact on the continuity of some pupils' learning, despite the strong support now given by the acting head of department. The teaching of the permanent staff is always at least good and often very good and results in equally good learning because it inspires both enthusiasm and academic confidence. This teaching is distinguished by its clarity and innovative approach to standard topics. For example, as a result of careful guidance, Year 7 students, knowing nothing about the Battle of Hastings, worked out the military moves Harold should have made after the Battle of Stamford Bridge and in so doing came to an understanding of why he lost the Battle of Hastings. Lessons are well planned, classes well managed, instructions precise and learning constantly reinforced so that students know exactly what is expected of them and good study habits are established. Skilful questioning guides students into building an argument. There are good relationships and a supportive climate for learning so students develop the confidence to voice their opinions, even, on occasions taking a considered stand against the rest of the class. Not all teaching is of this quality. A succession of temporary teachers for some classes means that those students affected have not had access to the same quality or consistency of input as their peers. Literacy skills are promoted in lessons but written work is not as good as oral work largely because, until recently, marking has not been detailed and helpful enough. Effective assessment procedures are now being introduced and marking of work is better, but is still not consistent across the department. Because of the individual advice given most students understand their targets and what they have to do to meet them.
90. The leadership and management of the acting head of department are very good. There is a clear vision for the future. Although improvement overall since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory due to the decline in provision in the interim because of staffing difficulties, considerable improvement has been achieved recently in a short time as a result of energetic reorganisation and good support for staff. GCSE results, the use of ICT and assessment arrangements are now improving. The history department has a strong sense of purpose. It is forward looking, committed to raising achievement and ensuring students' continued enjoyment of the subject.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE 2004 were much better than in 2003 and were well above the national average.
- The recently appointed head of department knows what is required to improve provision.
- Unavoidable staffing difficulties have caused a deterioration in standards and current standards in Years 9 and 11 are below average.
- Overall teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. In too many lessons students are not sufficiently engaged or challenged so that they waste time and do not complete tasks adequately.
- The attitudes and behaviour of many students are unsatisfactory. They show little interest in the subject and do not achieve well.
- Learning resources are inadequate.

Commentary

91. Standards in Year 9 are below average overall. All students have some understanding of how religious belief affects the lives of believers from all the major religious traditions. Some higher attaining students write sensitively of particular religious practices and achieve high standards. However, most students have much unfinished, missing or inaccurate work in their books so their knowledge is incomplete. Many students demonstrate a lack of respect for religious belief.

92. In 2004 almost all students were entered for the GCSE short course and attained results well above the national average. Standards vary significantly from year to year and in 2003 GCSE results were below average. Current standards in Year 11 are below average. Students understand that beliefs, attitudes and values affect responses to moral and ethical issues. They can relate these responses to particular religious traditions and express their own opinions. However, many students do not take care to express their understanding well in their written work. Much work in their files is incomplete and disorganised. Written work from Year 10 shows too much reliance on teacher support and direction.
93. Achievement overall is unsatisfactory. Teaching is pitched to the middle level of ability of students in a class so that gifted and talented students under-achieve and those with special educational needs cannot respond adequately to the demands made upon them. A large proportion of students have long-standing negative attitudes to religious education and do not try hard or behave well in lessons. A number of changes of staff and lack of continuity in teaching styles have exacerbated these attitudes.
94. Teaching and learning overall are unsatisfactory. Strengths seen in teaching include good command of the subject, thorough planning of lessons and good use of ICT for presentation and for the production of teaching materials. When students are interested they contribute well to class discussions and work well in pairs so their learning is effective. In other lessons the teaching does not sufficiently engage or challenge students so that they waste time and do not complete tasks adequately. Tasks and materials are not amended or modified to ensure that all students are appropriately challenged. Assessment is unsatisfactory. In half the classes taught, students' written work is carefully and helpfully marked, especially in Years 10 and 11. In the other classes students' work has not been marked since early in the year so students have little encouragement to try hard. Work in students' files in Year 11 is incomplete and poorly organised.
95. As the result of staffing difficulties, the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The recently appointed head of department has a clear vision for the future needs of the department, for the development of the curriculum and its assessment. New forms of assessment and new teaching materials have begun to be developed. However, a lengthy and unavoidable absence since soon after appointment has resulted in delay in developing and implementing improvements in practice and provision. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is not well planned. The study of matters concerning death which fills the autumn term of Year 9 is particularly inappropriate. Resources are barely satisfactory. Students share worksheets, books are in short supply and access to ICT is difficult. Accommodation is satisfactory. The two specialist rooms are close together but are not adjoining and one room is small.
96. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory as standards are lower and provision less good.

