

INSPECTION REPORT

WELLFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Leyland

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119723

Head teacher: Mr M Ainsworth

Lead inspector: Mr B A Jones

Dates of inspection: 16 - 19 May 2005

Inspection number: 268508

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

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Terms used in this report

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are at Key Stage 3, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools after Year 6. Students in Years 10 and 11 are at Key Stage 4 of their education. Students in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for students of all ages at school.

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

Inspectors judge the standards reached by students by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for students of the same age nationally. The students' achievements reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational value added over time. In this report, similar schools are defined as those having similar standards at the start of each stage of learning.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of students: 11-16
Gender of students: Mixed
Number on roll: 551

School address: Yewlands Drive
Leyland
Lancashire
Postcode: PR25 2TP

Telephone number: 01772 421303
Fax number: 01772 454767

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Cllr W Evans

Date of previous inspection: 19th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a smaller than average mixed comprehensive school with 551 students currently on roll, comprising 282 boys and 269 girls. The school is a little smaller than at the time of the previous inspection. Students are drawn from a wide range of social backgrounds, but predominantly from disadvantaged backgrounds. On entry to Year 7, standards of students are below average. There are no students whose first language is not or is believed not to be English. Around 17 per cent take up their eligibility for free school meals, which is above average. The proportion of students with special educational needs is broadly average, but there is a higher than average proportion of students with a statement of special educational need. Around three per cent have such statements, mainly for dyslexia or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school has attained Business and Enterprise College status. The school is involved in local community initiatives. It participates in the Young Enterprise scheme and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. It has been awarded Healthy School recognition, is a Green Flag Eco school and has Investors in People status.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18462	B. Jones	Lead inspector	
9132	J. Godfrey	Lay inspector	
30690	G. Alison	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
4926	T. Aspin	Team inspector	Mathematics
15079	A. Boys	Team inspector	Science
20629	J. Bryson	Team inspector	English
22695	R. Cardinal	Team inspector	History Work-related learning (WRL) Vocational education
20287	D. Harris	Team inspector	Modern languages English as an additional language (EAL)
20192	T. McDermott	Team inspector	Physical education
15678	J. Radford	Team inspector	Religious education Provision for students with special educational needs
10392	D. Ratcliffe	Team inspector	Geography
30901	S. Schofield	Team inspector	Art and design
2079	T. Slack	Team inspector	Design and technology
1340	D. Wigley	Team inspector	Music Citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. Teaching, learning and students' achievement are good overall. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching is good overall and enables students to achieve well in most subjects.
- Leadership by the senior managers and the governors is good and gives a clear direction to the development of the school.
- The curriculum is good and meets well the needs of all students.
- Levels of attendance are unsatisfactory and the school's systems to improve attendance are not effective enough.
- Overall provision in history is unsatisfactory.
- Departments are inconsistent in the way they use marking and assessment data to track students' progress in meeting their targets; effectiveness varies as a result.
- Links with the community, local businesses and industry are very good and are used effectively to enhance learning, particularly in vocationally-based courses.
- The school's strong focus on citizenship and environmental issues helps students to build their self-confidence and develop well their social awareness.
- Relationships between teachers and students are good, leading to good behaviour in lessons, where learning is valued.

Specific weaknesses noted in the key issues of the last report have been tackled satisfactorily. The school has made good improvement in the quality of education offered and good improvement overall. The school still does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		All schools			Similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	D	D	D	B

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. For Year 11, Similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

Achievement is good. Results in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2004 were below average in national terms, but above average compared to similar schools, reflecting good achievement. The GCSE capped examination results in 2004 were below average but above results in similar schools; achievement was good over Years 10 and 11, but this masks some significant underachievement by this group of students in their earlier time in school in Years 7 to 9. Standards seen in the inspection are average in Year 9 and in Year 11. The standards in Year 11 are higher than recent GCSE results, reflecting effective action taken to tackle underachievement. Students achieve at least as well as they should in all subjects except history, where achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards in

mathematics among Year 11 students are well below average as a result of earlier unsatisfactory provision, but they are now achieving satisfactorily. The achievement of students with special educational needs is good and the highest attaining students also achieve well. There are no significant differences in the standards of boys and girls.

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Behaviour is satisfactory; it is good in lessons and around the school but exclusions are high. Attendance is well below average. Much of the absence is parentally condoned and the action taken by the school has not had sufficient impact to improve attendance. The attitudes of students seen during the inspection were good. However, the above-average level of non-attenders means that attitudes are satisfactory overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education overall. Teaching is good throughout the school. Overall, learning is good. The curriculum is good. Pastoral care in the school is good and the good relationships in the school support personal development well. Students receive satisfactory advice and guidance on course options and career choices. The school has very good links with other schools and colleges, and with the community. The school's specialist Business and Enterprise College initiative and Green Flag status have a strong influence on the local and wider community and a very good impact on students' learning, achievement and personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Leadership by the headteacher and key staff at senior and middle management levels is good overall. Governance is good, but the school does not comply fully in providing an act of collective worship on a daily basis and in ensuring access to the full National Curriculum requirements in ICT. Here, because of a lack of cross curricular tracking, the school cannot be assured that all students in Years 10 and 11 have access to the control element of ICT. There are also some unintentional omissions in the information provided for parents.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Students think this is a good school to be at. They have good friends, are taught well and are expected to work hard and do their best, but a high proportion are worried about poor behaviour, and especially bullying. Students enjoy physical education and the after-school clubs. Parents think this is a good school where children settle and staff expectations of hard work enable their children to make good progress. A significant number of parents express concern about behaviour and bullying. Inspectors found behaviour in lessons and around the school to be good and the school's action in tackling bullying to be very effective.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve levels of attendance;
- improve teaching in history and tackle underachievement in the subject;
- ensure greater consistency and effectiveness in the way subject departments use marking and assessment data to track students' progress in meeting their targets;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- provide a daily act of collective worship for all students;
- ensure access for all students in Years 10 and 11 to the full National Curriculum in ICT;
- meet all the requirements in providing information to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Achievement is good in Years 7 to 11. Standards are average in Year 9 and in Year 11.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well in ICT by the end of Year 11, reaching above average standards.
- Standards in Year 11 are well above average in German and above average in physical education, religious education and citizenship.
- Standards in history are below average and students underachieve throughout the school.
- Standards in mathematics are well below average in Year 11; this group achieve satisfactorily now, but their standards have been adversely affected by earlier underachievement and unsatisfactory provision.
- GCSE results are above average compared to similar schools.

Commentary

1. Results in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2004 were below average, but above average compared to similar schools. These students achieved well in relation to their starting points. The trend of improvement in results to 2003 was above the trend nationally; there are no data to judge the trend to 2004. The GCSE capped examination results in 2004 were below average. However, the results were better than results in similar schools and reflected good achievement over Years 10 and 11 after unsatisfactory achievement through Years 7 to 9. Girls did not achieve as well as boys. The trend in results to 2004 was below the trend of improvement nationally and challenging targets were missed significantly.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.0 (34.5)	33.3 (33.4)
Mathematics	34.5 (33.0)	35.5 (35.4)
Science	31.7 (32.5)	33.1 (33.6)

There were 151 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	35 (42)	52 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	87 (86)	89 (88)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	94 (93)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	260.1 [31.0] (31.4)	282.8 [34.9] (34.7)

There were 127 students in the year group. Figures in [] brackets are for the previous method of calculating the average point score. Figures in () brackets are for the previous year.

2. Students join the school with levels of attainment that are below average in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, standards are mainly below average, but are well below in design and technology and ICT. Standards seen in the inspection are mainly average in Year 9, although below average in mathematics, design and technology, ICT and music. This reflects good achievement in most subjects. In mathematics and music achievement is satisfactory. Students underachieve in history and standards in much of the work seen were well below average. Where achievement is good, and this is across most subjects, teaching is good and students' learning is benefiting from the widespread and effective use of teaching methods recommended in the national Key Stage 3 strategy. The unsatisfactory achievement in history is largely due to very unsettled staffing in recent years with subsequent overall unsatisfactory provision.
3. In the work seen in Year 11, standards are broadly average. Standards are average in English and science and students achieve well in these subjects. In mathematics, Year 11 students have been disadvantaged by unsatisfactory provision in their earlier years when the lack of specialist staffing was a significant issue. This situation has now been resolved, but not in time to fully counter the earlier underachievement and allow these students to catch up. As a result, their standards are well below average, but recent achievement is satisfactory. Students in Year 10 are achieving satisfactorily and their standards in mathematics are nearer the average. Students now achieve well in most other subjects except history. Here, achievement is unsatisfactory because staffing problems have undermined students' achievement and standards in much of the work are well below average. However, there is now more specialist teaching, and standards are improving as a result. Standards are below average in French, but students are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their starting points. In design and technology, standards are also below average, but these students are achieving well when account is taken of their level of attainment on starting the course. In ICT, physical education, religious education and citizenship, standards are above average. When account is taken of the students' starting points in these subjects, achievement is very good in ICT and good in the other subjects. Few students take German, but they achieve well and attain standards that are well above average. In geography and art and design, standards are broadly average, reflecting good achievement over Years 10 and 11. There are no students currently taking music in Year 11.
4. These standards reflect an improvement compared to recent GCSE results, which were below average. This improvement is due to a number of factors. The school identified significant underachievement in the 2004 GCSE group and took extensive action to tackle any underachievement among students in subsequent years. Initiatives that had been devolved to subject departments were taken back to whole-school level. Thus, senior managers ensured that data about students' performance was updated regularly, systematically and accurately. The appointment of assessment managers was very successful in this process. Having identified students who were not attaining the standards they should, a number of initiatives were then put into place for them. These included mentoring by senior staff, additional provision for revision outside the school day and the closer involvement of parents. The impact was monitored carefully at subject level and Year 11 students' progress towards their targets is now well documented and indicates that they are achieving levels of work in line with the challenging targets set.
5. Standards of numeracy are usually sufficient to support learning at the level students require in other subjects. In science, work is accurately presented and graphs clearly labelled. In design and technology students measure accurately and link these measurements with their designs. In art and design, students show a good understanding of proportion. Little mathematics is used in geography, but students are able to apply their skills when required. On occasions

younger students have weaknesses in the numerical skills required to use spreadsheets in ICT lessons, but the subject teachers address these very well so that they do not impede learning. Standards of literacy are average. There are more students entering the school with lower standards than in most schools. Higher attainers explain themselves clearly both orally and in writing. Lower attaining students speak clearly and understand the main points of what is said to them. Spoken answers in class are frequently expanded and students are good at using subject-specific vocabulary.

6. The higher attaining students and those who are gifted and talented achieve well, in line with their peers. The school has recently undertaken a great deal of work to ensure that, as well as creating opportunities outside lessons to stretch and challenge this group, all subjects now plan carefully to provide challenge in their lessons. These initiatives are at an early stage of development and not yet fully embedded in the school's day-to-day practice. However, a very good start has been made, good systems and strategies have been put in place and the quality of planning is high.
7. Students with special educational needs usually attain the standards that their teachers expect of them and their progress overall matches the good progress of other groups of students. They achieve well in relation to their standards on entry to the school because they benefit from good teaching and support and also because they are keen to succeed. There are no students at an early stage of English language acquisition, and students who come from ethnic minority groupings achieve well, in line with their peers.
8. Although there are differences in the standards achieved in different subjects by boys and girls in Year 9 national tests, there is no consistent pattern to these variations. The difference between girls' GCSE results over the past five years and those of boys is no greater than the difference found nationally.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes to work of students who attend regularly are good and overall behaviour is satisfactory. However, the above-average level of non-attenders means that attitudes are satisfactory overall. Attendance is, however, well below national averages and unsatisfactory. Punctuality is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The good working ethos of the school promotes the learning and achievement of those students with good attendance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' good attitudes to learning enable them to achieve well.
- Relationships across the school are good and supportive.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. However, behaviour is satisfactory overall because the number of exclusions is high in comparison with similar schools and has risen significantly since the previous inspection.
- Much absence is parentally condoned and measures taken by the school to improve attendance are not effective enough.
- Students' social development is very good and is a strength of the school.

