

INSPECTION REPORT

WAYLAND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

Watton, Thetford

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121158

Headteacher: Mr M Rose

Lead inspector: Mr M Beale

Dates of inspection: 13-16 September 2004

Inspection number: 268506

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 pupils: 11 to 16
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 709

School address: Merton Road
Watton
Thetford
Norfolk

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs C White

Date of previous inspection: 17 June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This small school serves the Norfolk town of Watton and its surrounding villages. The headteacher was appointed in September 2002. It has recently gained technology college status. The number of students has steadily increased since the last inspection. There are currently more girls than boys; this difference is most marked in Year 9. There are very few students from minority ethnic backgrounds and only four students are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The number of students taking up their eligibility for a free school meal is below the national average but does not accurately reflect the fact that there is a degree of social and economic disadvantage within the locality. Eleven students are in the care of the local authority. While half of the students transfer from the local junior school, the remainder do so from schools in outlying villages. Attainment on entry as measured by Year 6 National Curriculum test results is below average overall but is rising. Detailed analysis of the Year 6 results and of assessments soon after admission shows that attainment on entry is seriously affected by weaknesses in writing which limit the progress of a significant proportion of students. The attainment on entry is further depressed by the presence of selective schools locally. Approximately seven percent of students in the area go to selective schools, although Wayland still has a reasonable number with the potential to achieve high standards. The proportion of students identified with special educational needs is above the national average and has increased in the last year. The proportion with statements has risen considerably since last year and is now at four percent of the school population, which is above average. There is an on-site unit for six students identified with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia. The unit provides support for basic skills through a mixture of withdrawal and in-class support. To combat the low staying on rates in education post-16 the school is involved in the Rural Pathfinder project.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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19528	Roland Portsmouth	Team inspector	Mathematics
15079	Tony Boys	Team inspector	Science
8052	Ken McKenzie	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
8096	Nigel File	Team inspector	History Religious education
1489	Paul King	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology
33015	Richard Winter	Team inspector	Geography Citizenship
32173	Barbara Brown	Team inspector	French German
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a reasonably effective and an improving school; it provides satisfactory value for money. The school plays an important role in the local community. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and the standards achieved by students are improving under the very good personal leadership of the headteacher. Even so, boys are not achieving all that they are capable of at GCSE level. In many cases this is because of low motivation and narrow aspirations.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's energy, enthusiasm and drive generate a sense of purpose and a clear direction for the improvement of the school.
- Standards are rising throughout the school; however, students are not achieving as well as they should in religious education, modern languages, and design and technology.
- A significant number of skilful teachers regularly teach lessons that engage and interest the students so that they learn new ideas rapidly.
- Shortcomings in standards of literacy and students' speaking skills are holding down the overall achievement of a significant number of students.
- Insufficient concerted action has been taken to tackle falling levels of attendance.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1999 is satisfactory overall, largely because of rapid progress over the last two years. The decline in results at GCSE since the last inspection was reversed in 2004. Test results for Year 9 pupils have been improving more rapidly than nationally, particularly in mathematics and science. The areas identified at the previous inspection as needing improvement have been tackled with varying levels of success. Standards have risen in music and requirements for information and communication technology are now fully met in Years 10 and 11. However, the approach to assessment is still not consistent nor the use of data to inform targets and support students' learning. Achieving technology college status has considerably benefited the level of new technology resources throughout the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Standards are improving and **achievement is now satisfactory overall throughout the school.** Students with special educational needs and the small number with English as an additional language also achieve satisfactorily. Where specific programmes are provided for students with particular talents such as in music and mathematics, their achievement is good. Year 9 test results were average in mathematics and science in 2003 and improved further in 2004, but were below average in English in 2003 and at a similar level in 2004. GCSE results had been following a declining trend up to 2003 when they were in the bottom five percent of similar schools. There was a considerable improvement in the 2004 results when the proportion of students achieving at least five A*-C grades jumped from 36 to 51 percent.

Overall standards are in line with national averages throughout the school, although boys are not doing as well as girls in most subjects. Current standards are in line with national averages in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology by Year 11. However, standards are not as high as they should be in religious education, modern foreign languages, graphics and resistant materials. The school is wisely tackling the weaknesses in students' writing that are evident from their entry to the school but are not doing enough to improve speaking and listening skills.

The students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Although cultural development is satisfactory, there is scope to develop further the students' awareness of the cultural diversity in British society today. Students' attitudes to learning are satisfactory and behaviour is good. Most students try hard in lessons; however, a small but significant minority are not well motivated and do not work hard enough. Attendance is below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. Teaching is also satisfactory, but varies considerably. A significant proportion of the teaching is lively and interesting and motivates the students to try hard. However, the headteacher is aware of where teaching lacks drive and is taking steps to secure improvements. The curriculum is appropriate for the needs and aspirations of the students and includes increased flexibility in Years 10 and 11. Students participate with interest in the good range of extra-curricular activities; their views are sought and acted upon by the school where possible. The school exploits the good links established with the community and other schools and colleges for the benefit of the students' achievement. These links are also used to raise students' aspirations and understanding of the opportunities open to them after the age of 16. The support and guidance provided for students are satisfactory, although the assessment procedures on which these are based are not consistently implemented.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides a very clear direction to the work of staff and to the school's development. He has gained the respect of staff, students, parents and governors who largely share his commitment to raising standards and support him effectively in the main. The governing body is going through a period of transition but its work fulfils requirements and it has supported the headteacher well in the drive to improve achievement. The headteacher, staff and governors have a good understanding of the issues facing the school and the action needed to tackle them successfully.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are both very much in support of the headteacher and all that he is trying to do for the school. Parents' views of the school, while quite mixed, are generally favourable. They feel that their children like school and are making progress. Pupils are slightly more sceptical, but generally agree with parental views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- involve all staff in implementing strategies and teaching methods to raise boys' achievement;
- ensure that all staff and subject departments play a carefully planned and co-ordinated role in raising literacy standards and developing the students' speaking skills;
- ensure a consistent approach to marking and assessment procedures and the use of assessment to support the students' learning;
- raise standards in religious education, design and technology and modern foreign languages;
- take vigorous action to raise levels of attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards are rising and the students' achievement is improving following a period of falling standards in recent years during which time many students were not achieving all that they were capable of. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school overall and standards are in line with national averages by Years 9 and 11, although boys are not achieving as well as girls.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There was a substantial improvement in GCSE results in 2004 and Year 9 test results have been steadily improving particularly in mathematics.
- Students are achieving well in several subjects such as mathematics, information and communication technology and geography.
- Students are not achieving all that they should in religious education, modern languages, graphics and resistant materials.
- Weaknesses in the skills of writing and speaking are holding back the students' achievement; this has been identified as a major priority by the school.

Commentary

1. Overall test results for Year 9 students had been improving more rapidly than nationally over the period since the last inspection. They fell in 2003 from a high point in 2002, but indications are that they have risen in 2004. Overall results in 2003 were in line with the national average but represented less than satisfactory progress from the students' Year 6 test results. This was largely because Year 9 results in English were below average whereas results in mathematics and science were average. Indications are that mathematics results have improved considerably in 2004, particularly in the proportion exceeding nationally expected levels. Improvements in English and science are more modest. Girls attained much better results than boys in English since the last inspection, while there has been no significant difference by gender in either mathematics or science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.5 (33.5)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	36.1 (35.5)	35.4 (34.7)
science	33.7 (34.8)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 140 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Results at GCSE had fallen considerably by 2003 during a period of steady improvement nationally. The proportion of students achieving at least five A*-C grades fell from 53 percent in 2000 to 36 percent in 2003. This trend has been reversed in 2004, when 51 percent of students achieved this standard and results improved in English language, mathematics and science. It was only in English literature and physical education that

results in 2003 were above average, although results in both subjects fell in 2004 to the previous year's national average. The results in 2003 were significantly below average in the graphics and resistant materials aspects of design and technology, information and communication technology, French, German, religious education and history; however results improved considerably in both information and communication technology and history in 2004 and they are now above average in information and communication technology and average in history. Boys have regularly achieved lower results than girls at GCSE and by a greater margin than is the case nationally.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	36 (38)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	85 (79)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	30.7 (28.8)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 125 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Students are generally achieving the standards expected of them given their attainment on entry to the school. However, there are exceptions to this and a number of factors which hold back the students' progress. Several students, particularly groups of boys, are not motivated and have low aspirations. This is reflected in the low staying-on rate in education after Year 11. These students are unwilling to take responsibility for their learning and are not able to work independently. A major priority in school planning is to raise boys' achievement, their aspirations and the number continuing in education. Various strategies have been introduced recently and although appropriate it is not possible to evaluate their impact given the limited time they have been in operation.
4. There are significant weaknesses in the students' writing. Furthermore, their speaking skills are not sufficiently fluent or well developed to support improvements in writing. This holds back progress particularly in subjects that require competence in these two aspects. The school has identified the need to improve writing skills and has introduced several strategies not all of which are yet sufficiently embedded in the work of departments to have a lasting impact.
5. Students are achieving well in mathematics, information and communication technology and geography throughout the school. They are also achieving well in music and physical education in Years 7 to 9 and in art and design in Years 10 and 11. The 2004 GCSE results reflect the low standards currently in graphics, resistant materials, religious education, French and German. The students are not achieving as well as they should in these subjects and standards are below average throughout the school. Achievement is satisfactory in other subjects and standards are average with the exceptions of above average standards in geography throughout the school and in art and design and information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11.
6. The school is working with some success to meet the needs of all students. For example, students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their targets. Those with literacy difficulties, who are withdrawn for specialist teaching also achieve satisfactorily. Achievement is good for the students identified as having