TECHNOLOGY

Design technology

The provision for design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effective teaching in Years 10 and 11 leads to well above average GCSE results and consistently good achievement.
- Teaching in food technology and resistant materials is often very good, engaging and encouraging students successfully.
- The subject staff team share a common purpose and drive to raise standards.

- The access to and quality of ICT resources limits the development of design skills, particularly more advanced skills.
- The tired and worn accommodation in food and workshops, added to the use of a corridor as an overflow workshop area, compromises standards of hygiene and safety.
- There is very good technical support for students' learning and practical working.
- There is less time allocated for the subject in Years 10 and 11 than is usually the case.

Commentary

97. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 indicate standards in line with the national average. Standards of work seen during the inspection are in line with expectations overall, but with some aspects that are above average. Students apply design principles to given briefs successfully. They acquire a good range of making skills and manufacture products to a good standard of accuracy, finish and presentation. They have good knowledge of materials, ingredients and components, helped by their better than average literacy skills, although their technical knowledge is often lacking in depth and detail. Freehand sketching skills are underdeveloped however, and insufficient use is made of ICT in research, testing and evaluation. The use of computer aided manufacture is developing, despite the limitations posed by out of date workshops.
98. The 2004 GCSE results are well above the national average with a clear trend of improvement in all areas. The performance of both boys and girls is better than in most other school subjects. Standards of work seen during the inspection were marginally below this standard, due to incomplete project work but there are clear signs that final project outcomes will be of a similarly high standard to that obtained last year. Standards of work seen in the recently established NVQ catering course are well above average. Students on all courses apply problem solving skills effectively to a wide range of challenging briefs. Care is taken to finish practical outcomes to a high standard. All students confidently and safely use a range of power tools and appliances to make quality products. However, ICT is not used systematically enough by all students to enhance the quality of all aspects of design.
99. Standards on entry to the school are average with students displaying a mixed range of technological experience and skill. The standards attained by the end of Year 9, which although still broadly average are more consistent across the year group and have some elements that are above average, represent good achievement for all groups of students, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented. In Years 10 and 11 all groups of students continue to achieve well. Those on the catering course achieve very well, helped by an enthusiastic chef working with students, giving them the confidence and skills to attain the high quality of practice expected in a real workplace.
100. The overall quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 is good with some very good teaching in food technology and resistant materials. In these lessons, very secure subject command, high expectations, efficient use of time and very good technician support are used to encourage and engage students of all abilities. Lesson planning generally is detailed with a good match of tasks to students' differing needs. However, good practice as recommended in national initiatives in literacy, numeracy and ICT is not used well enough to promote students' understanding. Teaching resources are correctly used but basic ICT resources limit the range of teaching methods, especially for independent work such as for research, for example. Teaching is particularly successful in the final term of GCSE courses because teachers ensure that all major projects are completed to a high standard of finish and presentation. Work is regularly assessed but is not related sufficiently closely to National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9. All students study a design and technology course in Years 10 and 11, which is commendable, but the time allocated is below that usually seen. The shortfall is compensated for by staff providing extra-curricular activities out of lesson time. This is successful in that students achieve well in the subject but it is not an ideal situation.

101. Leadership is good, displaying a strong drive to raise standards, which is shared by other staff. Staff are very good role models and manage students in a mature fashion to which they all, particularly boys, respond very positively. Management is also good. The routine management of resources is very efficient, despite difficulties with accommodation. Successful, though modest, refurbishment of a food room has enabled vocational courses to be timetabled. Specific risk assessments have been created, but out of date workshops make risk control increasingly difficult, especially in relation to hygiene and safety. The use of a corridor as an overflow workshop does not allow direct supervision of whole classes and presents a potential hazard. Since the last inspection, progress in raising standards has been good despite the deficiencies in accommodation.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Drama