Commentary

9. Students learn well as a result of their good attitudes in lessons. They are usually attentive and cooperative, and work hard to achieve their best. In the most successful lessons, students are enthusiastic, confident and well motivated. They particularly enjoy physical education and after-school clubs, which have high rates of participation, and English, where students grow in

confidence and self-esteem and attitudes are consistently very good. Only in a few lessons do students show less application and become restless and chatty.

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	551	90	2

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

10. When the relatively high rate of exclusions is taken into account, behaviour overall is satisfactory. On the inspection questionnaire, a high proportion of students expressed concerns about behaviour. However, during the inspection students responded well to teachers' very high expectations of good behaviour and behaviour was good in lessons and around the school. Nearly a third of students stated that staff do not treat them fairly and with respect, but discipline is used consistently and fairly by staff. Students are careless with their litter in the playground but otherwise there is good respect for the school's property and very little vandalism and graffiti.
11. Exclusions are high for a school of this size and have increased significantly since the previous inspection. They are most often the result of bullying, violence to other students, bad language or refusal to cooperate. The increase is explained by the school's strict adherence to its code of conduct. The use of exclusions is effective in improving behaviour in the school so that students learn and achieve better. The increase in fixed term exclusions has also led to fewer permanent exclusions. All the students excluded from school last year were from White British backgrounds. The majority of excluded students were boys, reflecting the pattern found nationally. The two permanent exclusions were both girls and both were excluded as a result of the same incident.
12. The school works hard to promote respectful relationships and to prevent bullying and this results in good relationships across the school. There is a high awareness of bullying and although many students are concerned about harassment, the school has very good strategies for dealing with incidents, and students and parents are pleased with the effectiveness of action taken. Younger students appreciate the support they receive from older PALs (Pupils Are Listeners) who have been trained to help their younger peers. Students work well together in mixed groups to aid each other's learning and appreciate the efforts of others. They feel trusted by the school to act responsibly and show courtesy and thoughtfulness for the well-being of others. They are polite and helpful to staff and visitors.
13. Students with special educational needs usually have good attitudes towards their work and behave well in lessons. This is because careful lesson planning ensures that they can make a positive contribution to lesson activities and because they receive good support.
14. Students' personal development is good. The school provides well for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The ethos of the school, with its emphasis on positive thinking and consideration for others, ensures that students develop a firm set of values, principles and beliefs. Students are encouraged to develop self-awareness through well-planned activities that have a spiritual dimension to them, such as the study of different religious beliefs and the exploration of spirituality

as expressed in art, literature and music. Themes in assemblies promote reflection on spiritual matters, but opportunities to discuss the 'theme for the week' are sometimes missed in form periods. Overall, spiritual development is good.

15. The school promotes students' moral development well. There is a clear code of conduct that students understand and respect and staff are good role models. Assemblies include moral themes and in many form periods tutors incorporate the 'theme for the week' that is printed in students' planners. Participation in sport gives students a good sense of fair play. Students explore a wide range of moral issues across the curriculum, such as capital punishment, marriage and family life, fair trade and deforestation. The school's Green Flag status as an eco-school gives students a good understanding of their moral responsibilities towards the planet through minimising waste, conserving energy and recycling.
16. Social development is very good and is a strength of the school. All students are very aware of the responsibilities of living in a community, and they work together in a very positive way. Students are encouraged to take on responsibilities, which they do very willingly. Prefects take their duties seriously and contribute to an orderly school environment. The PALs lend a sympathetic ear to those in need. The school council actively canvasses the views of all students, and members contribute to meetings of the governing body, making a very positive contribution to the life and development of the school. A considerable number of charities are very well supported, and students represent the school in a responsible way, not only in the many extracurricular activities that bring them into contact with the local community, but also in those visits that take them further afield.
17. Students' cultural development is good. In most subjects, and in the programme of enrichment opportunities that the school provides for them, students extend their knowledge of their own and others' cultural traditions. Students take part enthusiastically in a wide range of activities such as musical performances, environmental initiatives, drama productions and visits to different places of worship. They are prepared well for living in a multi-cultural society.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.9	School data	0.5
National data	6.9	National data	1.1

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

18. Attendance is unsatisfactory and has an adverse impact on overall achievement of students who do not attend as regularly as they should. Attendance in Year 7 is good, but in every other year it is well below national averages and has not improved since the previous inspection. Although the school reminds parents of the need for good attendance, much absence is parentally condoned. The school's efforts to improve attendance have had insufficient impact. Support from the Educational Welfare Office has been erratic in recent years due to long-term illnesses of staff. Registration systems are appropriate and form time is usually used well to support students' personal development. Attendance statistics are not analysed well enough to target areas for improvement; for example the school has not yet evaluated the impact on attendance of the newly introduced courses in work-related learning. Systems are not secure enough to detect internal truancy effectively. Punctuality is satisfactory, although a number of students arrive late each morning. Punctuality to geography and physical education lessons is very good, but it is unsatisfactory in mathematics and science.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education. The quality of teaching is good. The curriculum is good and is enhanced by very good extracurricular provision. Pastoral care is good and the school has satisfactory links with parents. There are very good links with other schools and colleges and with the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good and leads to good learning throughout Years 7 to 11. The assessment of students' work is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a significant element of very good teaching throughout the school and occasionally some that is excellent.
- Teachers have a very good command of their subjects and plan their lessons well to ensure good learning takes place.
- Teachers structure their lessons well, mainly using the Key Stage 3 strategy consistently and to good effect.
- Teaching in history is unsatisfactory overall.
- Very good teaching in GCSE classes in ICT leads to students achieving very well.
- Learning is mainly good and is helped by the positive qualities students bring to their studies, as seen in their good behaviour and the good working atmosphere in lessons.
- There are inconsistencies in marking and in the way some subjects use data to track students' progress in learning and help students improve.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 104 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (5%)	34 (33%)	40 (38%)	24 (23%)	1 (1%)	0	0

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

Commentary

19. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is good in nearly all subjects. Overall, it is satisfactory in mathematics and music. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in history. Students and parents appreciate the high rate of consistently good teaching, along with a significant amount of very good teaching and some that is excellent. The consistency ensures that good learning takes place in most lessons. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is also good. Students are motivated to achieve as well as they can and teachers use this to challenge and stretch them. Teachers maintain a good level of expectation and the demands they make are in line with students' own expectations and those of their parents. The result is an orderly working atmosphere in classrooms, where achievement is valued and students want to learn. The one unsatisfactory lesson seen was uncharacteristic of the teaching provision normally received by students. On a number of occasions, excellent teaching was seen, where students were inspired by the teaching provided.
20. Teachers have good relationships with their students and help to develop positive relationships between students. Typically, this means that teachers do not have to

waste time on disciplining students, and can maintain a firm but friendly approach in their teaching. In general, students work hard and the atmosphere in lessons is one where students can be trusted to work on their own or with others. Teachers do not always capitalise fully on this. Students take responsibility well and this is not exploited fully enough by teachers in order to develop students' independent learning skills. Independent learning is not helped by a relatively small library that is not well enough stocked. In some subject areas, for example geography, the lack of resources also hinders the approaches that teachers can use.

21. A characteristic feature that promotes the good learning that takes place is the way in which students and teachers respect each other. This enables teachers to challenge and stretch students, knowing that they will obtain a good response. Teachers are mainly specialists in their subjects and have a very good level of expertise about their subjects and the examination requirements in their areas. They plan conscientiously, usually to a format based on the Key Stage 3 strategy. This brings a consistency in approach that students enjoy and respond well to. Students play their part in learning, for example in the way they respond to questioning, in their positive behaviour and in their approach to completing homework.
22. Throughout the school, teachers know their students well and generally inform their knowledge with conscientious marking of work and maintaining good records. Recent initiatives put into place to track students' overall progress are bearing fruit, but the embedding of this good practice represents an area for the school to improve further. Similarly, while there are some examples of very good marking techniques that point the way to further improvement for the student, too much marking does not inform the student what needs to be done to take the work to a higher level.
23. Teachers take good account of the needs of all students and plan their lessons to meet these needs, for example those with special educational needs and the highest attaining students. Teachers and support staff are mindful of students' needs, treat all students equally and encourage all to participate fully in lessons. As a result, all groups achieve equally well. A great deal of work has been recently undertaken to monitor and ensure that lesson planning takes good account of the differing needs of students. All students have completed an on-line survey to identify their preferred learning style so that lessons can be matched to their needs in order to tackle underachievement. As a result, students with a wide range of attainment generally learn and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. There is no formal policy of organising classes so that boys or girls are not allowed to dominate in any one particular group (for example by varying the seating arrangements in lessons) but such arrangements are made to good effect in some subjects.
24. Students with special educational needs usually learn well because they want to succeed, and also because in most lessons the teaching methods and learning materials are adapted well to their needs. Students gain confidence through the help they receive from teachers, support staff and their fellow students. However, there are occasions when not make enough progress is made because the work is too difficult for students to cope with, or, conversely, it is lacking in challenge. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection and is now carried out systematically through the reviews of students' individual education plans.

Example of outstanding practice

Using a variety of teaching strategies in the classroom, was used very effectively to challenge and encourage to promote excellent learning.

At the start of this superbly organised lesson the teacher met her students in the corridor, welcomed them to

their lesson and ensured that they sat in appropriate seats. This set the tone for a very enjoyable lesson. Before beginning the starter activity, the teacher explained the homework. This ensured that students valued the homework and appreciated its place in a sequence of learning activities. The excellent relationship between the teacher and students ensured that they were all quickly involved and willing to accept responsibility for their own learning as well as working cooperatively with others. Attitudes and behaviour were admirable. The teacher's management of this excellent Year 9 poetry lesson enabled all of the class to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of poetic terms and techniques. After reading and analysing the structure of *Song of the City*, the class were asked to speak about those parts of the poem that interested or intrigued them. In an exciting conclusion to the lesson volunteers presented their analyses, received criticism and considered what the class had learned and needed to do next. One articulate boy explained how the progression within the poem led him to see that the sprawl of the city damaged the countryside and had a negative impact on both urban and rural communities

25. There is a suitable numeracy policy in place. While opportunities to teach numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics are not always identified in planning, standards of numeracy are usually sufficient to support learning. In science, art and design and ICT, numeracy skills are taught well, but fewer data handling skills than usual are taught and used in geography. The arrangements for teaching literacy are satisfactory overall. This includes some good practice where specific attention to literacy development as an integral part of the teaching and learning process leads to above average outcomes. However, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching of literacy skills and the impact on learning have not been sufficiently systematic.
26. Teachers have been given good guidance on how to use assessment information. Useful initiatives have been started, for example identifying and mentoring those students in Year 8 who are underachieving. Students know their attainment levels in most subjects and help to set their own personal and academic targets for improvement. This has a good impact on their learning and achievement. Despite the very good leadership by staff with responsibility for leading on assessment, the use of data in subject departments to track students' progress in learning and help students improve is inconsistent throughout the school, largely because developments are recent and not yet fully embedded in the school's practice. Individual target-setting over a short period is at an early stage of development. At present targets are not always precise enough, nor is there a consistent system for checking when targets have been achieved. Test and examination results are analysed to review the progress of different groups of students. This ensures that action can be taken to tackle differences in achievement that may arise. Targets relating to national examinations are sufficiently ambitious and securely based on previous examination or test performance.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and ensures progression by catering well for the different needs and aspirations of the whole student body. Opportunities for enrichment of learning through extracurricular activities are very good. The provision of staffing and accommodation is satisfactory. Resources are unsatisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the curriculum is very innovative, especially with regard to developing vocational courses.
- The overall breadth of opportunities is good and the range and number of courses meet well the needs of the learners in the 14 to 16 age range.