particular talents. Specific programmes, such as in mathematics and music, have been introduced to extend the abilities of pupils with particular talents. The eight Portuguese students, who have arrived at the school in the last year, have settled in very well. They commented enthusiastically on the support provided by both staff and fellow students. The strong group identity they have developed, plus the mutual support they provide, have contributed powerfully to their successful assimilation into the school community and enabled them to deal effectively with the low level teasing they have occasionally encountered. Academically they have made satisfactory progress and are included in all classroom activities. However, teachers are not well equipped to support students who arrive speaking little or no English and who do not have others in the school sharing their mother tongue.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attendance is unsatisfactory. Punctuality and attitudes to school are satisfactory in the main although a significant minority of students lack motivation. Although the number of fixed period exclusions is high for a school of this size, most of the students behave well. Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is good. Their cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are not rigorous enough and attendance is below the national average.
- The school is successful in promoting the students' personal development.
- Students with special educational needs have good attitudes to learning.
- Teachers act quickly to resolve any incidents of bullying or harassment.
- The number of fixed period exclusions is above the national average.

Commentary

- Attendance was good at the time of the last inspection. However, it has slowly fallen over the last four years so that it is now below the national average. The school is working hard to raise the standard of students' work and is concerned about the effect that these absences have upon their education. Analysis of the reasons provided shows a steady rise in the level of illness. Where there is a particular cause for concern, the school asks the medical officer to confirm students' illnesses and provide the appropriate professional advice. Although a raffle is held each term for those who have outstandingly good attendance, the range of rewards and incentives is limited. Systems for following up unexplained absence are insufficiently rigorous and few families are contacted on the first day of their child's absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.8	School data	0.5
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

- During lessons, most of the students co-operate with their teachers and willingly undertake the work set. However, many of the older students remain very dependent

upon their teacher and they are reluctant to take responsibility for their own learning. A minority of students lack self-motivation and cannot always sustain concentration in lessons. Students with special educational needs have more positive attitudes to their learning, although they find the work difficult. The teacher from the on-site unit provides good support and this helps these students to maintain their positive attitude to learning.

9. The majority of students are successfully encouraged to listen to each other's points of view, present arguments and support each other during group discussions. They work together well and the school council and prefect systems are successfully developing students' sense of responsibility. The school has a clear commitment to broaden students' horizons; improving links with the community are supporting students' personal development well. For example, the local Youth Arts Festival enables students to participate in a wide range of activities, some of which are hosted on the premises. The 'Pathfinder' scheme and the 'Skill Force' project are also allowing students of all abilities to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Students respond well to opportunities for private reflection and they actively enjoy assemblies. However, the development of students' cultural awareness is largely limited to European culture. This does not prepare them well for life within a multi-cultural and multi-racial community.

10. The headteacher and his staff have created a calm and constructive atmosphere for learning and they have high expectations of students' behaviour. Teachers take every opportunity to praise good behaviour, while dealing firmly with those who let themselves and the school, down. The headteacher is highly visible and he is taking a strong stand against inappropriate language and behaviour. As a result, the number of fixed term exclusions has risen markedly over the last two years but there have been no permanent exclusions and this reflects the commitment to the education and care of all students. Analysis of the questionnaire showed that two-thirds of students share concerns about bullying and the standard of behaviour. However, during discussions with inspectors students were surprised at this and said that students of all abilities and ethnic origins get along well with each other. Inspection evidence is that any incidents of either bullying or racial harassment are dealt with quickly and firmly and as a consequence the school is a harmonious environment for the students.

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	687	85	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	2	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. Teaching quality varies, but there is much that engages the students and supports their learning. Assessment practice has improved but remains inconsistent. The curriculum covers all requirements and is enriched by a wide range of sporting and musical activities. The students are guided and supported well and involved well in school developments. Achievement benefits from the links forged with the local community and other educational institutions.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall as are procedures for the assessment of the students' work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many teachers prepare and teach stimulating and well-structured lessons which ensure that all students learn well and make progress.
- The most effective lessons generate a good pace and effective challenge; teachers in these lessons set high expectations of students in terms of their participation and learning.
- Where teachers do not have a good command of the subject and where planning is poor, students, particularly boys become bored and inattentive and fail to make progress in lessons.
- Monitoring and recording of assessment data has improved since the last inspection, with good practice emerging in several subjects; however, inconsistencies remain in the implementation of school procedures to monitor the progress of students and use assessment information when planning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 129 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (2%)	24 (19%)	56(43%)	38 (29%)	8 (6%)	1 (1%)	0

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

11. A good proportion of the teachers regularly teach lessons that move learning forward. They are good role models for their colleagues. Where teachers are well prepared, appropriately qualified and are able to engage students with relevant materials and appropriately worded and targeted questions, students make good progress and achieve well. This is particularly evident in the teaching of physical education where the expert knowledge of the teachers, the setting of high expectations and the enthusiastic teaching stimulates students and maintains their interest during lessons. There are also examples where this occurs in other subjects. For example, a very good Year 10 science lesson on the role of enzymes in digestion was characterised by having the content and pace matched to students' needs with a variety of activities to maintain student interest. Where teachers use appropriate and targeted questioning, students make very good progress and achieve well.

12. Many teachers have established strong and productive relationships with their classes in a short time. For example, the teacher's pleasant and very productive relationship with students in a high quality Year 8 music lesson ensured excellent achievement by all. The ambitious target of the whole-class producing music as an ensemble was achieved to the great delight and pride of the whole class. However, in the minority of lessons where teachers fail to engage students' attention with interesting and relevant materials taught at the right pace and with enthusiasm, many students in such lessons are unable to maintain interest, quickly become bored and fail to learn or make progress in the lesson.
13. There are several examples of teachers allocated to subjects beyond their main area of expertise. Their teaching was generally weaker than in their main subject largely because they lacked sufficient subject expertise to deliver key ideas and check the students' depth of understanding. For example, poor subject knowledge resulted in confused teaching in an unsatisfactory Year 9 history lesson on the Triple Entente.
14. Teachers are striving with some success to meet the needs of all students whatever their learning needs might be. The learning support assistants are well trained, competent and provide students with special educational needs with effective individual support because they know their needs well. The teaching of students with marked literacy difficulties in small groups is good.
15. Students with English as an additional language are given satisfactory support in developing their skills in English language. A Year 11 student with English as an additional language praised the commitment of her teacher; his efforts to include and encourage her, and his willingness to correct her, which she believed some teachers were misguidedly reluctant to do. Teachers provide writing frames to support these students but there is scope for a greater focus on speaking and listening, the use of planned techniques including the use of visual prompts, drama and other interactive approaches.
16. The assessment of students' work is satisfactory overall with some good practice emerging in several subjects, particularly in science, history, geography, design and technology, art and design and information and communication technology with the general monitoring and recording of assessment data improving since the last inspection. As part of this improvement, a whole-school assessment and monitoring cycle has been established in order to allow students' progress to be tracked including an analysis of results by gender. However, a lack of suitable computer systems means that centrally held records are not easily accessible to middle managers which inhibits their ability to carry out detailed analysis of students' progress in different groups at subject level. There are also inconsistencies in the use of assessment data to inform planning and in students' understanding of their own achievement and progress. Subjects where assessment practices are unsatisfactory are English, modern foreign languages, religious education and in music in Years 10 and 11.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory and the students' experiences are enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is inclusive, catering for all abilities and a wide range of aptitudes.
- Weaknesses in literacy are being tackled but not all departments are sufficiently involved for initiatives to have a lasting effect.
- Students are prepared well for the next stage after compulsory education, in either further education or employment.
- The current structure of the timetable causes a number of problems which have an adverse impact upon teaching, learning and the effective deployment of some staff.
- Significant improvements have taken place in the last two years in the level of learning resources particularly those for information and communication technology.