102. Drama was sampled by observing lessons in Year 10 and 11 and examining school documents. Drama is taught in English in Year 7 but is separately timetabled in Years 8 and 9. It is an increasingly popular optional subject at GCSE. Results vary from year to year. They were in line with the national average in 2003, but below in 2004, although all students achieved a grade. In the lessons seen, standards at the end of Year 11 were broadly average and achievement was good. Students show good understanding of a range of texts, reinforced through individual research. They move comfortably and interpret scripts using a variety of expression. Students cooperate well in pair and group work, showing enjoyment. Teaching was good, with a strong commitment to promoting high standards. There are good teaching facilities and a good range of extra-curricular activities contributes well to students' personal development. The good use of video-editing helps develop pupils' understanding of the effective use of ICT in media.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have sound drawing skills because these are well taught.
- Some students' behaviour and their excessive talking in lessons adversely affect their achievement.
- The work of the acting subject leader is well supported by senior staff.
- Accommodation and resources for the subjects are good, although risk assessments have not been carried out as required.
- No students use ICT well enough when developing their work.
- There are some weaknesses in assessment.

Commentary

103. Standards on entry are typical of those found nationally, as seen in students' earliest Year 7 work. In 2004, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 showed that standards were at the national average. The standard of work seen during inspection was also average. Sound drawing skills underpin the work of most students and they have some understanding of significant Western artists. In their large pencil studies from still life groups, students draw accurately and use tone well to describe form and surface. They develop work based on their study of masks from other cultures but show little understanding of the role and significance of these. Though students use ICT for research, they are not able to use it to develop and modify images.

104. GCSE results in 2004 were below average with fewer higher grades than would be expected. However, the proportion of students gaining grades A*-C has steadily risen over the last five years and is now much closer to the national average. This rising trend is continuing and standards seen in the current Year 11 matched national expectations. Students are able to use a good range of 2D and 3D media to develop their work. By the time of examination, many students develop very personal responses, reflecting their own views, beliefs and interests, sometimes combining imagery and text to powerful effect. Students are not yet using ICT where it would be appropriate.
105. Overall, students achieve satisfactorily in Years 7 to 11. However, where individual boys and girls have poorer attitudes to work, their achievement is impaired because they talk in class excessively and do not make enough progress. Students with special educational needs also achieve satisfactorily because teachers know their needs well and give appropriate support.
106. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Drawing is well taught and regularly practised in class and in homework. In the best lessons, there is an insistence on good behaviour, allowing students to work well and make significant progress. In others, students are allowed to talk to friends too much, so that they do not make good use of time. Teachers regularly mark students' work well. Comments help students understand how to improve. However, they are not sufficiently aware of the National Curriculum level they are reaching and data about students' performance is not used well enough to set challenging targets.
107. Students work in large, well-furnished studios and the adjacent gallery space is a valuable addition as a venue for art events. Good learning resources support students' studies well. Staffing problems result in a continuing use of temporary teachers, affecting the continuity of students' experience. The use of non-specialist teachers in two Year 7 groups is not good deployment of available staff. ICT is not well enough planned into units of work to ensure progression through Years 7 to 11.
108. The subject is well managed and its leadership is satisfactory, in the absence of a permanent subject leader. There are good arrangements in place to support the work of the temporary post holder. The quality of teaching is well monitored by the headteacher and good quality feedback given to teachers. However, at the time of inspection no subject policy for students' health and safety was available and risk assessments had not been undertaken.
109. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The decline in standards of teaching reflects the current staffing difficulties but standards at GCSE have improved steadily.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well in Years 7 to 9 because of very good teaching and learning.
- The use of ICT is very good and makes a significant contribution to helping students learn effectively.
- Use of non-specialist accommodation for listening to music for Year 11 students limits their progress in this aspect of the subject.
- Extra-curricular work is lively and enjoyable and enhances the learning in the classroom.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- There are some weaknesses in assessment in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