- A very good range of activities enhances learning outside normal school hours, and involves around two thirds of the school's population.
- The provision for students with special educational needs is good.
- Resources are unsatisfactory in design and technology, geography, and music.

Commentary

27. The school's curricular provision is good. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements except for the provision of a daily act of collective worship, and access for all students in Years 10 and 11 to the whole of the National Curriculum for ICT. Current emphases on national intervention strategies such as the Key Stage 3 strategy and the requirements on the school as a Business and Enterprise specialist college are beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. In addition, the leadership has been innovative in the manner in which it has approached curriculum planning so that it best meets the needs and aspirations of all students, especially in Years 10 and 11.
28. During Years 7 to 9, all students have access to the full range of subjects of the National Curriculum. There are additional elements in the form of media studies, business studies, drama and formal problem solving. Students begin to have exposure to opportunities for work-related learning in these years. The time allocated to both art and design and music in Year 9 is lower than normally found in most schools.
29. During Years 10 and 11, students follow a good range of GCSE and accredited vocational courses. The school has introduced different pathways of courses for students to follow so they can have experiences that better suit their abilities and aptitudes. It is clearly taking advantage of the opportunities provided by increased flexibility in curriculum planning for this age group. Students can follow alternative courses within science, and there are also vocational courses in ICT, animal care, applied business, motor vehicle maintenance, and work-related learning. The development of very good links with local colleges has been a key factor in increasing the range of courses on offer.
30. The very good range of enrichment opportunities give a strong impetus to the development of students as good citizens and active lifelong learners. Participation rates among students are very good, almost two thirds of all students taking part in at least one out-of-school-hours activity. There are some unique features, such as the 'Waste Minimisation Project' and the ecological 'Sustainable management of energy' project. The range of educational visits is good and is supported well. Many are sports-based but they also include curriculum-based visits for science, mathematics and English, modern languages and geography. Many subjects provide additional opportunities for study before and after school.
31. Careers education is satisfactory. It is taught in 'Issue Days', tutorials, assemblies and registration periods from Year 7 through to Year 11 and supported well by the Connexions service. Year 9 students have had appropriate guidance on their course options for next year, but some are unhappy that they have not yet had their choices confirmed. Year 10 students value two weeks of well-organised work experience. A good range of placements is found through the very good business links within the community and evaluation of their experience is part of the English curriculum. Connexions conduct personal interviews with individual students from Year 9 and

interviews with all students in Year 11 to help them decide their future. Extra support is given to those who need it.

32. The school curriculum ensures equality of opportunity for all groups. All students have full access to the National Curriculum and to a wide range of extracurricular programmes, except for some pupils in Years 10 and 11 who do not have full access to the control element of the ICT National Curriculum. The school's focus on Business and Enterprise education is reflected throughout the curriculum. This allows it to effectively meet students' needs through provision of vocational and work-related courses. A few students, for whom it is felt appropriate, are offered extended work experience. Option choices in Year 9 are open to all students. The school has taken action to tackle underachievement by offering extra programmes for identified students. The students' understanding of life in a multicultural society is enhanced through work in citizenship and other lessons. As a result relationships are good and incidents of a racist nature are rare. There are currently no refugees or asylum seekers in the school but Kosovan refugees have attended in the past and the school found this to be a very positive experience that enhanced the students' understanding of other cultures.
33. The curriculum is well planned to meet the different requirements of students with special educational needs. Methods of provision include teaching in whole-class year groups with modified programmes of study and additional support given by the subject teacher and a teaching assistant, periods of withdrawal to work with a support teacher, and support from specialists from the local support services within the class or as part of a withdrawal programme. Students are encouraged to work towards examinations at GCSE and there is a good range of alternative courses available. Younger students benefit from using ICT in literacy and numeracy. Accommodation is good. The main teaching room is large and has been attractively decorated by the department staff to make it conducive to learning. Resources are adequate and information for subject faculties includes information on appropriate teaching methods for students with a wide variety of special educational needs.
34. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. However, in music the small room has an adverse impact on teaching and learning as it restricts the methods that teachers can use. Also there is only one practice room. Several of the other rooms are also small and when used by larger classes, especially in mathematics, this limits teachers' access to students when giving assistance. Provision in design and technology is very good and much improved from the previous inspection. The good arrangement for modern foreign languages, in a suite of rooms, encourages staff communication and cooperation. The sports hall currently being constructed will greatly improve the indoor physical education facilities. The school manages and maintains the accommodation well. The school's recently granted status, as a Business and Enterprise college, includes planning that will greatly improve the accommodation.
35. Overall, the match of teachers and their subject qualification to the curriculum is good. There is a small proportion of second subject teaching but this does not significantly affect the quality of learning and standards achieved by the students. In recent years, the governors and headteacher have recruited high quality staff to the small number of vacancies that have arisen, but they have until very recently experienced difficulties in recruiting staff for mathematics. The match of learning support staff to the curriculum for students with special educational needs is very good. Due to budget difficulties the school is unable to appoint technicians to some departments, so support is limited in those areas. The secretarial and site management staff make a significant contribution to the smooth day-to-day running of the school.
36. Resources for learning are unsatisfactory overall, particularly in the provision of textbooks. However, teachers and students work hard to minimize this barrier to

learning and are effective in doing so. The overall provision of ICT resources for teaching and learning is satisfactory, but the range and availability of equipment in subject departments are variable and this inhibits the contribution ICT can make to students' learning. The library has been under-funded as the school has given priority to investing in ICT equipment. It has fewer books than recommended and many of them are out of date.

Care, guidance and support

Pastoral care is good and the school takes good care of students' welfare. Advice and guidance, based on effective monitoring, are good and this has a positive impact on achievement. The school canvasses students' views very well to involve them in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction arrangements for new students are good.
- Pastoral care is good and students have trusting relationships with adults in school. This gives them the confidence to achieve well.
- Students have a very good involvement in the development of the school through the school council.

Commentary

37. Pastoral care is good, enabling students to achieve well in a secure and supportive environment. Induction arrangements are good and aided by the good links with primary schools so that students settle well in school. Staff know students well and track students' academic progress and personal development well through a variety of media such as planners and self-assessment tutorials. A newly introduced computerised database coordinates individuals' academic progress and personal development very well, but is not yet used consistently throughout the school to help guide students.
38. Staff pay good heed to students' safety in lessons and good care has been taken to ensure students' safety during current building works. Risk assessments are routinely completed in some faculties and for outside visits, but they are not in place for all school activities. This makes overall provision for students to work in a healthy and safe environment satisfactory rather than good. Internet service provision is safe and secure. Procedures for dealing with child protection issues are good. The canteen offers a good choice of healthy foods and staff have tried to encourage healthy eating by raising the price of unhealthy options, but many students still opt for an unbalanced carbohydrate-laden diet. The toilets are maintained well.
39. Students enjoy good relationships with their form tutors and form time is usually used well to enhance personal development. Behaviour is tracked well and parents are kept well informed. Incidents of bullying and racism are monitored and dealt with very effectively. Teaching awareness of bullying has a very high profile in school and relationships with staff are so supportive that students are happy to report any problems.
40. The school gives good guidance and support to students with special educational needs. There are efficient systems for identifying and monitoring students in need of extra help and students' individual education plans now give clear targets for improvement together with useful advice on suitable learning activities. Support staff

have established good relationships with the students in their charge and are well aware of their particular needs. Most students know what they need to do to improve and they make their own contributions to progress reviews. The school's effective partnership with the local support services enables students to benefit from specialised support when necessary.

41. The good and comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught through separate lessons, tutorials, registration time and 'Issue Days'. It is planned well to guide students through school choices and to prepare them for life after school. The careers programme is sound and well supported by Connexions. The careers library and resources are limited and do not help students discover the wide variety of career options available. Advice on the option choices for Year 10 is satisfactory. Students in Year 10 value two weeks of useful and well-organised work experience. Work-related learning and extended work experience placements are provided for some students. Students receive good advice on post-16 options based on a good knowledge of individuals and tracking of academic ability and personal development, so they are guided onto the most appropriate course for their needs and abilities.
42. The school council is very well organised to canvass students' views and actively involve them in the work and development of the school. Most students feel the school is interested in their views. Representatives from each year group meet every week before school to discuss a wide variety of issues. Students regularly attend governing body meetings where their views on various issues, including health and safety, are valued. The work of the school council makes a very valuable contribution to students' social and moral development and successfully raises their awareness of their responsibilities to the local and wider community.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has satisfactory links with parents. It has very good links with other schools, colleges and with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very comfortable in approaching the school and feel the school's high expectations enable their children to make good progress.
- Complaints procedures are unsatisfactory.
- Good links with primary schools aid transition to secondary school.
- Very good links with local colleges enhance the curriculum and offer wide choices to students.
- Very good links with the community widen students' experiences and enhance learning.

Commentary

43. The school has satisfactory links with parents to support students' education. Parents consider this to be a good school, where high expectations enable their children to make good progress. They are very pleased with the way their children settle in school and are comfortable in approaching the school. A small number of parents are concerned about behaviour and bullying, but inspectors found that tackling bullying has a high profile in school and there are very good procedures for dealing with it.

44. The school provides useful information about the school to parents of new students. The prospectus is informative but unintentionally misses some details that should be in place, for example, information about the school's National Curriculum assessment results and local and national figures for GCSE examinations. The governing body annual report is too cursory and also omits some details, for example arrangements for taking disabled students into the school, steps taken to enable disabled students to be treated on equal terms with other students, and information about the policy for special educational needs. The website is still in the early stages of construction and is not yet sufficiently useful to parents. Students' planners are used satisfactorily to monitor progress and communicate with parents. It is unsatisfactory that the complaints procedure is not published and records of any suggestions or complaints by parents are not formalised.
45. The school provides good information on students' progress through well-supported parental consultation evenings and good quality annual reports. Many students attend consultation evenings with their parents. Reports give parents a good picture of what students are learning in each subject, their standards in relation to national averages and helpful targets for improvement. Parents feel well informed about their children's progress. The school is quick to contact parents when there is a problem and parents support the school's actions to promote good behaviour. The vast majority of parents support their children's learning well at home by providing computers and Internet access. Parents are consulted informally through the governing body and Friends of Wellfield, and through occasional surveys on things such as school uniform and Business and Enterprise status for the school. Good account is taken of their views and the majority of parents appreciate this. The Friends of Wellfield make a good contribution to the social and financial life of the school and promote closer links between home and school.
46. The school has a good partnership with parents of students with special educational needs. Parents of students with a statement of special educational needs contribute to the reviews of their children's progress, and are generally pleased with their children's development. The strong links with the partner primary schools and local colleges of further education enable students to move confidently from one phase of education to another.
47. The very good links with the local and wider community are a strength and enhance students' learning, achievement and personal development very well. A wide range of visits and visitors broaden students' knowledge and social development very effectively. There is a very good range of residential and day trips. Students support local and national charities such as the tsunami appeal and the Red Nose Day very well. The school has very productive links with the Lancashire Education Business Partnership and a very good range of useful work experience placements is found locally for students in Years 10 and those on work-related courses. Very good support and sponsorship were found from local business and industry for the school's specialist Business and Enterprise status and they continue to support the school and work-related learning. The school's Green Flag status has been particularly effective in forging community links and promoting students' personal development.
48. The school has very good links with other schools and colleges that make a significant contribution to achievement and personal development. These have been enhanced by the Business and Enterprise and Green Flag status. The school has electronic-based links with other Business and Enterprise colleges across the country and this spreads good practice. It works very well with a number of primary schools to promote

environmental awareness and reduce waste. The specialist sports coordinator has very good links with other schools to enhance sporting skills. Links with primary schools are effective in easing transition from Year 6 to Year 7, but curriculum links are underdeveloped because of the large number of schools involved. Primary schools provide work experience placements for some students. The school works closely with local colleges to provide alternative courses and improve choices in Years 10 and 11 and post-16. The school makes an excellent contribution to the training of teachers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by a very well informed governing body and effective key staff. Management is satisfactory. There are some statutory breaches relating to information published for parents, the lack of full access to the National Curriculum in ICT for all Year 10 and 11 students, and the lack of a daily act of collective worship.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong leadership by the school's senior managers and governors has helped bring about significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.
- The award of Business and Enterprise College status and the school's pioneering involvement in areas of social responsibility are testimony to a strong, shared vision.
- Leadership is successful at ensuring that students are fully included and listened to, and that staff are consulted and nurtured in their professional development.
- The school development plan is not sharp enough in its focus.
- The use of data to underpin and accurately inform the school's self-evaluation is not yet sufficiently well embedded in the school's practice.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by heads of subjects are not sufficiently consistent throughout the school.