Commentary

17. The school offers equal access to a range of curricular opportunities which meet statutory requirements and suits the needs of most students. The school's personal, social and health education programme supports the students' personal development and covers the aspects of sex education and drugs awareness. Action is being taken to tackle weaknesses in the students' literacy in a variety of ways. Students experiencing particular difficulties in literacy receive targeted support through a literacy course and a teacher has been appointed to focus specifically on improving the students' writing. The literacy co-ordinator is playing an important role but subject departments are not fully playing their role in spite of the training that has been provided.
18. Students with special educational needs have the same access to the curriculum as all students. When they are withdrawn for specific teaching, care is taken to ensure that they do not repeatedly miss the same subject. Provision for the small number of students who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory. There are several subjects with provision for gifted and talented students which is worthy of note. In mathematics the most able students take GCSE one year early which allows them to study AS Level in Year 11. There is regular liaison with local sports clubs which gifted and talented students are encouraged to join to develop their abilities in a competitive environment. Several students have gained county honours in a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities. By participating in music groups talented pupils have been able to perform at a professional standard and at national festivals and events. Many of these activities are also pursued through the school's broad range of extra-curricular activities. Given the difficulties over transport arrangements facing many students, the numbers participating in these activities is at a creditable level.
19. There have been significant improvements in the arrangements for information and communication technology as a discrete subject in all years. The level of information and communication technology resources has improved significantly and a well-managed network is accessible from most parts of the school. Many departments are now equipped with interactive whiteboards which have Internet access. These are now playing an increasingly important role in teaching and learning. All teachers have access to a portable computer which has raised the profile of information and communication technology. However, subjects such as science, music and design and technology are not making full and effective use of these resources. In addition the mapping of information and communication technology use across the curriculum is not sufficiently thorough to ensure that all students consistently receive their full entitlement.
20. The current structure of the two-week timetable has several shortcomings particularly in the imbalance it gives to the allocations for several subjects. For example, all lessons for

a group of students in subjects such as physical education occur in one week and then there are no lessons in the following week. This affects allocations in other subjects and is also leading to several teachers taking classes outside their specialist subject area.

21. Preparation for the next stage in education and for employment is good. Arrangements for careers advice and guidance are effective and the students are provided with valuable work experience in Year 10. The requirements from this year to teach about the work related curriculum are met and provision is developing well. Vocational elements are introduced in Years 10 and 11 and the needs and aspirations of different groups of students are met through increased flexibility in their programmes. The 'Skill Force' course is a particularly effective example of this, raising the aspirations of otherwise somewhat disaffected students and making a significant contribution to the development of both learning skills and more general life skills.
22. The refurbished learning resource centre provides a comfortable and attractive working environment which is well equipped with computers. Much work has been undertaken to improve the accommodation, with further building and refurbishment planned. However, many rooms in the school are small for the demands of the curriculum, limiting teaching strategies in a number of subjects and inhibiting the best use of some learning resources. Sports facilities remain a good strength of the school. Temporary accommodation, which is separated from the main building, is far from ideal in most respects. Funds have now been made available to replace these buildings as well as to improve accommodation by extending the school building. The school has made significant efforts to improve ground floor access for all children and wheelchair ramps have been built at several entrances. The nature of first floor accommodation presents particular access difficulties.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure students' care, welfare and health and safety are satisfactory. The school provides students with satisfactory support, advice and guidance and the extent to which it seeks, values and acts upon students' views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- First aid procedures are good and students' day-to-day medical needs are met in full.
- Well-planned induction procedures help new students to settle in quickly.
- Students receive good educational guidance and well-informed support when selecting their options for Years 10 and 11 and beyond.
- The school encourages students to voice their views and acts upon them whenever it can.
- A small number of the routine health and safety procedures are not sufficiently rigorous.

Commentary

23. Members of staff work as a very effective team to ensure that students receive good personal care and support. Day-to-day child protection procedures are in place and the designated person is fully aware of her responsibilities. Although the school is meeting its statutory obligations for health and safety procedures, the headteacher was informed of some concerns that arose during the inspection.
24. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting spoke highly of the support given to students when they join the school at the start of Year 7. Inspectors agree with these views. Good liaison with contributing primary schools and well-planned transfer

arrangements ensure a smooth transition when students enrol at the start of Year 7. Year 6 students also attend a summer term transfer day when they undertake various activities with their new teachers. Working relationships are good and students say that their teachers are kind and very fair.

25. Teachers provide students with good academic support and guidance. During discussions, students say they know their National Curriculum level and how they can improve their work. Students say that their teachers are approachable and this encourages them to seek help when they need it. In addition, nominated students who are experiencing particular difficulties may receive individual support from the learning mentors. This popular scheme helps to ensure that the students concerned do as well as they possibly can. The learning support team involves students in monitoring their progress, through the reviews of their individual education plans and attendance at the annual reviews of their statements. All members of staff are familiar with the students' needs and competent assistants support them well during lessons.
26. Students receive detailed information about the courses they can follow in Years 10 and 11 and in further education. Links with the Connexions service are good and work experience placements at the end of Year 10 give students a good insight into the various opportunities that are available once they have left school. The successful Pathfinder initiative is enriching students' breadth of experience as the school builds wider and stronger links with the world of industry and commerce. This good provision helps students to make informed choices about their future; they speak highly of the experiences that have been made available.
27. Students of all ages express their views through the school council and they are very pleased with the way in which the school responds to their suggestions and preferences. For example, students designed the tie that identifies their year group and council representatives were recently consulted when the school was awarding the current catering contract. In addition, students much appreciate the visibility and approachability of the headteacher and the constructive way in which he welcomes their ideas.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strengthening community links enrich the curriculum and promote students' personal development well.
- Good links with other schools and further education colleges help students to make informed choices about their education after Year 11.
- Very high quality members of the administration staff help to build especially close links with the parents of students who have special educational needs.
- The school actively seeks parents' views and incorporates them into plans for the future whenever possible.

Commentary

28. The school is developing strong and mutually beneficial links with the local community, businesses and industry. Initiatives such as the 'Rural Pathfinder' project are helping to raise students' aspirations and increase the proportion that continues studying after Year

11. Working with three other secondary schools and two colleges of further education, the school has established close links with numerous local businesses and these are increasing students' awareness of the opportunities available in the world of work. In addition, local companies provided generous financial support for the school's technology college bid and regularly provide work placements for Year 10 students.
29. There are effective links with contributing primary schools and with other secondary schools. Close liaison over curriculum matters helps teachers to set work that is well matched to the incoming Year 7 students' needs and abilities. Primary schools receive good support in several subjects, including English, information and communication technology, science and design and technology. Students who would benefit from a boost prior to their Year 6 statutory tests are able to attend a 'writing day' and the school hosts annual tournaments for primary school sports teams. The additionally resourced facility maintains very close links with primary schools to ensure that students' needs are well known prior to entry. Any anxieties about transition are resolved individually. At the end of Year 11, a good proportion of students who want to undertake vocational courses move on to Norwich City College. Many of those who wish to continue with their academic studies join sixth forms in nearby high schools. Using the recently established video-conferencing facility, students at different schools are able to swap information and advise each other about the various opportunities available to those who are considering a move on to sixth form study.
30. The school maintains good links with parents of the students who have special educational needs. Very close liaison helps to ensure that the teachers receive comprehensive information about the students who are supported through the additionally resourced facility. There is always a member of the special needs staff in the department to answer the telephone and talk to parents.
31. The school actively seeks parents' views and encourages them to be open and frank if they have any suggestions or concerns. In order to gauge their views, questionnaires are circulated during the consultation evenings and the school regularly asks parents for feedback on issues such as homework, behaviour and the curriculum. Great importance is placed upon their comments and suggestions and nine out of ten parents say they would feel comfortable approaching the school with their questions or comments.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Governance is satisfactory as are the leadership of other key staff and the effectiveness of management.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has provided new impetus to the work of staff and gives a very clear direction for the work of all associated with the school.
- Procedures to monitor the work of staff, review the effectiveness of provision and then plan for improvement have become more rigorous in recent years.
- Funding is used well to increase resources, improve accommodation and meet the school's major educational priorities.
- The school is achieving its aim of ensuring that all students are included in all that the school has to offer, although there is scope for improvement.

- Management arrangements in design and technology are suffering from staff absence and improvements have not been sufficiently rigorously planned.