110. Teacher assessments made at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were in line with the national figures. Current standards in year 9 are above average, continuing the improvement trend noted during the last few years. Students compose and perform well. They listen attentively and talk about music using good vocabulary. They are confident users of ICT for building compositions effectively and creating backings for their performances. They understand how to manipulate the software to improve their music and use it expressively. All students, including those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups, achieve very well.
111. GCSE results in 2004 were well below average, although all students achieved a pass grade. Results over the last few years have fluctuated as have numbers doing the examination and it is impossible to mark any trend. Current standards in Year 11 are average. Composition work is a strong feature for which students use ICT well. The majority of students play instruments competently, with one or two very able players although some have very elementary skills. Students achieve well with these aspects overall. Listening skills are weaker across the board and especially for those who have not had the advantage of long term instrumental lessons. This is because they have not been rehearsed as rigorously as they should be, nor in a way that relates what they hear to what they do in other aspects of music. Teaching in non-specialist accommodation for this part of the course contributes to this situation. However the department has analysed GCSE marks thoroughly, is aware of the issues and has put an improvement plan into action.
112. Teaching and learning overall are very good in Years 7 to 9 and overall, and good in Years 10 and 11. There were examples of outstanding practice during the inspection. Lessons are very well prepared. High levels of challenge and pace result in productive sessions. Students are encouraged to work independently for much of the time with focused and challenging support given as it is appropriate, prompting students to make further explorations and decisions about how to develop their work. As a result, students trust their teacher implicitly and respect shines through at every level. Students enjoy music greatly and are fully engaged with their work. They love using ICT, and this has transformed teaching and learning styles, including the good support that is given to students with special needs. Students' work is assessed thoroughly and accurately at all stages, but teachers do not yet use National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9, making it more difficult for students to know how to achieve higher standards. Teaching and learning in Year 11 listening lessons is not so effective. Timetabling and rooming arrangements mean that it has to be taught outside the specialist area, and as a result it has become divorced from their practical work, a significant shortcoming as it comprises 50 per cent of the students' learning time.
113. The leadership and management of the department are very good and have resulted in good progress since the previous inspection. The head of department is an excellent role model and there is a very strong commitment to the subject and to the students. There is an effective and well supported team. Students' progress, especially in Years 10 and 11, is monitored very carefully. Results in Years 7 to 9 are not analysed thoroughly yet and so information potentially available to inform plans for improvement is not used. Extra-curricular work is varied, lively and highly enjoyable and has a positive impact on students' learning in lessons. Instrumental lessons are of good quality. Students' involvement in the community is a strong and very worthwhile feature of the work of the department.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching with tasks appropriate to students' needs creates a positive climate for learning and promotes good achievement.
- There is strong leadership of a committed team who work hard to maintain high standards.
- Innovative development of the curriculum for Year 7 enhances students' personal and social development.
- Curriculum time for Year 10 students is half the national recommendation and is limiting students' achievement.
- There is a comprehensive health and safety policy but risk assessments are not carried out as required.
- ICT is not used well enough.
- There are some weaknesses in students' understanding of how well they are performing in relation to National Curriculum levels.

Commentary

114. Standards on entry to the school are variable as are students' attitudes to physical education. Teacher assessments made at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were in line with the national figures and students currently in Year 9 are working in line with national expectations. Their attitudes to the subject are good. This represents good achievement. The vast majority of students apply skills with accuracy and control and begin to develop good technical and tactical awareness in a number of sports. More able students can analyse and comment on the application of skill and technique to improve their performance. Year 7 students on completing a short module of dance can compose simple sequences with some attention to detail and structure a simple dance. A small group of students in each class lacks co-ordination, precision and finesse in performing basic physical skills.
115. In 2004, 90 per cent of students following the GCSE course gained an A*-C grade. This is well above the national average, and represents very good achievement. Predicted grades for 2005 based on sound evidence suggest that high standards will be maintained for those on the GCSE course. Boys and girls attain equally. Standards in core physical education lessons, despite restricted time in Year 10, remain in line with national expectations. Students have sound knowledge and understanding of sport and accurately apply skills in physical activity and team games. Participation is very high and attitudes are consistently good. This reflects good achievement by the vast majority of students. Only a minority of students find the application of skills difficult.
116. Throughout Years 7 to 11 students achieve well, including those with special educational needs. The department extends students whom they have identified as gifted and talented through more challenging tasks and links to out of hours activities and local sports clubs. This depicts a fully inclusive department. Students also develop a good understanding of how different types of exercise can contribute to their fitness and health.
117. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and some very good teaching was observed. The department has established a good climate for learning, promoting enjoyment and success for students. Very good subject knowledge, high expectations and challenge and good engagement and encouragement of students underpin all teaching and learning. Lesson planning is variable in quality in the amount of detail contained within it, although teaching methods are appropriate to students' needs and tasks are adapted to suit different levels of ability. Teachers are positive role models and have good and respectful relationships with students, resulting in a positive departmental ethos. Lessons have good pace and are productive. Students are using video technology to begin to observe and analyse their performance more fully. Students generally behave and concentrate well, although occasionally a few students stray off task. Students' awareness of National Curriculum levels and criteria is inconsistent, limiting their ability to take even more