Commentary

49. The headteacher provides strong, stable leadership and an ambitious vision for the school. At the heart of this vision is the relentless drive to raise the achievement of students and to provide for them an education that encourages growth as confident and socially responsible people. In both these goals the school is notably successful. Students are achieving well compared to their attainment when they joined the school. This has been the result of a number of strong staff appointments coupled with a persistent focus on improving teaching and learning that is beginning to pay off.
50. The hard-won award of Business and Enterprise College status exemplifies the school's unofficial motto: "If you think you can, you can" and is a tribute to good leadership. It comes in the wake of copious hard work, consultation and clear thinking from senior managers and governors and brings a new direction and much-needed funds to the school. The same spirit underlies the pioneering work the school is doing through the Green Flag Eco schools initiative, which involves students of all ages in 'hands-on' environmental projects.
51. These initiatives could not have become reality without the co-operation of others. It is a tribute to senior managers' success in communicating their vision that they have the support and loyalty of the governing body, staff, parents and students. Effective consultation is at the heart of this co-operation and has allowed the headteacher to

carry out measures that might otherwise have met with greater resistance. The good new curriculum, tailored more closely to the needs of individual students, is also the product of innovative thinking and the drive to carry it through. Running through these initiatives is the school's effort to ensure that all students are included and equally valued, whatever their aptitudes, disability or ethnic heritage.

52. The development of leadership at the level of heads of faculty and pastoral leaders is helping these middle managers to become increasingly accountable for the performance of their areas of responsibility and the welfare of the staff they lead. In the absence of regular formal links between heads of faculty and senior management, this currently happens mainly through twice-yearly reviews of performance with the head and deputy head. Several of these middle managers are currently following a course in leadership, devised by the school in collaboration with a local college. Leadership at this level is good and improving.
53. Strategic planning is satisfactory. The school's improvement plan has a strong and appropriate focus on the raising of standards and students' achievement. This is reached through a well-defined process involving staff and governors, who play a part in modifying the plan and bringing it up to date. However, the plan is not clear enough in explaining the actions needed to achieve its aims or the means of knowing how successfully they have been carried out, by whom and by what time. There is scope for overhauling the plan and sharpening its focus.
54. Governance is good. Governors act very effectively as critical friends to the school, both challenging and supporting senior staff. They take a very active role in supporting the leadership of the school, based upon their establishing an effective working relationship with the senior leadership team in particular. They have good quality information about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have a very good knowledge and understanding of them. They use their very good insight into these to hold the school to account for the standards and quality produced. Governors make a positive contribution to the planning and decisions that help to shape the vision and direction of the school; for example, they made a very good contribution to the successful bid for Business and Enterprise Specialist College status. Overall, governance is good rather than very good because there are some statutory breaches. However, these do not affect standards. There are some unintentional omissions in the information the school sends to parents. The school does not meet the requirement to provide the full programme of study in ICT in Years 10 and 11. However, the number of students is small and overall achievement in ICT in Years 10 and 11 is very good and improvement in provision since the previous inspection is very good. Governors have not been able to ensure that the school fully meets the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. However, the overall provision for students' spiritual and moral development is good and governors try to ensure that morning registration sessions include an appropriate consideration of a theme for the week.
55. The school is managed satisfactorily. There are good systems and strategies in place to guide its progress. Overall, the school has made a satisfactory response to tackling the key issues raised in the last report. The quality of education is now good, where previously it was judged to be needing some improvement. In the majority of subjects, improvement is judged to be good or very good, and at least satisfactory in all others except history, where it is unsatisfactory. Other major areas of the school's work have been maintained at a good level. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

56. There are some clear strengths in the management of the school. The school's specialist college status has come about due to farsighted planning and good management. The benefit of this status is being seen in the reinforcement and consolidation of very good links with the community and other schools and colleges and the enhanced learning opportunities that have resulted. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are undertaken regularly as a part of the performance management of teachers. There are some good examples where this process is taken further and the quality of teaching is improved by additional monitoring. This process is not consistent across departments and opportunities to identify and spread the best teaching practice are missed. In the main, monitoring of weaker teaching is undertaken more effectively and there is very little unsatisfactory teaching among the permanent staff and a majority of teaching that is good or better. Assessment procedures and the collection and use of data have developed rapidly since the appointment of assessment managers. There is very good vision for development and a very good database that is adapted to suit the needs of those with different levels of responsibility within the school, both pastoral and academic. There are inconsistencies in the way different subjects approach marking, and in some areas marking is ineffective in taking students' work forward. None of these issues are impacting on standards sufficiently to make management unsatisfactory, but they do detract from the good aspects of management to make it satisfactory overall.
57. The school has recently put into place good systems and strategies to ensure improved self-evaluation. The effectiveness of initiatives taken is monitored and evaluated satisfactorily. The school gathers data very efficiently but up to this point its use to inform self-evaluation has not been fully embedded in the school's practice. The recent appointment of staff charged with the responsibility of managing assessment data means that the school is now in a better position to analyse its performance and to compare with other like institutions to ensure that standards and the quality of its provision are as high as they should be. In this process, the school has developed very well its systems for identifying and tackling underachievement. The impact of recent improvements in terms of accurate setting and use of targets is now starting to be seen.
58. The school's senior staff provide good leadership in ensuring that teachers are aware of equality issues, resulting in good provision for equality of opportunity in most subjects, with no subjects where provision is unsatisfactory. Programmes to tackle underachievement have been offered equally to all groups of students. The school has policies on equal opportunities, racial equality, disability access and inclusion. Their implementation is monitored to ensure that they are applied effectively by all staff. Governors are fully committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and racial harmony in the school.
59. The leadership and management of the special educational needs department are good. Daily routines run smoothly and the recently appointed special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has been successful in overcoming most of the difficulties arising from recent staffing problems. An efficient and dedicated team of support staff has been formed and the statutory requirements in relation to students with a statement of special educational needs are met. The department also benefits from the good support given by the designated governor. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. The department is now well organised, morale is high and individual education plans are in place for those who need them. However, although the different subject faculties have access to these plans, they are not yet used to best effect by individual teachers.

60. The school has taken a positive approach to performance management and procedures are good. These are fully implemented and are having an increasing impact on raising the standards of teaching and learning. There are good and effective procedures in place for supporting the professional development of teachers, much of which takes place in school. Priority is given to the training needs associated with the school improvement plan, departmental plans and those identified as a result of performance management reviews. The induction of staff new to the school is very good. All the new staff, including those who are newly qualified, have mentors and the school provides a programme of meetings on a range of relevant whole-school topics. Students on initial teacher training courses also attend these sessions and the school makes excellent provision for these new entrants to the profession. The school is successful in meeting the development needs of staff other than teachers, and unqualified support staff have attained qualified teacher status as a result.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,036,834	Balance from previous year	-25,108
Total expenditure	2,080,419	Balance carried forward to the next	-68,693
Expenditure per pupil	3,762		

61. Financial planning and management are good. There are good processes in place to ensure that the school consults and compares to gain best value in its spending. The principles of best value are applied prudently and effectively. However, there is not a clear enough link between school development planning and the costing of the plans that are put forward. Specific funds are used appropriately. The school has experienced difficulties in financial resources that have come about due to falling rolls. The governors and senior team have managed this situation effectively, and have ensured that the budget, while still in deficit, can nevertheless cope with the school's costs. The school has an agreed action plan, formulated with the local education authority, to move to a balanced budget in the near future and is on course to do so. One issue that has resulted has been an under-resourcing of books and ICT equipment. The staff have worked hard, and mainly successfully, to overcome this barrier to learning and standards have not suffered. The specialist college status now granted will ensure that resources are improved, particularly in the area of ICT equipment. The relatively low expenditure by the school, set against such outcomes as good achievement, reflects the very good value for money provided.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING (WRL)

Provision for WRL is very good. It meets statutory requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have a very good foundation for WRL in Years 10 and 11 because of innovative curriculum development in Years 7 to 9.
- Courses cater very well for the full ability range because of the wide range on offer.
- The range of learning experiences has been significantly enhanced because of very good college links.

- WRL has a very strong 'real world' dimension because of very good local business links.
- There is very strong momentum for the further development of WRL because of the school's designation as a Business and Enterprise college and because of very good partnerships with other schools.

Commentary

62. GCSE results in business studies in 2004 were well below average. In photography nearly three quarters of those entered achieved grades in the A*-C range. Over one third of students taking media studies achieved passes in the higher grade range A*-C, reflecting good achievement.
63. In work seen achievement is good overall. In a Year 10 GCSE business studies lesson, teaching and learning were very good. In work seen from Year 11 business studies students, standards were average, indicating a significant improvement from last year following a change in syllabus. In school-based Year 10 lessons sampled in vocational GCSE courses, teaching and learning were very good in business studies, good in ICT and satisfactory in animal husbandry (these courses are taught mainly at local colleges). In photography lessons, sampled teaching and learning were very good in Year 10 and good in Year 11.
64. WRL has been very well established throughout the school through the combined impact of a number of developments. As a result older students benefit from a variety of relevant earlier learning experiences. The school has developed a very distinctive and innovative curriculum that enhances WRL very effectively. It has established a very strong focus on environmental issues, for example waste reduction, and linked this to the world of business. Other developments include younger students studying financial awareness as part of 'learning to earn'. In Year 9, students work on establishing an enterprise with the support of an external adviser from industry. Newly introduced vocational GCSEs have attracted students from a wide range of ability. Their WRL experience has been enhanced by the major role taken by local colleges in providing these courses. A small number of students benefit from extended college placements to study vocational courses. The Young Enterprise scheme is flourishing, with, for example, one team winning a regional final. The very strong business links are used very well, for example as part of an enrichment programme for gifted and talented science students.
65. The Connexions service is appropriately involved in working with groups and individuals to provide independent careers advice. There is a Connexions resource centre containing up-to-date careers information. There is a satisfactory careers education programme. Work experience is well organised and administered by the school. The local education business partnership provides information on a very wide range of opportunities for work experience. A small number of students benefit from an extended programme.
66. The leadership and management of WRL are very good. The school has developed very strong partnerships that directly and indirectly enhance WRL. It works with local feeder schools and a special school on a primary enterprise scheme. One very successful outcome from a partnership with other schools and a local company is the establishment of a vocational learning centre close to the school offering 300 places to study construction, including linked work experience. Funding has been secured and the centre will open this year. The school's recent designation as a Business and

Enterprise specialist college means that links with local business are already very strong and well established. It already works actively with a number of local businesses. One outcome of these links will be to increase the use of learning mentors from industry. In its development work with colleges, local firms and training providers the school has ensured that in both current provision and future developments, WRL is enhanced for all students. There is a very clear vision of a whole-school curriculum that has many links with WRL.