Commentary

32. The headteacher is a very effective leader. He is energetic, enthusiastic, has a very clear vision for the direction of the school and has rapidly gained the respect and support of staff, pupils, parents and governors. Members of staff support his drive to raise achievement and several heads of department are now taking on a much more effective leadership role in their areas. However, the management of the design and technology faculty has shortcomings that are affecting the achievement of the students. There is a lack of direction, limited evaluation and no one to carry through the faculty development plan.
33. Since his appointment two years ago the headteacher has identified the key strengths of the school and the main factors that are holding back achievement. Thorough and rigorous procedures have been introduced to review, monitor and evaluate the work of staff. This has enabled the headteacher to gain a clear picture of where improvement is needed. He has introduced very appropriate action to improve teaching and learning in a variety of ways, some of which are already starting to bear fruit. A variety of steps have been taken, including enabling high quality teaching staff to work with and support colleagues in improving their classroom practice. One other step has been to link some of the very small departments together so that teaching staff can benefit from not working in isolation. This is already having a beneficial effect on the quality of teaching and consistency of practise in several areas. The observation of teaching is based on clear criteria, although it is evident from subject management folders that these are not always consistently interpreted by departmental staff.
34. The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection and there have been considerable improvements in the last two years. Achieving technology college status has given renewed impetus to the work of staff. The refurbishment of many parts of the accommodation and a substantial increase in the level of new technology resources has significantly enhanced the students' learning. Further funding for more rebuilding work has been obtained and the school is about to prepare a new development plan as the current one reaches the end of its timescale. The headteacher has already identified many of the key priorities for the next stage of the school's improvement and has already begun to focus on their implementation.
35. Key governors have a good understanding of the main issues facing the school, its strengths and its weaknesses. They have been suitably involved in shaping the future direction of the school, particularly through the appointment of the headteacher. The governing body is now going through a period of transition with a new chair and a few vacancies that have occurred recently. However, they challenge and question the headteacher and staff over key decisions and have played a crucial role in moving the school forward in recent years. Governors have successfully used the finance available to meet their major priority of retaining the desired curriculum model through ensuring that staffing levels are maintained. They have also successfully extended the resources available to staff. Best value principles are applied satisfactorily to spending decisions, governors being particularly prudent in ensuring that they gain value for money within what has been a tight budget. The relatively large carry-forward figure of nearly six percent of

the budget from 2003-2004 is planned to be used during the 2004-2005 financial year to support school developments.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,336,394	Balance from previous year	34,877
Total expenditure	2,208,304	Balance carried forward to the next	128,090
Expenditure per pupil	3,164		

36. The school is committed to enabling all students to benefit from the activities that are provided and is working with increasing success to ensure that educational inclusion is at the heart of its developments. For example, the learning support department is enthusiastically led and there have been several recent innovations relating to how students are supported and monitored. The team is mutually supportive and frequently exchange information informally. However, students with special educational needs are not always identified in the way stated in the current Code of Practice for special educational needs. The governing body has recently adopted a revised policy on race equality, although it is not particularly sharp or clear and offers little opportunity for effective monitoring of equality.

37. The school provides satisfactory value for money given the achievements of the students when compared to their attainment on entry and the below average costs. Largely because of the drive of the headteacher and direction now being given to the school's educational development, it is well placed to secure further improvements in coming years.

WORK RELATED LEARNING

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has made a good start to fulfilling requirements and it is well placed to extend provision further.
- Work experience and careers education are well organised and contribute significantly to the students' learning through work.
- Flexibility within the curriculum is used well to widen the opportunities for students to learning through and about the world of work.
- Subjects contribute to provision, but their input is not monitored sufficiently to ensure that all students receive a consistent approach.

Commentary

38. The school's provision for WRL is having a satisfactory impact on the students' achievement, their understanding of the world of work and the development of appropriate skills and attributes. The provision is developing well, although the co-ordinator recognises that there is still more to be done to make provision fully effective. Learning through work is the most effective aspect of provision. The careers education programme is firmly embedded in the curriculum and supports the students' achievement

and understanding well. Careful preparation for work experience, visits to placements by staff and a formal debriefing of students on completion enable students to benefit considerably. Placements are thoughtfully matched to the students' needs and capabilities where possible, given the rural location of the school. Placements for two students to undertake a more appropriate alternative to the full Year 11 curriculum have been arranged. A small group of students also travel to the nearest college for vocationally oriented courses, which benefit their individual achievement well.

39. Study on vocational courses is supported through business links that enable the students to apply and develop understanding of the application of their courses to work. The 'Skill Force' course provides a wide range of activities that support the students' understanding of the world of work and successfully develops important skills such as team work. The practical approach to this course is particularly successful and supports well the achievement of the students involved. Furthermore, the school has provided an interesting range of other activities that enable the students to learn about work. Many of these take place in Years 7 to 9 and prepare the students well for learning in Years 10 and 11.
40. The developing provision for WRL is well managed and carefully co-ordinated. The co-ordinating group has developed a reasonable strategy for implementation of school policy. The teacher in charge is extending his expertise through further training and all members of staff have received a small amount of training for the part they are to play in implementing WRL. It is expected that all subjects will write elements of WRL into their planning, provide activities each year and record evidence of learning. It is too early in the year to judge the success of this aspect, although there are currently no clear systems to map the experiences of individual students and the impact of activities on their achievement.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, reflecting the impact of recent improvements led by the headteacher and head of department.
- Students are offered a good range of extra-curricular opportunities for enrichment.
- Inadequate procedures for assessment and tracking the progress of students diminish the impact of the good teaching on students' learning.
- The gap in standards between boys and girls is well above the national average.
- The most able students do not achieve all that they should, with few achieving the highest grades in national examinations.

Commentary

41. Students enter Year 7 with below average attainment. Year 9 test results fell in 2003 and were below the national average and well below average when compared to schools where students had similar levels of prior attainment. Results in the 2004 tests indicate a small improvement, particularly for more able students. GCSE results were in line with the national average in 2003, but were well below the average of schools where students had similar Year 9 test results. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C in GCSE rose in 2004 for the third consecutive year. At both key stages, girls attained significantly better than boys. Work seen during the inspection indicates that students currently in Years 7 to 9 are performing at a level that should result in a continued improvement in standards. Achievement is currently satisfactory throughout the school and standards in the subject overall are in line with national averages by Year 9 and Year 11.
42. Standards in speaking and listening are below average throughout the school. Students have a limited vocabulary and use a narrow range of grammatical structures when responding to questions or expressing their views. Many examples were seen of teachers giving students the opportunity to engage in paired talk. Whilst this is valuable, students require more structured opportunities for oral rehearsal, particularly to hear and practise the speculative language that underpins more challenging oral and written responses across the curriculum. The recently introduced communications course in Years 10 and 11 is designed to tackle this need for lower-attaining students. All students, including the most able, would benefit from the opportunity to rehearse spoken language as an end in itself and as a preparation for writing.
43. Standards in reading are broadly average throughout the school. Students are able to read accurately though they often lack fluency and expression, indicating some shortcomings in comprehension. The focus on improving standards in writing has possibly contributed to a fall in the percentage of students achieving the expected Level 5

in reading in the Year 9 tests in 2004. Standards of spelling, punctuation and handwriting vary considerably. Boys' work in particular is often marred by careless errors.

44. Writing has been identified by the school as an area for improvement. Overall standards are broadly average but boys' performance is significantly below that of girls. The results of the 2004 tests in Year 9 show a rise in the percentage of students achieving both Level 5 and Level 6 in writing. Despite this improvement, few students attain the highest levels throughout the school. From the work seen, it appears that the most able students are not always challenged to edit and redraft their writing to meet the highest standards of which they are capable. Students make use of computers to word process their work but insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support learning.
45. Current teaching is good, with some examples seen of very good lessons. Learning is quick and although aspects of students' literacy skills are sometimes weak, there is a strong element of catching up with national expectations. Considerable effort has been made to embed the core principles of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, particularly the sequence for teaching writing. This results in lessons which break learning into manageable segments, delivered at a brisk pace; an approach which particularly supports the learning of boys. This strategy enabled a lower ability Year 8 set to successfully construct counter arguments on a range of current topics. Lessons are well prepared and based on very good subject knowledge.
46. There are no formal, consistent systems in place to track students' progress. This inhibits the accurate identification at an early stage of students, or groups of students, who are underachieving. Curricular targets for students are often vague and have little impact on teaching and learning. The lack of accurate information also precludes the effective targeting of intervention strategies and the evaluation of their impact. Assessment for learning is underdeveloped across the department. Teachers identify learning objectives for their lessons but rarely learning outcomes, which would support all forms of assessment. The quality of written feedback to students is inconsistent. Marking is both more diagnostic and challenging in Years 10 and 11. Deficiencies in assessment reduce the impact of the good and very good teaching.
47. The quality of leadership is good and is introducing appropriate change. The effectiveness of management is satisfactory overall. The head of department, in post for two years, has a clear vision for improvement and has significantly impacted on the teaching and learning strategies adopted by the department. She has instituted useful procedures to promote the sharing of good practice. The department offers good opportunities for enrichment, offering book weeks, theatre visits to London, visiting poets and drama groups. The production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', currently in preparation, for performance in a public theatre, is very ambitious and offers students the opportunity to develop their talents to a very high level.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. Students' literacy skills are below average on entry to Year 7 and remain at that level throughout the school. Their performance particularly that of boys in English and other subjects continues to be adversely affected by this weakness.