responsibility for their own learning. The use of ICT is under-developed, restricting students' learning, especially in the analysis of skills for GCSE students. However the department does make good use of target setting to stimulate students desire to learn and improve.

118. Assessment procedures are thorough, and students' progress throughout Years 7 to 11 is well recorded. Assessment data is used to respond to students' needs and inform planning. Curriculum provision meets statutory requirement although time allocation for students in Year 10 fall well below the national recommendation. The loss of accommodation for examination purpose limits full delivery of the planned curriculum. Both of these factors have a detrimental impact on students' achievement by limiting the time available to consolidate their understanding and skills. Innovative developments in the curriculum for Year 7 students, including a self evaluation booklet and the introduction of students having to invent a game using James Bond and the Olympics as themes, are enabling students to develop their interpersonal and social skills more fully and enhance their thinking and enquiry skills. The recognition of students' achievement and success, particularly through very good visual displays, enhances their spiritual development. A good programme of intra and extra sporting activities and links with local sports clubs and recreation centres promotes students' participation in sport. The department needs to complete risk assessments for all activities and procedures to comply with statutory requirements.
119. Leadership and management of the department are good. Teachers form a committed team who are determined to maintain high standards. They have high aspirations for their students. The department has a strong identity, and uses a self evaluating approach to address issues. All concerns from the previous report have been addressed and improvement since then has been good.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Applied business

Provision in applied business is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the best lessons planning is very good and ensures a variety of learning experiences that are matched to students' needs.
- There are too few opportunities for students to learn in business environments and this is restricting standards and achievement.
- The use of assessment to promote learning is underdeveloped.
- Higher-attainers achieve well in response to the input of a voluntary assistant.
- Computers are used well to promote students' independent learning skills.

Commentary

120. Applied business is a relatively new GCSE subject that was introduced into the options in Year 10 last September. There are no examination results to report at present.
121. Standards at this early stage are average and achievement is satisfactory for both boys and girls overall, although higher-attaining students achieve well and their standards are above average. They are able to explain in detail the conflicts of interest of business stakeholders and understand how these conflicts may be resolved in relation to, for example, the expansion of a factory site and its impact on the environment. Middle and lower attaining students, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily and produce work of average standards. They have a sound knowledge of business vocabulary because of the clear focus on key words in lessons. However, they are less confident in applying

their new knowledge to business situations, as there are few opportunities for work-related learning through visits or simulations. The lack of vocational experiences is a barrier to improving the standards of all students at the present time.

122. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The best teaching is very well planned and enables the use of a variety of learning tasks that are appropriately matched to students' different capabilities. For example, in a lesson on recruitment, a good starter activity consolidated prior learning on the meaning of the technical terms used. The effective use of computers enabled all students to research aspects of selection before constructing a flow-chart of the process. Students were interested and engaged in their learning and worked well in groups and independently. The teacher and an assistant moved around the class efficiently and ensured that students were productive. The specialist knowledge and experience of the voluntary assistant is used well with small groups to encourage students to consolidate and increase their knowledge, understanding and skills. Where teaching is least effective there are insufficient opportunities for students to learn through experiencing the business environment. In a lesson on training, learning was dominated by the teaching of factual content. There was no structured simulation exercise to enable students to analyse the training needs of employees at different stages of their careers.
123. Students enjoy the course, especially the use of computers to support their independent learning. They know how to improve their work through individual discussions with the teacher. However, they are not informed of the standard of their work through the use of grades and they do not have target grades. The use of assessment to improve learning is a weakness that has yet to be tackled.
124. Leadership and management are satisfactory and, as a result, applied business has been introduced successfully into the curriculum. The professional development of staff has been promoted through attendance at numerous courses and by the provision of adequate resources. Partnerships with businesses to provide appropriate vocational experiences for students have not yet developed and this is proving a barrier to raising standards of achievement. There is no plan to tackle either this shortcoming or the fact that teaching time in Year 11 next year will be considerably below that usually found for an applied subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