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 **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management have created an effective faculty team where the specialist teachers have an excellent command of their subject.
- Effective planning by teachers ensures that lessons are stimulating and challenging.
- Good teaching and learning are resulting in good achievement.
- GCSE English literature results were above average in 2004, but the proportion of students entered for GCSE English literature is low.
- Targets for improvement are often vague because marking and assessment are inconsistent.
- There are too few opportunities for students to develop their ICT skills, because teachers do not make the most of their access to computer suites.

Commentary

67. In 2004, the results in the end of Year 9 tests were below average. This reflected satisfactory achievement for this group of students in relation to their starting points. In the 2004 GCSE English examination, the proportion at A*-C grades was close to the national average. These results represent good achievement. The English literature A*-C grades were above average, but the entry rate was lower than in most schools.
68. Standards in the current Year 9 are average overall and reflect good achievement in relation to the students' below average standards on entry. This is because the faculty team of specialist English teachers use their expert knowledge to plan and deliver stimulating and challenging lessons. In Year 9, about six out of ten students are working at the expected Level 5 or higher. About one in ten are at the higher Level 6 or higher. A significant number do not meet the expected standards. Many lower attaining students make too many errors and do not respond in sufficient length or detail. In Year 11, standards are average. Students' achievement is good. The course work of more than half the students is at grade C or higher. Few students are gaining the very highest grades. ICT skills are good, although some teachers do not make the most of the planned opportunities in the schemes of work and their access to computer suites.
69. The quality of teaching and learning is good with excellent features, leading to good achievement by all students. Where excellent teaching was seen, qualities included the use of very clear learning objectives supported by consistently challenging activities and well-constructed assessment opportunities that matched the objectives. In all lessons, teachers ensure a good sense of pace, purpose and urgency. Expectation and challenge are high. Consequently, students know what is expected from them in terms of the work attitudes they bring to the lessons. Students' attitudes and behaviour

are very good and contribute to a positive, cooperative atmosphere. Overall, assessment is satisfactory rather than good because marking and target setting are inconsistent. In Years 7, 8 and 9 comments on written work encourage students. However, targets for improvement are often vague. In Years 10 and 11, many early drafts of written coursework do not include any advice on how to improve. As a result, many students are not clear enough about their level or grade targets or about how to achieve them.

70. Subject leadership is good. The head and acting head of faculty have established a good team approach based on the shared and accepted judgement that results have not been high enough. Both are good role models for colleagues. The departmental development plan is clear, appropriate and costed. Management is good. Recently, systems to analyse results and progress have been introduced. Teaching is now monitored satisfactorily. Schemes of work for Years 7, 8 and 9 have been rewritten to include a common assignment for each topic so that students can see how they will be assessed. However, the analysis of data to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning and to set targets that are both aspirational and realistic is not yet secure. More frequent formal assessment and tracking of progress are emerging but are not yet carried out rigorously or frequently enough. Overall, improvement in standards and teaching since the previous inspection has been satisfactory rather than good. However, good leadership now, along with stable staffing, means that there is good capacity for further improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

71. Standards are average and an improvement on the students' standards on entry. The proportion of students who enter the school with low standards is higher than in most schools. These students benefit from focused programmes to support their progress on basic skills. Higher attainers explain themselves clearly, both orally and in writing. Lower attaining students speak clearly and understand the main points of what is said to them. Spoken answers in class are frequently expanded. The teaching and use of subject specific vocabulary and the development of students' writing are not consistent.
72. Overall, arrangements for developing literacy are satisfactory. There is some good practice where specific attention to literacy development as an integral part of the teaching and learning process leads to above average outcomes. In geography, for example, a planned focus on the development of writing skills leads to students developing competence in explanatory, interpretative, analytical and empathetic forms of writing. In physical education, a constant focus on how to use key vocabulary enables the students to show their understanding of key concepts. Outcomes are better as a consequence. Other subjects tend not to be equally and consistently explicit in their approach. The school has targeted literacy for development. All teachers have received training in the extension of technical vocabulary, developing reading for information and the improvement of writing skills. However, the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of these initiatives on learning have not been sufficiently systematic.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Over the past few years, students have done better at GCSE in French and German than in most of their other subjects.
- Good teaching – much of it very good – ensures that students in Years 7 to 9 achieve well.
- The modern foreign languages department benefits from good leadership and a stable, well-qualified staff.
- Students do not benefit enough from the use of ICT to enrich their learning of a foreign language.
- The department assesses and marks students' work effectively, but does not yet systematically set targets for improvement.

Commentary

73. In 2004, GCSE results in French at grades A*-C were below the national average. However, nearly all students were entered for one or two foreign languages and everyone gained a GCSE grade A*-G. These results overall represented good achievement for the majority, though girls did not do as well as expected. In German, results among the small group of higher-attaining students were well above the average. They, too, achieved well. Students over the past few years have done better overall at GCSE in foreign languages than in most of their other subjects.
74. In Year 9, standards in French are similar to the national average. Consistently good teaching at this level, and in Years 7 and 8, means that students are keen, motivated and well behaved. They achieve well as a result. Particularly strong is students' understanding of spoken French, and in many cases their confidence in speaking simple French sentences. This reflects teachers' persistence in using the language in the classroom, ensuring that students are exposed to a lot of high quality French. This applies equally to students with special educational needs, who are also achieving well. Students' pronunciation is often very English-sounding and would benefit from more systematic practice. Students doing German in Year 9, both boys and girls, are already reaching above average standards and are achieving well despite a later start in Year 8. In both French and German, higher-attaining students would benefit from more opportunities to write freely and at length.
75. Standards in the current Year 11 in French are below average. However, students are achieving satisfactorily and their written coursework, in particular, shows a fair grasp of vocabulary and use of the past tense. Higher attainers, many of them girls, have produced work of well above average quality. Students of lower attainment, however, have major gaps in their understanding of basic French structures. The small group of high-attaining students of German in Year 11 is achieving very well. Students here are highly motivated because very effective and disciplined teaching has brought them to a well above average standard in a relatively short time.
76. The quality of teaching overall is good in Years 7 to 9, and so is students' learning. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are satisfactory in French, and very good in German. The best teaching, which is very good, has a strong, brisk pace and involves students in lots of colourful activities, such as competitions and paired dialogues, which help them get to grips with new language. A real strength of the department is the extent to which teachers use the foreign language naturally in the classroom. Students are used to this and respond very well to it and have unusually good comprehension as a result. Learning in such lessons is rapid and enjoyable, and students are well behaved. A small amount of teaching, while satisfactory overall, does not give students

enough opportunity to speak and make active use of the language. Students learn less and are not as highly motivated in these lessons. Students at all stages would benefit from more use of the language for routine requests such as asking to borrow a pen or apologising for being late.

77. The department enjoys good leadership and improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The recently appointed head of department has already made a strongly positive impact and benefits from a very united, stable and experienced team of teachers. The department is well regarded in the school. Teachers set a very good example to students, treating them with courtesy and respect. Management is satisfactory. The department runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis, and benefits from good accommodation that is welcoming to students and invites frequent communication. A well-subscribed annual trip to France provides students with a useful cultural and linguistic experience. There is too little use of ICT to extend students' understanding and enjoyment of language learning. Furthermore, the department is not yet using its good assessment data to best effect to track students' progress and set them targets for improvement.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement throughout the school are improving, but students in Year 11 underachieved throughout their earlier schooling because of a history of unsatisfactory provision; recent achievement is satisfactory.
- Initiatives taken by the school and the recent appointment of specialist teachers of mathematics are improving provision.
- Provision for students with the lowest attainment in Years 7 and 8 is very good.
- Marking and its use to plan work matched to the needs of individual students are unsatisfactory.
- Although improvement overall since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory, very recent improvement is good.

Commentary

78. In 2004, standards in the Year 9 tests were below average when compared with all schools, but above those of similar schools, although ambitious targets were not achieved. There was a significant increase in the proportion of students achieving higher levels and their results lifted the overall results significantly; for these students achievement was good. Overall, achievement was satisfactory. GCSE results in 2004 were well below average and achievement was unsatisfactory. Too many students with average or above average standards in the 2002 national tests in Year 9 were ungraded. The unsatisfactory achievement was mainly due to an extended period of unsettled teaching, often by non-specialist teachers of mathematics, and ineffective use of assessment to determine the best programme of study or level of entry for individual students.
79. Standards are improving. Students enter school with standards that are below average in mathematical skills. The number entering with above average attainment is relatively

low. Standards remain below average overall up to Year 10, reflecting levels of achievement that are satisfactory overall. Increasing numbers reach above average standards as they progress through the school and there is very good, very recent improvement in the achievement of those with the lowest attainment in Years 7 and 8. Standards in mathematics are well below average in Year 11. This year group did not achieve as well as they should have done as they moved through the school because of earlier unsatisfactory provision, but recent achievement is satisfactory. Presentation and written communication of mathematics are not as well developed as students' factual knowledge. Work is often untidy and diagrams badly drawn. Students have difficulty combining operations to solve problems. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls.

80. Teaching is satisfactory overall, leading to satisfactory learning. About half of the lessons seen were good or better. During the inspection one unsatisfactory lesson and one excellent lesson were observed. Lessons are planned and organised well; there are good relationships with students and in most lessons class routines are well established, so little time is taken managing behaviour. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and are able to demonstrate the small steps needed for students to understand the work. ICT is used very well to help students learn and make effective use of time. The scrutiny of students' work shows that insufficient written work is completed by some students in the time available. Teachers use the most recent national guidelines that provide a strategy for raising standards in Years 7 to 9, but have not fully grasped the techniques that enable students to develop at different rates. In the most effective lessons, work was planned well for students to work at different speeds, but too often all students do the same work. There are some inconsistencies in policy and practice across this new team of teachers but this is gradually being addressed. In an excellent lesson in Year 7 and a very good lesson in Year 8, the teacher's real understanding of primary school practice was key to the high quality of learning for students with low attainment. Here, the practical work used helped students to understand the work and stimulated learning and literacy skills, including vocabulary, reading, speaking and listening, were developed throughout the lesson. The enthusiasm of the teacher was conveyed to the students, who remained on task throughout because of the high interest level and the good class management skills of the teacher. Marking is unsatisfactory, and although data is collected to track progress, insufficient attention is given to careful and consistent marking and assessment procedures that identify specific weaknesses and give students strategies to improve.
81. After an extended unsettled period since the previous inspection when standards were judged higher than at present, there is now a team of qualified teachers of mathematics, and only a very small amount of teaching by non-specialist teachers. This is the major reason for improving provision. The new leadership is good. There is good vision for development and a number of initiatives have been introduced recently to improve provision. Documentation and teaching materials to support teachers are good and used flexibly. There is a comprehensive development plan, although targets are over-ambitious. There is a lack of rigour in implementing policies, and in checking the quality of teaching and of students' work in their books and using this to set targets for improvement. This detracts from other good features of management and makes it satisfactory overall.

Mathematics across the curriculum

82. Development of numeracy across the curriculum has rightly taken a lower place in school priorities whilst other issues relating to mathematics teaching have been addressed. There is a suitable numeracy policy and subject audits and specialised training have taken place. In science, art and design and ICT, numeracy skills are developed well and taught effectively. In other subjects, standards of numeracy are usually sufficient to support learning although fewer data handling skills than usual are used in geography. Opportunities to develop numeracy skills in other subjects are not always identified in planning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are achieving well as a result of good teaching and their positive attitudes to work.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and committed to improvement, with the result that standards are rising.
- The school's focus on business education is reflected in lessons so that the curriculum emphasises real-life applications of science.
- Routine marking and the use of homework are inconsistent.
- Teachers and students have insufficient access to suitable computer equipment.