49. The school benefits from having an advanced skills teacher for literacy and a literacy co-ordinator who working with the director of the communications course, form a potentially powerful literacy team. Training has been provided all staff using the Key Stage 3 Strategy material. Currently this is having limited impact, restricted mainly to lists of key words and the use of writing frames. Members of staff lack the explicit knowledge of grammatical features and structure necessary if they are to effectively analyse and model the text types that are specific to their subject areas. The literacy team has prioritised the need to support colleagues planning and to model and team teach lessons, if the principles promoted in the training are to embed and students' skills improve. The dissemination of accurate assessments of students' reading and writing levels, linked to appropriate targets, is essential to inform all teachers' planning and teaching.
50. The communications course is promoting the development of spoken language as a prerequisite for improving writing. A group of Year 11 boys was able to access and appreciate a difficult poem by Wilfred Owen following work with photographs, which encouraged empathy and allowed the rehearsal of the appropriate language of response. This approach is not universal. Members of staff do not adopt a similar talk-based approach, using visual prompts, artefacts and classroom drama techniques to enable the students to develop their vocabulary and syntax as a preparation for improving both their oral presentation and their writing.

French and German

Provision in French and German is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below national averages.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory and there is a lack of challenge for more able students.
- A new head of department is now in post and development planning is good.
- Teachers' knowledge of both languages is good but they do not use enough French or German in the classroom.
- Relationships with students are productive.

Commentary

51. This is a department in transition and is well-poised to make progress. Instability and staffing problems in recent years have contributed to the current situation in which standards at the end of Year 9 are well below national expectations and at the end of Year 11 are well below national averages in both French and German. Boys perform less well than girls as is the case nationally. Standards seen during the inspection have risen to below national norms due to the implementation of more effective classroom practice. Teacher assessment of National Curriculum levels and GCSE speaking and writing examinations is over-inflated.
52. Achievement throughout the school is also unsatisfactory because of negative experience of language learning and some unsatisfactory teaching. This is particularly affecting the progress of the more able learners who are frequently not challenged to extend their skills or who do not hear enough foreign language from teachers to develop adequately their own understanding and speaking of the languages. Lessons and tasks are not consistently pitched at the appropriate level. This results in more able and less

able students achieving at a less than satisfactory level as their specific needs are not catered for sufficiently.

53. Teaching overall is satisfactory, with a few unsatisfactory and some good elements. The generally supportive approach of teachers and good response of students means that relationships in the classroom enhance learning even when tasks are mundane or the pace of learning is too slow. In good lessons where there is a wide variety of activities and students are challenged to listen and respond in the foreign language, their progress is much more substantial, there is a real enjoyment evident and they achieve at a level in line with expectations. The overall planning and structure of lessons is shared throughout the department and there is emphasis on sharing of good ideas and materials in order to pass on the best practice for the benefit of learners. In particular, teachers make their lesson aims very clear so that students know what they must do each lesson. However, these aims often underestimate the learners' ability so they are not sufficiently extended in their acquisition of the language. This is also reflected in inadequate assessment and tracking of students. Their capacity is underestimated in lessons whilst their attainment is overestimated at the end of Years 9 and 11. Opportunities are often missed to develop the students' literacy skills in both the foreign language and also more generally. The endings of lessons do not adequately sum up learning in order for the students to consolidate new knowledge and skills, although homework often compensates for this to a degree.
54. In spite of all these difficulties, the appointment of a new head of department in September 2004 is already beginning to improve the overall performance of the department. Leadership and management are both now satisfactory, with much potential for further development. New documentation to support learning has been started, as has the implementation of the development plan which effectively identifies and prioritises areas needing improvement. The head of department engenders a clear sense of purpose. She is already developing an insight into the respective strengths in the team and devising strategies for addressing the most significant areas of weakness.
55. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. There has been a decline in standards and much disruption to learning in the intervening period which has had a negative impact on the profile and performance of the department. Several issues identified at the last inspection remain to be tackled; in particular the monitoring of progress, the effective use of data to inform practice and inconsistencies in marking and assessment. Information and communication technology is rarely used, although software and access to computers have improved. It remains a departmental priority to implement their use in the modern languages classroom.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The continual rise in Year 9 test and GCSE examination results since the last inspection has been better than the national trend.
- Good teaching is resulting in a good response from students.
- The use of new technology is effectively integrated into the curriculum.
- There is scope to improve marking and the subsequent feedback to students.

- There is no whole-school policy for the development of the students' numeracy within other subjects.

Commentary

56. Test and examination results in mathematics have been rising more rapidly than nationally. Results in the 2003 national tests for Year 9 students were close to the national average. These results represented good progress for these students as their mathematical standards when they entered the school were below the national average. There has been a further improvement in the 2004 results. The GCSE results for 2003 were slightly above average and again represented good progress for the students from their Year 9 results. The 2004 results have risen significantly. In addition one group of 27 students took GCSE mathematics at the end of Year 10; all gained a grade in the A*-C range and are now following an AS Level course in mathematics.
57. Boys and girls achieve well and the difference between the standard of their work is less than the national difference. Standards seen during the inspection were slightly above the national average with students in Years 8 and 9 working above expected levels. The very highest attaining students in Year 10 were aiming to take the higher level GCSE examination at the end of this school year. There is one group in the current Year 11 who, after taking their examination at the end of Year 10 are following the AS Level course. These students confidently use a range of algebra skills to solve quadratic equations and one student had been so challenged that he had acquired an understanding of complex numbers through self-study. There is little difference between the observed standards of boys and girls in mathematics and students with special educational needs are also achieving in line with that of their peers.
58. Good teaching is the main factor in the rise in results and overall standards. A majority of lessons seen were judged good or better. Brisk mental activities start lessons well, where these were not carefully planned, students take longer to settle. Lessons are planned well and there is a mutually supportive atmosphere in classrooms. Planning is based upon a well-written scheme of work that contains references to the National Curriculum, the National Numeracy Strategy and target grades at GCSE. Guidance within the scheme gives resources and ideas for teachers so that lessons are challenging and relevant to the students' experience. Opportunities to enhance teaching by the use of practical work, group work or experimentation are missing because of the lack of space in mathematics classrooms. The use of new technology is well developed to support and enhance learning as it is included in the scheme of work at specific intervals. The resources to support teaching are adequate but it has been recognised that more computer software is now needed to enhance computer use further.
59. Consistently good teaching evokes a positive response from students. Students arrive at their lessons promptly and are ready to work hard. They listen well and when given the opportunity to work solutions on the board participate well, explaining their answers as they go. Lessons have sufficient pace and generally students work in short bursts following clear exposition from teachers. This is effective in sustaining good levels of concentration of all students during lessons. In a good lesson students were confident to work solutions to quadratic equations on the board. They were offered constructive comments in a polite manner from their peers.

60. Assessment is planned carefully into the scheme of work and links well with the appropriate National Curriculum levels in Years 10 and 11 and target grades at GCSE. However, day-to-day marking needs improvement. Constructive comments are rarely used and students do not know how to improve or move their standard up to the next level.
61. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good especially in regard to standards and assessment. Supporting these improvements is an effective head of department who leads the good teaching by example. There is no deputy to assist in managing the department and recent staffing changes have added to the complexities of management. There is a development plan in place with the main aim of continuing to raise standards. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored and supported as part of the formal process of performance management. This process is well documented and teachers are given areas for improvement for the future. Informal support, by the exchange of ideas, is hampered by teachers not teaching in adjacent rooms.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Students' mathematical skills are sufficient for them to access the whole curriculum, although the development of numeracy across the curriculum has been limited since the last inspection. There is no whole-school policy for development of mathematical skills across the curriculum and there is no overall co-ordinator; this role has fallen, by default, to the head of mathematics. There has been some good work undertaken with the science and geography departments and this is evident in the good level of skills in graph drawing of data analysis and display. The National Numeracy Strategy is used as a basis for regular reinforcement of number skills at the start of most mathematics lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and a clear focus on improvement have helped to raise standards in recent years.
- Teachers assess the students' progress well, using the results to set appropriate targets for improvement.
- Teaching includes a variety of strategies to tackle weaknesses in writing that have hindered many students' progress.
- The department has good computer equipment but is not using it effectively to support experimental work.
- A minority of lessons are not well planned to meet the wide range of students' needs.

Commentary

63. Good leadership and management have ensured that the department is clearly focused on improving standards and the quality of teaching and learning. As a result teaching and learning are good in all years, with some very good teaching and no unsatisfactory lessons seen during the inspection. This good teaching has helped to overcome some of the difficulties with writing that many students experience, so that overall standards seen on the inspection are average and achievement is satisfactory throughout the school.

64. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were below average overall and below those in similar schools, but the 2004 results have improved to closer to the 2003 national average. Standards attained in the national tests for Year 9 students have risen faster than the national trend, although the 2003 results showed a decline and were below average and below those in similar schools. This was partly due to the absence of a small number of students who were expected to achieve above average results. The improved 2004 results restored the rising trend. There is no significant difference in the standards being attained by boys and girls. Students with special educational needs receive satisfactory support and their achievement is satisfactory.
65. The good teaching and skilful management of behaviour ensures that students learn well in most lessons. Practical work is given a high priority and teachers use good questioning techniques to encourage students to think, so that their ability to predict and explain results is being developed well. This was evident in a Year 9 lesson where the teacher used very good explanations and questions to improve the students' understanding of the role of particles in heat transfer. Demonstrations are used effectively to help the students to understand the work. For example, in a Year 10 lesson the teacher used a home made model of the digestive system to illustrate vividly the processes involved, generating keen interest from the class. Some good use is being made of computer equipment, such as when a teacher used an interactive whiteboard to enliven a Year 10 lesson on the role of enzymes. However, insufficient use is being made of data logging equipment in experimental work, partly because of a lack of suitable software. Whilst most work is well planned to meet the students' needs, this is not true of some lessons with middle ability groups, where a wide range of needs exists. However, teachers are planning work that helps to develop the students' communication skills and this is having a positive effect on standards. Homework is used to supplement learning, but its use is not consistent across the department.
66. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, with rising standards and significant development in the curriculum and in the introduction of new teaching methods. The work of the department is monitored effectively and good assessment systems are used to set the students targets for improvement. Curriculum planning is good, with a wide range of courses offered in Years 10 and 11. Accommodation has also been improved but there are still some drab and old-fashioned laboratories that do not provide a good learning environment. The science technicians provide good support for the considerable amount of practical work that is undertaken, and this has a positive effect on standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a very significant improvement in the level of resources recently, enabling students in all years to have timetabled information and communication technology lessons.
- Teaching in the examination course is very good and examination results at GCSE have improved significantly.
- The management of the department is very effective.
- Several departments are not taking full advantage of increased resources and the improving skills of students, when planning their schemes of work.

Commentary

67. There has been a significant improvement in standards and the level of resources since the last inspection. Good teaching and learning are enabling students to achieve well. All students are now taught timetabled lessons in which to develop their skills and knowledge. While many subjects also use new technology to support teaching and learning, this is not universally the case. For example, there are inadequate opportunities in science for using information and communication technology to measure and record change and in design and technology to respond to, control and automate events. Overall, standards in information and communication technology by Year 9 are in line with national averages. GCSE examination results were well below average in 2003, but there was a very significant improvement in 2004. The performance of boys improved relative to that of girls in the latest examination and they achieved more A*-C grades.
68. In lessons and in work samples in Years 7 to 9, evidence shows that students are making good progress, as a result of effective teaching, which provides good challenge and makes best use of the recently improved resources, including interactive white boards. Some very good work was seen in the early stages of Year 9. Students are progressing appropriately from Year 7 to Year 9, often from an initial low level of attainment. Work is well planned and based upon the National ICT Strategy and is designed to cater for a wide range of abilities and aptitudes.
69. Work seen in Years 10 and 11 indicates that standards overall are above average, particularly among students who follow the GCSE course in business and communication systems. All students in Years 10 and 11 now have timetabled lessons in which to develop their skills and knowledge. In Year 10 and 11 lessons, students respond well to teaching which is usually good and very good in the GCSE course. Whole class multiple-choice activities have recently been introduced using the interactive whiteboard technology. Courses are well planned and ensure that students have the necessary skills to use in their examination courses across the curriculum.
70. Good leadership and management in the department, and good support at senior management level, are helping to consolidate the improvement in the use of information and communication technology. Appropriate assessment procedures are in place and students are aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. This is particularly strong in the GCSE course. Work is stored appropriately both

electronically and on paper where necessary. There has been a very good improvement in provision since the last inspection and the school now has the capacity to improve further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. The skills and knowledge learnt in information and communication technology lessons are being exploited in the majority of subjects to varying degrees. However, information and communication technology is not used consistently to enhance teaching and learning in a minority, notably design and technology, science, and music. The co-ordination of information and communication technology use across the curriculum is underdeveloped. The curriculum has not been audited appropriately to ensure that all subjects make best use of new technology to teach the subject and play their full part in contributing to the information and communication technology curriculum. However, the school management is aware of these issues and appropriate steps are being taken to develop the whole information and communication technology curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Thorough assessment helps students learn how to improve their work.
- Provision for students with special educational needs is good.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the development of numeracy.
- Good teaching results from good lesson planning.

Commentary

72. Attainment recorded by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2003 was in line with the national average. Results at GCSE level in 2003 were in line with national averages but above results obtained in other subjects in the school for both boys and girls. The 2004 Year 9 teacher assessments and GCSE results were similar to those in 2003. Standards in lessons across the age range are average. The assessment of students' work is thorough because it is carried out regularly and is carefully structured. Comments on students' work are constructive and explain why the work is good and how to improve it. Assessment is used well to respond to individual needs and as a result most students have an understanding of how they can improve.

73. The achievements of students are good across the age range because tasks are carefully structured to enable students of all abilities to do as well as they can. Students with special educational needs achieve well because teachers work closely with teaching assistants to ensure that the resources provided work successfully and are improved when they do not. The achievement of gifted and talented students is good. Extension tasks are usually provided to ensure that these students can attain higher levels. Students enjoy the subject and have positive attitudes because of good quality teaching.

74. The subject makes a very good contribution to numeracy across the curriculum because students are encouraged to collect data, draw graphs and analyse them as for example, in their work on wave and pebble analysis on the Norfolk beaches. Good contributions to literacy are made through extended writing on for example, the causes and effects of development. Information and communication technology is used effectively across the age range. Good examples include use of the internet to gather information about a country and present relevant data from it. The use of a CD Rom on coastal processes also enabled students to take a more active part in their lesson.
75. Teaching is good largely because teachers plan carefully and have a good understanding of how students learn. This results in interested and productive students. In a Year 9 lesson on world population distribution, the teacher coaxed students to produce more detailed answers, making it clear how they could use reasoning to achieve this. Learning is also good. However, students learn better when they have to think for themselves. When they are not challenged, some students take the opportunity to chat. For example, in a Year 11 lesson the teacher demonstrated the process of longshore drift rather than closely questioning individuals to give reasons why pebbles are moved along a beach. However, in a Year 8 lesson on the European Union, the teacher got a much better response from students when challenging questions were asked of them.
76. The department has made good progress since the last inspection and the good standards of teaching, learning and achievement have been maintained. Leadership is very good because there is clear, strategic thinking and planning for improvement. There is good co-ordination across the department over for example, the assessment of students' work, its use in planning lessons, improvements to schemes of work and producing targets for improvement for individual students. There is also a thorough system for the observation of teachers and careful monitoring of marking and assessment. Overall management is good because the department development plan lays down clear strategies for improvement particularly in raising achievement.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been an improvement in results at GCSE in 2004.
- Information and communication technology activities in Years 7 to 9 are interesting and challenging.
- Students receive good written feedback but do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their writing beyond a first draft.
- Teaching does not sufficiently develop the students' historical interpretations and independent historical enquiry.
- There is a useful portfolio of assessed work to support non-specialist teachers.

Commentary

77. Achievement is satisfactory and standards are in line with national averages throughout the school. Results in GCSE in 2003 were well below the national average but improved in 2004 to around the 2003 national average, representing substantial progress. Higher-attaining Year 9 students are meeting national expectations. They critically analyse

Haig's military strategy. Middle attainers are not stretched so that although in a Year 8 lesson a student recognised that Cromwell had been interpreted in different ways she did not give reasons for this. Lower attainers work within national expectations, interpreting drawings of medieval punishments and considering sources about Cromwell in Ireland. Students with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. GCSE students are achieving satisfactorily because they are meeting expected outcomes, although in coursework boys write in less detail and make fewer references to sources.

78. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Specialist teaching is generally good with well prepared resources, useful questioning and a stimulating learning environment. Imaginative simulations on the development of castles, on Charles II, and on the bombing of Dresden are used for teaching history through information and communication technology. Literacy is developed through challenging questions such as 'Was Cromwell a war criminal?' Students are given useful feedback on how to improve, but do not then use these comments to re-draft any written work, or go on to undertake longer historical enquiries. Non-specialists prepare thoroughly, but in some lessons students passively copy or write dictated notes. Teaching does not enable students to examine and evaluate different historical interpretations. Students often evaluate sources for reliability rather than intention. In all lessons most students were keen to work and often made thoughtful responses so that learning was better than teaching. Higher-attaining students make connections between pre-World War 1 alliances and the alliance between the USA and the United Kingdom in Iraq, the European Union, the Anglo-Soviet pact and NATO. Some students in the middle and lower-attaining classes do not watch news on TV and hence cannot relate history to present events.
79. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough and supported by outside specialists when necessary. Teaching plans in Years 7 to 9 have good key questions which will help assess understanding. The portfolio of assessed work, a support booklet for non-specialists and an extended writing checklist are helpful. However, non-specialists have not had sufficient development time to be confident in implementing these guidelines. The GCSE course is well managed with a clear idea of how to improve attainment and good procedures to ensure that coursework is completed. Following a fall in GCSE results following the last inspection the department has now recovered and standards are broadly similar to those at the last inspection.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is just **satisfactory**, reflecting the impact of recent improvements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in GCSE religious studies are low but improving.
- A significant minority of boys in examination groups are not fully engaged in their learning.
- Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good and students respond with interest; this has boosted the pace of learning this year but has not yet remedied the long term under achievement and below average standards.
- Good new lesson plans have been developed for Years 7 to 9 which support non-specialist teachers, but these do not extend beyond the first four weeks.
- Assessment is not effectively planned into teaching.