There is an extensive programme for developing students' personal, social and health education, taught in specific, weekly lessons by form tutors. It was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection. However the course includes all formally required aspects including drugs, sex, relationships and careers education as well as parts of the citizenship curriculum. It also promotes healthy living well. The school has been nominated for the national teaching awards in the 'Healthy School' category and has achieved an externally accredited standard for its work in this area. The coordinator has a good overview of the programme which has been designed in conjunction with the heads of year, who have oversight of its delivery. Teaching is monitored and training is provided for staff. The programme is formally reviewed annually but there is more regular evaluation involving heads of year, form teachers and students. As a result the programme is made relevant to all students, and a real strength is the adaptations made to suit the needs of specific groups, such as a project designed to develop the esteem and confidence of a group of vulnerable students.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching captures students' interest well and ensures that they are fully involved in their work and so their learning is good.
- Different subjects of the curriculum make a good contribution to students' learning in citizenship.
- The management of the department is in a state of transition and no one person has a complete overview of provision.

Commentary

125. Citizenship is taught through the personal, social and health education programme, activities in form periods and through other subjects of the curriculum. Heads of subject departments have accepted responsibility for teaching specific aspects of citizenship. The religious education department deals with cultural diversity, for example, and the geography department with environmental issues. The acting coordinator has produced a handbook of guidance for staff responsible for the management and teaching of citizenship. The coverage of citizenship is included in departmental curriculum planning and students keep a record of their own learning in the subject. No personal, social and health education lessons were taking place during the days of inspection, and so citizenship lessons observed were when it was being covered in other subjects, including in science, English, ICT and physical education in Years 7 to 9.
126. The standards attained by students in the lessons observed in Years 7 and 9 were in line with expectations for the subject. Students demonstrate a good capacity to link scientific knowledge with citizenship issues. This was illustrated in a science lesson in which Year 9 students studying genetic 'finger printing' used their new knowledge to discuss the issues involved in children with genetic disorders being saved by tissue transplants from siblings conceived for that purpose. Students' achievement is good. They recognise the relevance of the topics studied to their own lives and are developing a good understanding of related issues. Year 9 students studying the Data Protection Act in an ICT lesson, for example, showed a growing awareness of the agencies which hold data on their families and they used their knowledge to design posters showing how to protect students in this school. Students with special educational needs make good progress because work is modified for them, such as in an English lesson, where they were given extra help through prompt sheets. Gifted and talented students achieve well because there are opportunities for them to work at an appropriately demanding level. There is not enough evidence to make judgements on standards and achievement in Years 10 and 11.
127. In the lessons observed teaching was good because topics were made relevant, resulting in students' interest being captured. A science teacher used Year 9 students' existing knowledge of DNA profiling from watching crime programmes on television to develop their understanding of the scientific procedures involved. Community spirit and cooperation between students was very well developed in a physical education lesson where groups of Year 7 students invented a game and in so doing learnt to think ahead, plan and organise. The weekly current affairs quiz conducted in form periods makes students aware of what is happening around them.
128. Good opportunities for the development of the social and communication skills and the sense of responsibility necessary for good citizenship are provided. Two student governors have been elected to the governing body and there is a school council. Charity work is undertaken successfully. Students run summer schools for Year 6 students. The music department has an extensive programme which promotes cooperation between students and participation in local events. Because these students act as good role models, other students are encouraged to join in school activities. The annual citizenship day which involves individual year groups strengthens the already good contacts the school has with outside agencies such as the police and fire service.

129. Leadership and management are satisfactory because, although citizenship has a high profile in the school and is well delivered, it is in a period of transition. A new head of department has been appointed to take up post in the summer term, but at present there is no one with a complete overview of overall provision in the subject. Consequently, lessons are not monitored and the work of the department has not been evaluated this year. However, students' attainment in citizenship is assessed in accordance with appropriate criteria and their progress is reported to parents annually.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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