Commentary

83. Standards attained in the 2004 National Curriculum tests for Year 9 students were below average, but broadly average compared to results in similar schools. The results were slightly below the previous year as a result of a large number of students just failing to reach the expected standards. There were no significant differences in boys' and girls' results and achievement was satisfactory. GCSE results for 2004 were below average but they were above those in similar schools and above the average achieved by the same students in other subjects. This represented satisfactory achievement in relation to the starting points of these students when they entered the school. Their achievement in relation to their Year 9 National Curriculum test results in 2002 reflects their under-performance in those tests. The proportion of the highest grades (A* and A) was below average but in line with similar schools. Boys' results were below girls' but the difference was not significant when compared to national averages, with both groups achieving better results in science than in their other subjects.
84. As a result of changes in teaching methods and assessment procedures, standards have risen and are now average in Years 9 and 11. This represents good achievement when compared with students' starting points and compared to past results. Students in all years have a satisfactory grasp of the key ideas underlying their work in biology, chemistry and physics. The highest attaining students have an above average understanding of more difficult work, such as balancing chemical equations, carrying out calculations in physics and work on genetics and inheritance. Students have plenty of opportunities to carry out practical work and they do this confidently and safely, showing appropriate understanding of fair testing and measures to ensure validity and reliability in experimental results. Their grasp of mathematical and communication skills is good enough to enable them to express their ideas clearly and to carry out

calculations and graph work effectively. However, they do not have enough access to suitable ICT equipment to allow them to develop these skills further. Students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students as a result of the good support they receive in lessons.

85. Teaching is consistently good in all years, with some very good teaching. This good teaching, together with the students' positive attitudes and good behaviour, ensures that learning and achievement are good in all years. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they use it to plan effective lessons that meet the students' needs well. For example, a Year 10 chemistry revision lesson was enlivened by effective practical demonstrations and very good use of computer equipment to present information. This ensured that all students were interested and fully engaged in the lesson. Learning was further enhanced by very good support for students with special needs, so that all students learned very well. Real-life and industrial applications of science are emphasised, as in a Year 9 lesson on energy production where students worked effectively in groups to produce presentations on non-renewable energy. Good teaching ensured that all students were engaged in their work, resulting in good learning and achievement. Relationships in lessons are good, ensuring that effective learning can take place. However, students' lateness sometimes delays the starts of lessons. Support staff are effective, allowing students with special needs to achieve well. Systems for tracking students' progress and setting targets for improvement are good, with effective formal assessments that allow good records to be kept. However, routine marking and the use of homework are inconsistent, with insufficient feedback on what students need to do to improve. Whilst some lessons are enhanced by the use of computer equipment, teachers and students have insufficient access to suitable equipment that would help to raise standards in ICT and lesson presentation.
86. Good leadership has helped the department to focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning and this is beginning to have a real impact. Planning for improvement is good and the science staff work well together to tackle priorities for improvement. Management of the department is satisfactory and systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning have been introduced. Assessment procedures have been revised to ensure accuracy so that all teachers are working to the same standards. However, monitoring of students' work has not been robust enough to eliminate inconsistencies in marking and the use of homework. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Where possible, the issues raised have been tackled but lack of funds has led to continuing deficiencies in resources and accommodation. The national strategy to raise standards in Years 7 to 9 has been taken on board and is beginning to have an impact on teaching methods. The science technician provides effective support for teaching but he is often stretched due to time constraints and the need to move equipment between floors and from one building to another. Financial constraints have meant that levels of equipment in the department are barely adequate and the outdated laboratories do not provide a good learning environment, despite teachers' efforts to brighten them up with wall displays.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 11 because of very good teaching.
- Good teaching results in good learning in Years 7 to 9.

- Students learn well in lessons because they have good attitudes towards the subject.
- The use of ICT in other subjects is inconsistent.
- Not all students in Years 10 and 11 are taught the control element of the National Curriculum.

Commentary

87. Examination results in 2004 were above average. This represents very good achievement for those students. Results in GCSE in 2004 were amongst the best in the school and within the county.
88. In Year 9, students' attainment is below national expectations. This represents good achievement as they enter the school with well below average standards. Most students are confident users of ICT and manipulate software well. However they are less able to evaluate and analyse the use of ICT to address particular issues. For example, only higher attaining students in Year 9 describe and explain in detail the sequences of commands when using control software. Teachers are now concentrating much more on these aspects of ICT capability and, as a result, standards are improving in Years 7 and 8. The inadequate time allocated to ICT in Year 9 limits the progress that students make. The school is currently taking steps to remedy this. In Year 11, standards in examination classes are above average and achievement is very good. The course is very well organised and very effectively taught. Students' good attitudes towards the subject also contribute positively to the very good learning. Students' coursework is developed and presented well due to the emphasis that their teachers place on this. For example, most students successfully justify and evaluate their use of a particular software solution to an ICT problem.
89. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers know their subject very well and use this effectively to extend and challenge students. Varied and effective methods are used to maintain students' interest and involvement. Teachers are enthusiastic and clear in their explanations, which galvanises the students to participate in lessons. Teachers support individuals well, which enables students to overcome problems. Students with special educational needs benefit especially from this, and from the effective support from learning support assistants. As result these students make good progress, especially in Years 7 to 9. Teachers ensure that students understand ICT terminology and can use it effectively. They use good techniques to reinforce these terms. Teachers take care to include all students in their lessons. For example, the homework that is set does not require access to ICT. Lessons move at a good pace that maintains students' interest. Behaviour is managed well and relationships are good. Marking is very good and gives students points for improvement that are specific to ICT. Many students act upon this advice appropriately. However the use of targets against which to monitor and challenge students in Years 10 and 11 is not fully developed.
90. Leadership and management of ICT across the school are good. There is a very good vision for the future development of ICT. The recent award of specialist school designation, which has ICT at its core, is indicative of this. There is a strong sense of direction that is converting plans to effective action. However the use of ICT by other subjects is not consistent. One result of this is that the school cannot be assured that all students in Years 10 and 11 have access to the control element of the National Curriculum, which is a statutory breach. There has been very good improvement in

attainment, teaching and organisation since the previous inspection, as the department has improved from a relatively low base.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

91. The use of ICT by other subjects is inconsistent, but satisfactory overall. Access to ICT resources is restricted, but the school has well-developed plans to enhance this provision through its Business and Enterprise specialist college status. Some subjects such as mathematics, geography, physical education and religious education have integrated the use of ICT well into their planning and teaching. ICT is very well developed in business studies. Students with special educational needs also use ICT effectively. There is some effective use of interactive display boards by students and teachers elsewhere, but other subjects have yet to fully develop their use of ICT. Provision in music is unsatisfactory. Although a preliminary audit of ICT use has been made, this has yet to be related to the requirements of the National Curriculum. ICT is used mainly to communicate and to research for information. Subject-specific software is used well in mathematics. Students have good access to the ICT resources out of lesson time through a network that is maintained well by skilled technical staff.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and often very good and innovative teaching is resulting in good learning and good achievement overall.
- Good leadership provides a clear focus on the development of teaching and learning and assessment, but monitoring is too infrequent to ensure consistently good practice.
- The level of resources, particularly maps, atlases and textbooks, is insufficient to support the curriculum. This constrains the development of teaching and learning and the raising of standards overall.

Commentary

92. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were below average, reflecting fewer students taking the higher paper. Students taking the foundation paper did well; all passed the exam and few at the lowest grades. Girls outperformed boys but both did less well than girls and boys nationally. Standards in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were average, but a significant number of students exceeded expected levels. Girls did better than boys. Students with special educational needs continue to do well.
93. In Year 9, standards are broadly average and students achieve well. Most students have a good knowledge of physical processes and human activities. However their understanding, expressed well in lessons, is not reflected in the brief written answers of many students. Although most students apply their literacy skills to their work they are less adept in applying their numerical skills to the interpretation of statistical data and map work. The acquisition of skills is not helped by the shortage of atlases, maps and textbooks. Effort, interest and good use of ICT are evident in detailed and imaginatively presented assessments. Students with special educational needs and higher attaining students do well over time. Standards rise to average overall from below average on entering the school and achievement is good. In Year 11, standards are average. When account is taken of this group's attainment on starting Year 10, this reflects good achievement. By Year 11, most students bring together sufficient

knowledge, understanding and skills to produce good coursework contributing to higher grades particularly at foundation level. However their analysis of statistical information and graphs is limited and map work is weak. Given the lack of textbooks, there is fortunately a closer match between the often thoughtful and detailed explanations given in lessons and written work.

94. The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good, especially in Years 10 and 11. Teachers' very good subject knowledge is used in planning a variety of activities to match the range of identified learning styles within each group. The mix of activities, including drama, poetry and artwork, develops a range of skills, stimulates interest and makes learning fun. Probing questioning challenges students' understanding and a brisk pace keeps everyone occupied. Students respond well to these thoughtful teaching methods and good relationships contribute to a positive learning experience. Fieldwork makes a valuable contribution to students' social and cultural development. Well-designed assessments with clear guidance are used to enable students to show what they know and can do. Although there is a lot of good practice, inconsistencies occur. Assessment tests, particularly in Years 10 and 11, do not focus enough on understanding and skills and not all teachers give guidance to students about setting achievable targets, or check that these are recorded and review dates are set. Not all teachers inform students through detailed marking about ways to improve. Planning overall does not provide enough opportunities to develop numerical skills and whole-class use of ICT. The development of teaching and learning is constrained by the lack of resources, especially textbooks, atlases and maps, resulting in an overuse of worksheets and photocopied information and a lack of visual stimulus in some classrooms.
95. The department is well led and managed. The subject leader is a very good teacher and leads by example. Innovative teaching methods and the strong focus on learning styles impact positively on achievement, but unsatisfactory resources impact negatively on standards. The analysis of assessment data results in prompt intervention strategies that effectively address weaknesses, particularly in Year 7 and at GCSE. Self-evaluation is ongoing, with a detailed development plan reflecting whole-school issues. Detailed schemes of work support teaching and supplementary materials compensate for the lack of resources. The strengths evident at the previous inspection continue, supplemented by improved teaching and learning. However, monitoring to ensure consistent good practice, an issue at the previous inspection, is still insufficiently thorough and not frequent enough. This, together with currently unsatisfactory resources and the resultant constraints placed on provision, reflects satisfactory rather than good overall improvement since the previous inspection.

History

Provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement is unsatisfactory because of the disruption caused by staff absence.
- The impact of this disruption has been significant because of the number of staff changes over a long period and because of the use of non-specialists.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because of the absence of key post holders.

- There is evidence of improvement in the department, due in part to greater stability in staffing for part of the current year and a very strong commitment to sustaining this new momentum.
- Greater stability in staffing has helped sustain students' positive attitudes towards the subject.