Commentary

80. The students do not achieve all that they should throughout the school but the pace of learning is leading to them catching up with requirements. Results in the short course GCSE improved in 2004 but were below the school's average for A*-C grades, and below the 2003 national average. By Year 9, students achieve below national expectations because students have insufficient knowledge of the effect of belief on individuals and communities or of the context of different groupings and traditions. Students with special educational needs make good progress in Years 8 and 9 because they are able to discuss their understanding with others. By Year 11 boys achieve less well than girls because they are less interested and motivated to learn. Students with identified literacy difficulties struggled with a difficult text and so made slow progress in a note taking activity.
81. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and show the impact of recent developments. In Years 8 and 9 teaching was stimulating and students were interested and enthusiastic in learning about God and Creation. Teaching was well planned with good opportunities for paired and small group work to enable students to clarify their thinking and good modelling of sentence writing for a group of lower attainers. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is less effective because lessons are not been planned systematically and there is no course outline to encourage students. Teaching is not interesting the students and the learning environment lacks stimulus and does not signal high expectations. There is little excitement because there is too much reliance on worksheets and too little thought given to the demands of texts and workbooks.
82. Leadership is satisfactory and has resulted in satisfactory improvement since the last inspection but several management procedures need improvement. Leadership and management are in transition with a new subject leader recently in post who is leading well by example. The curriculum is in the process of being replaced and revised. This is successful in the main but as yet is insufficiently linked to the locally agreed syllabus. There is no departmental improvement planning to address improving GCSE results or boys' achievement. There is no assessment strategy apart from the promised use of the faculty student self-assessment sheet; the department lacks awareness of non-statutory national expectations. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement by provision of short course GCSE with sufficient time now allocated in Years 10 and 11.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is largely satisfactory throughout the school.
- Standards are well below average in some areas, although they are above average in textiles in Years 7 to 9.
- Management is weak due to staff absence.
- GCSE results have fallen and are below national levels.

Commentary

83. The management and the staffing of this department are unsatisfactory. The department has four staff with the head of department currently on long term sick leave and the head of food studies on maternity leave. In addition, the department have suffered over the last two years from a succession of temporary teachers. Achievement is satisfactory overall, although this masks considerable variations between the different aspects. Currently the department has another two temporary teachers covering for the staff absences, one newly qualified teacher, and one teacher relatively new to the school. This is having a detrimental effect on standards of achievement in design and technology. GCSE results have fallen over the past two years from highs of 60 percent A*-C grades in resistant materials, food technology and graphics in 2002 to under 50 percent in 2004. The numbers of students opting for the subjects in Years 10 and 11 has also fallen particularly in resistant materials. The GCSE food technology results have been close to national levels, but in graphics and resistant materials they are below national levels. Students' making skills are relatively poor in resistant materials and their graphics skills are limited. Design folders are often weak particularly the freehand drawing with few students able to get the highest grades. Students are weak at developing ideas without support and making skills are limited in resistant materials.
84. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are above average in textiles, average in food technology, but below average in graphics and resistant material. Students understand the design process in all subjects quite well but levels of attainment are hampered by relatively poor making skills in resistant materials and poor graphics skills generally. The standards of making in textiles are good and the standards of making in food are satisfactory. Computer equipment has increased with more on order, which will help to tackle the limited use of information and communication technology. The use of new technology is usually limited to word processing, but students do use the computer-controlled milling cutter and the related design programme to good effect in Years 7 to 9. Students use the Internet well for research particularly in Years 10 and 11. However, there is scope for more information and communication technology equipment in the graphics area to tackle the students' lack of skills in drawing in Years 10 and 11 if aspirations are to be met and standards improved. Key words are taught to students in all subjects and there are glossaries to improve understanding of technical terms, but their writing is insufficiently developed. Students can measure and use simple mathematical calculations but there is little use of other mathematics
85. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers generally have secure and in some cases good subject knowledge. Lesson planning is usually good. Teachers support the learning of students with special educational needs well and try to promote high standards amongst the more able students. Technical support is used well to promote students' learning. Standards of behaviour are usually good in all lessons. Students like making and enjoy their time in the workshops. Homework is not used sufficiently to improve the quality of drawing and reinforce subject knowledge. There are good examples of curriculum guidance to support all students' learning, and a good system of student tracking and assessment checks. Several group sizes are too large in workshops in Years 10 and 11, and this has a detrimental effect on students' learning, their safety and standards of attainment.
86. There has been little improvement since the last inspection, although there is now a good textiles course in Years 7 to 9, which is developing well in Years 10 and 11. Leadership in design technology is unsatisfactory. The current organisation of the subject is weak.

The members of staff in the department are trying hard to organise themselves, but they lack direction and cohesion. There is a development plan which needs implementation, but no one to carry it through. There is no sense of vision in the department and limited team work. Departmental evaluation is poor and the monitoring of performance data is weak. All the organisational matters that a head of department would be doing at this time of the year are being put together by others. This situation needs to be tackled if it is not to get worse.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is consistently good or better.
- Innovative practices and links with outside bodies are good.
- Three-dimensional work is of a high standard and students make good progress; however, their drawing skills are not sufficiently developed.
- Information and communication technology in the department is weak and needs to be developed.

Commentary

87. Since the last inspection, the department has improved significantly. GCSE results have risen to a high point in 2003. Results at GCSE are in line with national averages and girls achieve higher standards than boys. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection where results were well below average. Achievement of students is satisfactory, but students make significantly more progress in Years 10 and 11 where achievement is good, and learn effectively how to work in a more independent way. Three-dimensional, sculpture and collage work is of a high standard. The use of information and communication technology was identified as an area to be improved at the last inspection. Information and communication technology equipment has recently been purchased but its use has yet to be realised. Weaknesses in students' drawing skills reduce their potential to reach the highest levels at GCSE.
88. Achievement is satisfactory and standards are in line with national averages in Years 7 to 9. Students start in the school with undeveloped art skills and make satisfactory progress. Drawing and painting in sketch books are not promoted sufficiently to augment the good three-dimensional work completed in the classroom. Tracking student achievement is good.
89. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. There are a good range of teaching styles in use which motivate the students. Projects are well planned and expectations are challenging. Good use is made of resources and time in lessons is well used. Consistent high standards of student behaviour are demanded and obtained. Homework is regularly set and completed, but this is an area which could be used more to enhance students' learning. The teaching assistant is well used and makes a good impact on students' learning. The acquisition of skills and knowledge in lessons is usually good and students are developing good independent learning skills in Years 10

and 11. The department has good assessment systems and students know what to do to improve. Focused support in class for students with special educational needs enables them to make good progress. Students are encouraged and given good guidance on writing about art work some of which is of a high standard. However, there is little emphasis on developing mathematical skills. Several of the projects have a cultural theme, although there is scope for this to be developed further. There is little of a spiritual nature in the department schemes of work.

90. This is a small department but leadership overall is good. There is a clear vision for the direction of the department and much innovative practise which encourages the students and develops their interest. The teacher in-charge of the department works well with others. Self-review and the careful monitoring of performance data enables appropriate action to be taken to develop a range of work, teaching skills and the skills of the students.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection, both in the achievement of students and in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Several students have distinguished themselves at national festivals, and music now contributes positively to the culture of the school and community.
- The department has not developed its own schemes of work to support teaching and learning.

Commentary

91. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Achievement is marked by good performing standards by all students, especially those who participate in the flourishing school bands. Students reach national expectations by Year 9 but there are no recent examination data to inform the evaluation of standards by Year 11. However, the work seen by students' currently in Year 11 was below average.
92. In many lessons, students perform as a whole class ensemble, making effective use of their keyboard skills. During the observation, a Year 8 class worked together with intense concentration, making speedy progress as the students practised an impressive performance of a concerto theme by Vivaldi. All were able to make valuable contributions to the overall musical effect, including those with special educational needs. In Year 11, the GCSE group enjoyed scrutinising 'Remix' recordings. Most students were fully engaged in the task, teasing out the features of the music and commenting on aspects of style. Instrumentalists in the group were particularly perceptive in their responses, although the inexperienced musicians were more reticent, contributing less to the group discussions. Students were also helped in understanding key musical terms, but to date their written work is scant and they have insufficient records of work undertaken during the previous year. This may have a detrimental effect on their examination performance.