Commentary

96. GCSE results in 2004 were well below average. Students did not perform as well in history as in other subjects taken. Year 9 teacher assessment results in 2004 were below average.
97. In Year 9, students do not achieve as well as they should. Development of skills of history is uneven and in much of the work, standards are well below average. All students, including those with special needs, write slaves' diaries with a strong sense of empathy. In contrast, skills in analysing and evaluating sources on slavery are much weaker. Investigation skills develop well. Students find relevant information to produce detailed accounts, for example, of living and working conditions during the industrial revolution. However, with the exception of some higher attainers, skills in producing a reasoned argument, for example on whether the domestic system was effective, are weaker. Standards are below average in Year 11. They are higher than last year because of some staffing stability, including more continuity of specialist staffing. Achievement is unsatisfactory; these students have not made the progress they are capable of, primarily because of the discontinuity in staffing arrangements. Examination technique is an area of weakness. In coursework students produce insufficient relevant detail, for example about the evacuation of children in World War Two. With the exception of some higher attainers, they adopt too narrative a style for a question that asks for an explanation of government policy. Source analysis skills are again weak, with insufficient emphasis on interpretation and reliability. Students' awareness of what is required to earn maximum marks is weak.
98. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. In the teaching seen in Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning were satisfactory. No specialist GCSE teaching was seen although evidence from the inspection is that specialist temporary staff are now producing satisfactory teaching and learning. However, there has been a lack of continuity in students' learning experiences over time and, in work seen, the development of skills in the subject is uneven and includes some significant weaknesses. This has resulted in unsatisfactory learning and achievement. In particular, subject-specific literacy skills have not been consistently taught due to the frequency of staffing changes and the adverse effects of the use of non-specialist teachers. Fragmented staffing has also had an adverse impact on the setting of homework, on the planned use of ICT and on opportunities to develop numeracy skills within the subject. Marking is unsatisfactory. In addition to unmarked sections of work there is insufficient guidance for students on how to improve, especially in Years 7 to 9. Much marking is not sufficiently subject-specific and as a result, individual weaknesses in key skills are not addressed. Currently there is evidence of a variety of learning styles being developed and of students responding positively. The use of resources, including support for higher and lower attainers, is another relative strength. The recent improvements ensure that the provision overall is unsatisfactory rather than poor and there is a satisfactory capacity to improve further.
99. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Staff absences continue to include key post holders. Faculty and senior managers in the school strive to ensure

satisfactory provision, but standards are too low and students are not achieving as well as they should. The key functions of both leadership and management are not currently carried out from a subject-specific perspective. There has been a lack of consistency and continuity in leadership and management over a considerable period of time. Planning and resources development were improved earlier this year but staff absence remains as the fundamental issue. Improvement from the previous inspection is unsatisfactory because standards, teaching and achievement have not improved sufficiently.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are very well prepared for examinations at GCSE.
- Lively teaching has resulted in good learning.
- Students enjoy the subject and achieve well.
- There are good opportunities for students to develop their spiritual awareness.
- Written work is spoiled by too many spelling mistakes.

Commentary

100. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were above average and students achieved well. They compared well with students' results in other subjects and over the last two years there has been a rise in the number of grades at A*-C.
101. Students in Years 7 to 9 follow the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and attainment in Year 9 is average overall. This represents good achievement as standards on entry are below average. Work seen during the inspection shows that both boys and girls have a firm understanding of the main beliefs and practices of Christianity and other world religions such as Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism. Students of all levels of attainment are confident in the use of words and phrases associated with the different religions. They also describe clearly what they have learnt from religion, for example the ways in which people's lives can be transformed through prayer.
102. Standards are above average in Year 11. Students build successfully on the work done in earlier years and continue to achieve well. Higher attaining students have a good understanding of different religious standpoints on issues relating to the termination of life and they are adept in setting out points of view clearly with relevant references. Lower attaining students make good use of structured guidance to organise information effectively. Throughout the school, students with special educational needs generally achieve well, especially when they receive additional classroom support.
103. The quality of teaching is good and there are some very good and excellent features. Teachers have a confident command of their subject and lessons are carefully planned to provide a range of challenging activities that interest the students and enable them to learn well. Students themselves have good attitudes towards the subject and are keen to learn. Lessons move forward purposefully so that usually there is enough time at the end of the lesson for students to reflect on what they have learnt. Speaking and listening skills are fostered through lively discussion sessions in which all students are encouraged take an active part, and assessment tasks provide good opportunities for

the use of ICT in research. A particular strength of the teaching in Years 10 and 11 is the focus on writing effective answers to examination questions. Very good classroom relationships give students the confidence to explore the spiritual dimension to life and to work together productively in groups and pairs. Work is generally well matched to requirements of students with special educational needs but the department has rightly identified the provision of more challenging work for gifted and talented students as an area for further development. In addition, not enough emphasis is placed on accurate spelling, with the result that standards of spelling are too low. The quality of assessment is good. Students generally know how well they are progressing in relation to their targets, and what they need to do to improve.

104. The department is well led and there is a clear vision for development. Management, too, is good with a firm sense of purpose. Teachers work together well as a team and performance monitoring is carried out effectively. Accommodation is good and has a positive impact on students' achievement. The subject rooms provide a stimulating learning environment and are large enough to allow innovative methods of group work. The interactive whiteboard is used to good effect. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. The change of examination syllabus has led to a rise in standards, particularly among boys, and ICT has a more prominent role in students' work. Teachers now use assessment effectively in Years 7 to 9 to plan more precisely for progress to a higher level of attainment and to achieve greater consistency in marking. Talks by outside speakers and visits to different places of worship have widened students' range of experiences. The subject makes a very good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the GCSE resistant materials course are above average and students achieve well.
- Students in all years have positive attitudes to the subject, which contribute to their good achievement.
- Teaching is good overall and often very good.
- Assessment practice gives insufficient attention to the setting of intermediate targets for improvement for individual students as projects develop.
- Not enough attention is given to the systematic and progressive development of design and graphical skills in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

105. In 2004, students' results in their GCSE examinations were well below average at the higher A*-C grades. In the separate subjects, results in resistant materials were above the average and in food technology and graphic products they were well below average. The attainment of boys was higher than that of the girls at the higher grades. Overall, students' results in design and technology were just below those they attained in most of their other subjects and their achievement was satisfactory.
106. Standards in Year 9 are below the national expectation. This is below the level of teacher assessment in recent years. These assessments were too generous and the criteria were not applied with sufficient rigour. However, achievement is good as the starting point in Year 7 is well below average for the majority of students. The teachers use carefully planned projects and tasks in a variety of materials that make increasing demands on students of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. As a consequence all students make good progress from a low starting point in terms of experience and attainment. The standards of the girls are slightly above those of the boys. In general the girls have design skills that are slightly better developed than those of the boys. Making and constructional skills in all materials are more highly developed than other areas of the subject, for students at all levels of attainment. Graphical skills are below expected levels for the majority of students. Higher attaining students have a more secure grasp of subject knowledge and specialist vocabulary.
107. In Year 11, standards are below average overall. Half the students currently in Year 11 and even fewer in Year 10 chose to study the subject after Year 9. For those who opt to continue their studies, mainly middle and lower attaining students, achievement is good against their prior attainment. However, in the work seen during the inspection there are clear indications that standards are rising on all GCSE courses and achievement is particularly good on the resistant materials course. The standards achieved by the girls continue to be higher than those of the boys, but the strategies to improve the attainment of boys are beginning to have a positive impact. Design skills continue to be less well developed than making and constructional skills for the majority of students. The higher attaining students generally have better developed graphical skills, especially those on the graphics course, and their subject knowledge and vocabulary are more secure.
108. Teaching and learning are good in all years, and a significant proportion is very good. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan effective lessons with clear learning objectives. However, the objectives are rarely shared with the students and

the progress made is rarely reviewed at the end of the lesson, and therefore the lessons are not always well focused. The projects used are varied and interesting but some of the challenge is lost when time deadlines are not set for the completion of intermediate tasks. The teachers use a range of appropriate methods to engage the students with the learning, and explanations, questioning and demonstrations are particularly effective in developing students' knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers produce resources of good quality to support the students' learning. In all lessons, teachers give high levels of individual support and well-informed feedback; this aids progress and encourages the students and raises their level of motivation. However, the use of assessment for learning could be further developed and individual targets for improvement refined as students progress through projects and units of work. The very good behaviour, good levels of concentration, and the very positive attitudes of the students to the subject add to the impact of the teaching and ensure that achievement is good in all years.

109. The leadership of the department is good and it is managed well. The department's development plan has appropriate priorities linked to raising attainment further. Good use is made of data and the analysis of results. A range of strategies is used to monitor teaching and learning. In curriculum planning, greater attention should be given to the progressive and systematic development of design and graphical skills in Years 7 to 9. In addition, the use of ICT should be further extended in all years and on all courses. Accommodation is very good. The teaching staff are all experienced specialists but there is no technician support. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Teaching is now consistently good or better. The curriculum has been broadened since the previous inspection and now includes textiles, structures and electronics units of work. The assessment system has been improved, but still requires further development. Resources continue to be unsatisfactory as the range of available materials is narrow and there are insufficient textbooks.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design and music were the focus subjects. *Drama was sampled.*

110. One Year 8 drama lesson observed, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Standards observed were below average. Students made satisfactory progress. Planning was detailed and catered for different learning styles. Students worked cooperatively, but lacked the self-discipline to make the most of a series of interesting and varied opportunities. The lesson was characterized by high expectations that were not translated into effective learning because the teaching space was inappropriate and students had insufficient experience of drama. Extracurricular opportunities are very good. Students present regular performances of plays and musicals. Recently, students and staff have worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company to present performances in both a local theatre and the school.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students from Years 7 to 11 learn and achieve very well in lessons as a result of very good teaching.
- Students are stimulated by the high quality teaching and demonstrate very good attitudes to work.

- Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good; standards have risen significantly.
- Insufficient curriculum time in Year 9 impacts on continuity and standards.
- Enrichment activities, particularly for gifted and talented students, are not yet sufficiently developed.

Commentary

111. In the last two years, GCSE results have significantly improved and have risen from well below average in 2002 to average in 2004. An above average number of students gained B and C grades but fewer students gained the highest grades of A* and A. Students achieved well in 2004.
112. In Year 9, students' attainment is average and of a higher level than recorded in the teacher assessments in 2004. This represents good achievement as students enter the school with a below average level of skills and understanding. They use creative skills confidently in a wide range of media and show good understanding of how to develop and research work. By studying a range of artists work such as the Surrealists they learn new techniques that they apply confidently to their work. Higher attaining students competently distorted scale and proportion after studying the work of Magritte, whilst lower attaining students successfully used simplified perspective. They learn quickly, particularly in Years 7 and 8, because the structured course gives them a sound understanding of formal elements and technical skills. The high quality of teaching results in very good progress being made in lessons. However in Year 9 there is insufficient curriculum time to build on and maintain this rate of progress and overall achievement is compromised; it is good rather than very good. There are not enough resources for ICT and this limits its use for creative purposes.
113. In Year 11, standards are average. Students use technical skills competently and show the ability to explore, interpret and analyse when researching areas such as Pop Art, where they use artists such as Lichtenstein as an influence for large scale work. In the photography course, students quickly take on an increased demand for individuality and confidently use processes to develop ideas. A significant number of students start the course with below average skills, understanding and breadth of knowledge. This relative lack of background holds back progress and makes achievement good overall rather than very good, despite the very good teaching provision. At this level students are encouraged to take more responsibility for their work and the strategies in place to encourage independent learning are beginning to have an impact. This is raising standards but few students currently reach the very highest grade of A*.
114. The quality of teaching and learning is very good; consequently students improve and develop their skills knowledge and understanding consistently, so learning is very good. By involving students in challenging discussion, giving very clear explanations, demonstrating techniques and building in an element of humour, the teachers stimulate and motivate students to do their very best. Students respond very well to the effective teaching and attitudes and behaviour are very good. Teachers have a very good command of their subject, and this is evident in their frequent references to artists and cultural influences that strongly support learning. Lessons are planned well to include a range of enjoyable and challenging activities for all levels of ability. For example, students of all abilities in Year 10 produced innovative and exciting work when producing large scale fantasy shoes based on the work of Gaudi. Students with special educational needs achieve well because teachers channel their strengths into areas of success. Very good diagnostic marking and a high level of individual attention give

students clear direction on how to improve. Specialised vocabulary is built into projects and its use is positively encouraged through discussion and in the written analysis and evaluation of work. Homework is used well to build on what students have learned in class.

115. The leadership and management of the small department are good. The head of department has only been in position for eighteen months but has had a very positive impact. A clear vision and direction are provided. A culture of high expectations and achievement is being promoted. This has led to very good progress being made since the previous inspection: teaching and learning have improved significantly and standards are rising. There are still improvements that need to be made and lead to leadership and management being good rather than very good. Assessment systems are beginning to ensure that continuity and progression are monitored well; however analysis of data is not yet firmly embedded. Learning is well supported by after-school classes but enrichment activities, particularly for gifted and talented students, are still in the early stages of development. Good links with feeder schools have been established through the waste-minimisation project. The ethos of the subject is raised by the high quality of display.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The profile of music in the school has recently been successfully re-vitalised.
- Significantly more students are being attracted onto the GCSE course.
- Due to severe staffing problems since the previous inspection, and a lack of continuity in teaching, standards are below average in Years 9 and 10.
- Inadequate accommodation and insufficient ICT resources adversely affect the quality of students' learning.