93. Although no bands were rehearsing during the inspection, recordings of songs composed by students and teachers were of a professional standard, fully justifying the national acclaim that some students have received. Instrumental tuition is increasing, supported by funds from the governors, although the number of students having lessons is still quite low. In guitar lessons observed levels of achievement varied. Several older beginners hadn't practised very much over the summer holiday and had forgotten some of the basis skills, whereas the more advanced played with fluency, good technique and commitment.
94. Teaching is good overall. All the teaching observed was of a high quality and some was outstanding. In all lessons the teaching inspired the students, not only in the range of effective strategies for learning and excellent classroom organisation, but also in the personable approach and ability to make music fun. Lessons were best when they were structured to allow for whole-class and group activities. Teaching was also marked by effective questions, visual reinforcement, good demonstration skills and an ability to make activities relevant to the interests and needs of the learners. Consequently students were positive about music, remained on task for the duration of the lessons and made good progress. However, the department has not developed its own schemes of work in order to ensure progression and continuity over a longer period. Assessment is not consistently threaded into the teaching and learning, therefore opportunities are sometimes missed for students to evaluate their own work and that of other students.
95. Improvement in music since the last inspection is good and the department has focused successfully on improving teaching and learning. There is a positive ethos and the status and profile of the subject has risen significantly since the previous inspection. This is due to the effective leadership of the subject and the teaching of relevant and enjoyable lessons. The accommodation and resources are now well managed, but the development of music technology has been slow. Computers are only now being introduced into the lessons, and during the observation none were switched on.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching by enthusiastic, expert teachers ensures all students make progress in lessons and achieve well.
- There is a clear direction for the subject from the newly appointed head of department.
- The good range of extra-curricular clubs and teams are enthusiastically taken up by students.
- The majority of students have a positive attitude to physical education and participate enthusiastically in lessons.

Commentary

96. Of the 29 students entered for the 2004 GCSE, 55 percent gained A*-C grades. This represented a significant fall from the previous year's exceptionally high 81 percent achieved by a very talented cohort but was still around the national average. A range of

strategies are in place for this year's cohort, aimed at achieving the previous year's impressive result. Examination and core physical education students in Years 10 and 11 are generally performing in line with national averages but with a wide range of ability. This stretches to the very talented, where many students have represented the county in sports including hockey, cricket and football. There is a similar broad range of ability in Years 7, 8 and 9, but all students make progress in lessons and achieve well. Their standards are average by the end of Year 9. Students with special educational needs are very well integrated into lessons and achieve as well as their peers.

97. Teaching and learning are very good with well prepared and structured lessons delivered enthusiastically by expert teachers. As a consequence the majority of students enjoy physical education and make good progress in acquiring the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding. Students achieved well in a very good Year 7 basketball lesson where the teacher's progressive practices and guided support ensured all understood the basic rules including when and how to restart the game. Similar very good progress was made in two Year 9 football lessons, one on passing and one on heading, where both teachers' expert coaching and enthusiastic teaching ensured high levels of performance and participation. A very enjoyable Year 8 gymnastics lesson on sequences was taught with clearly explained learning objectives linked to relevant teaching points which again ensured all students achieved well in the lesson.
98. Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed head of department has set a clear direction for the subject with an insistence on high standards of behaviour, performance and participation consistently applied through very effective teamwork which also enables the sharing of good practice. The department has made a good start to implementing a robust assessment policy with National Curriculum levels clearly expressed for each activity enabling students to understand what level they are at and what they need to do to improve. However, a rigorous analysis of student data to monitor and evaluate student and departmental performance is not in place.
99. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular clubs and teams which are enthusiastically taken up by students. The very good links with local sports clubs and coaches provides further outlets for the most able students. However, there is an unsatisfactory timetabling arrangement for some students in Years 7 and 8 where the fortnightly allocation of four periods of physical education is all taught in one week. Whilst the general facilities for the delivery of the physical education curriculum are very good, there is no physical education classroom dedicated to the teaching of GCSE theory lessons. There has been good progress since the last inspection, particularly with the teaching of games where this is now undertaken by specialists.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

100. Students in Years 10 and 11 can choose to follow a course in **engineering** leading to an intermediate GNVQ qualification. A satisfactory Year 10 lesson was observed, although there were too many students for the size of the accommodation. This limited their learning in spite of the well organised resources. The students responded much better to the practical element of the lesson than to the teacher's explanations. Standards were below average in this lesson.
101. The school teaches **travel and tourism** as an intermediate GNVQ course in Years 10 and 11. One lesson in Year 10 on employment was observed. The lesson was well-

prepared and carefully structured for the group just starting on the course. The lively students were managed well and benefited from well targeted questions which ensured that all students were involved.

102. The school also teaches a 'Skill Force' course to students in Years 10 and 11. This is a non-examination course but leads to a variety of certificates and includes team building and other activities. Two sessions of this course were observed. In a well taught Year 10 lesson the course tutors worked effectively as the students began planning a holiday project. As basic group work skills were lacking in many of the students this became an important focus for the session. A Year 11 session on first aid was taught satisfactorily and promoted the students' self-esteem well. The students, all boys, had a very positive approach to the session and to the course as a whole.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a wide variety in the quality of teaching.
- Procedures for assessing students' progress are inadequate in Years 7 to 9.
- Students are becoming well-informed citizens through acquiring a good knowledge and understanding of issues.
- Students achieve well in lessons where they are interested in debating issues that have relevance to them.
- Many activities that form part of the citizenship curriculum take place out of class but they are not recorded.

Commentary

103. Attainment is not recorded by teachers in Year 9 which makes it impossible to judge standards against National Curriculum criteria. However, standards of work in lessons are average across the age range. Standards at GCSE level in 2003 were well below national averages with only 30 percent of students gaining an A*-C grade. However, as the examination was taken in Year 10, 21 students opted to retake citizenship in Year 11. Of these, 78 percent gained an A*-C grade. There is only a marginal difference in the performance of boys and girls at GCSE. High attaining students show good understanding of the subject content for example in their work on human rights.
104. Students acquire a good knowledge of citizenship issues. For example, this is shown in their work on bullying and the use of leisure time. Good contributions to literacy are made such as when students produce good quality writing to explain the reasons for voting. There is good use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning.
105. The achievement of students in lessons is satisfactory overall but unsatisfactory in a small proportion of lessons where teaching is poor. Students achieve well in debates that have relevance to their lives and when they are given interesting and challenging tasks such as to argue the case for or against that 'marriage is out-dated'. This good opportunity to

discuss and debate results in the students attitudes being very positive, even from those who are normally less well motivated. Students with special educational needs achieve in line with their abilities because resources are well selected to suit their needs. For example, the use of flash cards to match definitions to terms, frameworks to enable students to structure their writing and encouragement to use diagrams to map their thoughts. In a Year 11 lesson, the resource was well prepared but the instructions unclear. Students managed despite this because they were interested in the subject matter and involved in their own learning.

106. Many activities take place outside of class that form the 'participation and responsible action' element of the citizenship curriculum but this is not assessed and recorded. Examples include organising fund raising events for charity that all students participate in. Students are not aware that this is an aspect of citizenship. Similarly, Year 9 students often act as mentors to help Year 7 students where necessary. They are also involved in visiting primary schools to help induct Year 6 students into secondary school life. All students take part in elections to vote for their school council representative and can then raise issues to be debated.
107. The quality of teaching and learning is very variable but overall are satisfactory. Where teaching is satisfactory or better, students are given the opportunity to take part in well managed debates. Where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, this results in unsatisfactory learning because there is insufficient insistence on high standards of behaviour, for example the acceptance of silly comments or inappropriate shouting out. This results in insufficient opportunities for students to explore and expand their understanding and insufficient challenge to allow more able students to make maximum progress. Where learning is good or better, students are able to respond to challenging questions requiring conceptual thinking, such as in a Year 11 lesson on love and marriage. Where tasks are matched sensitively to students' needs, they were able to make very good progress.
108. All students follow a course in citizenship which covers the National Curriculum but there are many other instances of citizenship being covered in other school subjects. For example sex education is dealt with in science and citizenship lessons but clear links are not made between the two. Other subject teachers do not often make it clear that an aspect of citizenship is being covered in their lesson. There has not been a cross-curricular audit and so co-ordination across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
109. Assessment is poor in Years 7 to 9 because no attempt has been made to assess students' work formally against National Curriculum criteria. Assessment in Years 10 and 11 is good because all students follow a GCSE short course in which work is regularly assessed. However, leadership and management are satisfactory because there has been a change in leadership of the subject. The new leadership recognises the need for change. It has identified the problems and has implemented some of the changes necessary, such as assessment procedures immediately. In other respects, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory because the majority of students concentrate well during lessons; they respond well to challenges and join in with discussions.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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