Commentary

116. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were well below average. When the current teacher arrived half way through the course, no students had completed any coursework, none had prepared pieces for performance and none were receiving instrumental tuition. They subsequently achieved well in Year 11 and all gained a pass grade, some gaining a C.
117. Standards in Year 9 are below average. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to their starting points and the restricted time given to the teaching of music. Thus, Year 9 students observed had difficulty recognising basic notation. Most do not know time signatures, do not know notes of the treble clef and cannot form chords with any confidence. Many are still unfamiliar with the use of keyboards. As students take music lessons on a carousel timetable arrangement, they forget what they have learnt in the weeks in which they do not have lessons. Students have satisfactory aural awareness, being able to successfully identify instruments in orchestral music they hear.
118. Due to recent staff turnover, no students in Year 11 take music. Year 10 students who do take the music option have below average standards due to staffing problems when

they were in Years 7 to 9. Most started the course with very modest practical ability, and all are achieving satisfactorily. Many still have difficulty reading notation. Most are developing good analytical skills when listening to music.

119. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. During the inspection, the music teacher was absent and her timetable was covered by two supply teachers who are also professional musicians. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, and good in Year 10. The one teacher observed used largely didactic, teacher-led, whole-class strategies, which was a safe plan as he did not know the students well. Scrutiny of documentation and workbooks shows that teaching styles are normally more varied, allowing for students to work individually and in groups for composition and improvisation. Normally, assessment procedures are used as ongoing systems in practical work, with references to National Curriculum levels, and targets for improvement being made. Students behaved well in the lessons observed.
120. The relatively new music teacher has made a good start in raising the profile of music in the school. Leadership is good, and has resulted in a clear direction being given to the development of the subject. The department is now managed well and this has led to significant improvements in the overall provision of the subject. A comprehensive, realistic development plan has been produced to take the department forward. A significant increase in the numbers opting to take music in Year 10 confirms how music is now being made attractive to both boys and girls. Assessment procedures have improved since the previous inspection. ICT provision is slowly improving, though limited resources, together with inadequate accommodation, provide a barrier to students' learning. Students are now encouraged to get involved in extra-curricular activities, and there are some effective small rock bands in the school. The current Year 10 is too large a class for effective ongoing monitoring of students' practical work in lessons. There has been overall satisfactory development over the past year to issues raised in the previous inspection report.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Mains strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management ensure that all students can make good progress.
- Consistently good teaching leads directly to good learning.
- Students have good attitudes to learning and this leads to good achievement overall.
- The achievement of a minority of students in Years 7 to 9 has in the recent past been hindered by staffing and subsequent timetabling difficulties.

Commentary

121. Students were entered for GCSE examinations for the first time in 2004. Standards were above the national average, both at higher grades and overall. All students entered for the examination passed successfully. For these students, this represents very good achievement. Assessment data shows that students currently in Year 11 are reaching their targets and achieving very well. Numbers of students taking the GCSE course are now rising quickly.
122. In Year 9, accurate teacher assessments show that standards are close to the national expectation. Given the below average standards of students on entry to the school, this represents good achievement. Staffing and timetabling difficulties have presented a barrier to learning for some students, but this problem is now being successfully addressed to ensure that all students continue to achieve well. In Year 11, overall standards in the core provision are better than would normally be expected, as students build on the strong foundations of earlier years. All groups of students achieve well. Progress and learning in a range of activities are both consistent and good.
123. The quality of teaching is good and this leads directly to good learning. One very good lesson was seen. Teachers have secure knowledge and are enthusiastic in their teaching. Detailed lesson plans support comprehensive and up-to-date schemes of work. Class management is very good, giving all students the opportunity to engage successfully, and to learn well. Teaching methods are varied, and meet the different learning styles of all students well. In a very good Year 7 lesson, girls were actively and enjoyably engaged in learning how to increase the distance of their long jumps in athletics, because the teacher encouraged them to work together to identify and modify the parts of their performance that were less effective. This independent learning ensured that all students were able quickly to improve their performances and therefore to achieve well.
124. Students respond well to the positive learning environment created by the purposeful teaching. Attendance is good, students arrive promptly at lessons, and they change quickly into the appropriate clothing. There are very few students who do not take an active part in any one lesson. They listen well, and pay close attention to the guidance given by their teachers. They work co-operatively and with enthusiasm, even when not under immediate supervision. Students are able to analyse complex skills such as a forehand passing shot in tennis, or bowling in cricket, and they can make pertinent

suggestions about improving their own and others' learning. Relationships between students and teachers are very good, as is behaviour in lessons.

Leadership and management

125. Leadership and management of the department are very good. This has led to very good improvement since the previous inspection. The full time staff team are dedicated and energetic specialists. They are deployed well to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is a clear vision of continuous improvement, and the skills are present to make this ambition a reality. Comprehensive schemes of work are based on nationally recognised models. The accurate and reliable assessment system is producing objective data for measuring learning outcomes, and for improving the planning of teaching. The department is active in the school sports co-ordinator scheme, working with local partner schools to raise standards of physical education, especially in younger students. Outdoor accommodation is very good, but indoor space is limited, though this will be rectified when the new sports hall, now under construction, is completed. Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching has improved significantly, standards have risen similarly and are now above average, and achievement is now consistently good. All of the other issues identified as weaknesses in the previous inspection have been addressed, and the leadership has ensured that there is now very good capacity to improve further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The focus subject was citizenship; personal social and health education (PSHE) was sampled.

126. The planned programme for PSHE is comprehensive and good. It is taught as separate lessons, and supplemented by 'Issue Days', assemblies, tutorials and registration periods. It is taught by specialists, visitors and non-specialists, and training is given where necessary. PSHE is valued by students and the school and prepares them well for adult life. It includes careers, health, sex and relationships and drug education. Students appreciate careers education, especially the well-organised programme of work experience in Year 10, and find it helpful in making informed choices throughout their school life and when they leave the school. Careers provision in Years 7 and 8 is sound and satisfactory advice is given on option choices for Year 10. Students are given good and impartial advice on post-16 options.

127. In the few lessons seen during inspection, teaching was good overall, resulting in good learning and achievement. PSHE lessons were observed in Years 7, 9 and 10. Year 7 students learnt well about the impact of bullying and how to deal with it. Year 9 students had a very effective lesson on relationships and self-control. A visiting teacher used a selection of videos effectively to demonstrate various aspects of prejudice and racism to students in Year 10.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning are resulting in good achievement and above average standards.
- The department is well led.
- Good links have been established with the local community.

- Monitoring and evaluation of the teaching of the subject are underdeveloped.
- Assessment procedures are underdeveloped.

Commentary

128. Citizenship has been successfully introduced into the school and contributes strongly to the good attitudes of the students, and to their personal development. All departments have identified how elements of citizenship are included in their programmes of study, and they are planned for in all schemes of work. These are enriched by specific modules within the PSHE programme, which all students follow. During the inspection, six lessons in Years 7 to 9, in which citizenship featured prominently, were observed in English, media studies, geography and PSHE. One Year 10 PSHE lesson and one Year 11 English lesson, which centred upon aspects of citizenship, were also observed.
129. In Years 7 to 9, students achieve well, gaining above average standards in each year. In a Year 7 English lesson, students studying the leadership qualities of Macbeth and Duncan in the Shakespeare play related them well to the same qualities needed to be active members of today's society. Year 8 media studies students, designing and advertising chocolate bars, were able to express clearly their strong opinions about the relevance of media in contemporary society. Year 9 students, in a PSHE lesson, demonstrated mature views relating to problems about, and possible solutions to, relationships during teenage years.
130. In Years 10 and 11, students achieve well, gaining above average standards. Year 10 students expressed well-considered views about prejudice when discussing aspects of the Ku Klux Klan movement. Year 11 English students revealed an accurate and perceptive understanding of the importance of water in Asia when analysing an unseen poem by an Indian poet.
131. Teaching and learning are overall good, with some very good features. Teachers demonstrate a huge enthusiasm for the subject, and this motivates the students to carefully consider the topics being addressed. Lessons are very well prepared and are developed at a fast pace. Open-ended tasks ensure that students of all ability are fully extended. In the lessons observed, teachers smoothly and effectively integrated citizenship elements into the specialist nature of the subject being taught.
132. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has undertaken appropriate training, and has produced full documentation in order to facilitate the smooth introduction of the subject. Assessment procedures are still developing, and these are aided by individual Citizenship Development profiles for students in Years 7 to 9. The co-ordinator has a heavy workload, which is a barrier to monitoring and evaluating how citizenship is being taught across the curriculum.
133. Good links are being developed with the community to enrich curriculum provision. Special days are set aside, such as 'Defence Day' to consider refugees, and the police 'No Fear' Day. The chair of governors is on the local council, and has spoken to Year 10 and 11 students about local government. Some students are members of the local Youth Council, and can express their views on local matters through that body. The school council enables students to air their views on matters such as school uniform and school meals. Students are heavily committed to raising money for charities. Most students take citizenship seriously, as demonstrated by a Year 9 boy who is very

proud of his 'Make Poverty History' bracelet. Recognition for the quality of citizenship education was recently made when the headteacher, co-ordinator and ten students were invited to visit the House of Lords.

OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Four courses were sampled; all were applied GCSE courses. These courses were introduced this year and all are provided jointly with local colleges, who undertake most of the teaching. Lessons seen were those taught by school staff.

134. One Year 10 lesson on animal husbandry was sampled. Teaching and learning were satisfactory. Standards were below average. Challenge was good in a lesson where students produced and conducted scripted interviews to explain how the respiratory system works. The introduction effectively assessed previous knowledge, encouraged the use of relevant vocabulary and was adapted well to respond to difficulties encountered. Methods were less effective in reinforcing the pace of learning and as a result, learning was satisfactory rather than good. Relationships were good.
135. GCSE results in business studies in 2004 were well below average. One Year 10 business and communications lesson was sampled. In work seen in Year 11 and in the Year 10 lesson sampled, standards were average. Students are following a new syllabus in both year groups and the one taught to previous year groups has been discontinued. In Year 11 coursework, students find ICT solutions to business problems. They think creatively and convey their proposals clearly, with higher attainers showing good evaluation skills. Teaching and learning were very good in the lesson sampled. Excellent resources provided students with a user-friendly and confidence-boosting introduction to finding a firm's break-even point on a graph. They worked in pairs, moving strips of paper representing different costs to different points on the outline of a graph. This method very effectively consolidated their own learning before they individually constructed graphs using the conventional method of pencil and ruler. ICT was used very effectively throughout to define key terms, give examples and to set objectives.
136. One Year 10 applied business lesson was also sampled. Teaching and learning were again very good. A small, enthusiastic and hard-working group of students were managed very well. The group ranged from lower attainers to gifted and talented students. All were involved in a lively and challenging lesson. Relationships were excellent. ICT was used very effectively to introduce students to key cost and revenue terminology. Activities for students were planned carefully to find out what students knew already and then to ensure that each grasped the essential features and differences between key definitions such as fixed and variable costs.
137. One Year 10 ICT lesson on an introduction to computer hardware was sampled. Teaching and learning were good. Standards were well above average. Students prepared and delivered presentations about hardware. They displayed good confidence in their use of PowerPoint and the interactive whiteboard in their presentations. Planning was very good, especially in including the school's network manager to give a demonstration in this introductory lesson. Good subject knowledge resulted in effective questioning of students, with additional information given as required. There was not enough emphasis, however, on what students needed to learn as a basis for understanding hardware. There was a good working atmosphere with very good management of behaviour.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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