

INSPECTION REPORT

WENTWORTH HIGH SCHOOL

Eccles, Manchester

LEA area: Salford

Unique reference number: 105982

Headteacher: Mr Nigel Harrop

Lead inspector: Denis Pittman

Dates of inspection: 31st January - 2nd February 2005

Inspection number: 268509

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 11 - 16 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 896
School address: Wentworth Road
Eccles
Manchester
Postcode: M30 9BP
Telephone number: (0161) 7894 565
Fax number: (0161) 7877 362
Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mr M Hingston
governors:
Date of previous 8th March 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wentworth is an average-sized comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 16. The number on roll is 896 (430 boys and 466 girls). There are relatively more girls than boys in Year 11. The socio-economic background of pupils is below average, there being areas of social deprivation close to the school.

The school has a low number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, in line with the local demography.

The attainment of students on entry is well below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs is above the national average and the proportion of pupils with statements identifying their particular needs is well above the national average for 2004. This includes the 17 pupils in the 'barrier-free' unit for pupils with physical difficulties that is part of the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16976	D Pittman	Lead inspector	
13786	S Walsh	Lay inspector	
20497	V Williams	Team inspector	History
10895	D Wasp	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship
10894	P Reynolds	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
17404	J Tolley	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
22501	S Jones	Team inspector	Music
7926	J Bowden	Team inspector	Physical education Special educational needs
12499	M Durkin	Team inspector	English English as an additional language
23082	G Loach	Team inspector	Mathematics
21866	D Tracey	Team inspector	Science
31129	J Pickering	Team inspector	Art and design
23891	P Slape	Team inspector	Design and technology Work-related learning
20072	J Webster	Team inspector	Geography

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
1 - 4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is unsatisfactory. It has not been sufficiently consistent in enabling pupils to achieve as well as they should, particularly by the end of their time in the school. The headteacher has a strong commitment to creating a breadth of curriculum and learning opportunities for pupils. These aims have not been fully translated into practice because of unsatisfactory aspects of management. However, the overall quality of leadership in the school is satisfactory. The school is popular because of the support it gives to pupils. Whilst the school provides a satisfactory quality of education, it has serious weaknesses in management and consistency in monitoring its outcomes. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The effectiveness of management is unsatisfactory; insufficient progress has been made in raising standards.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Boys generally are underachieving compared to girls.
- The results of recent examinations and tests are well below the national average. Standards in comparison with similar schools in GCSE examinations are below average.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and in the 'barrier-free' unit is very good.
- Financial management and control are very good.
- Assessment procedures are inconsistent and the quality of marking is unsatisfactory.
- The extra-curricular provision is good; it provides opportunities to promote pupils' personal development.
- Attendance levels are below the national average but are comparable to similar schools.

The school has made unsatisfactory progress since the previous inspection. Some progress has been made regarding curriculum provision, target setting and levels of resources. However, standards of attainment still vary too widely between subjects, homework is not set regularly and the quality of marking is still an issue. Attendance levels have improved. The quality of assessment data is better but, as before, the information is not put to good use in all subjects. GCSE performance has improved but has 'plateaued' in recent years: the trend is not reflecting national improvements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall, achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards are broadly well below average on entry to the school; literacy skills are particularly weak. Examination results show a static picture for the higher GCSE grades but some improvement for the broader grade range A* to G. The school's performance in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 is well below the national average but is comparable to similar schools. In most subjects,

standards in the 2004 GCSE examinations were below the national average and below the average for comparable schools. However, results in history were well above average. Attainment seen in lessons in Years 7 to 9 is below average, as it is in Years 10 and 11. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Students with special educational needs make good progress; talented students make similar progress to other students.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Behaviour and attitudes to work are satisfactory; relationships between pupils are good. Attendance levels and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is generally satisfactory but older pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Teaching in science, ICT, physical education and religious education is of a good standard. However, the quality of teaching in music and elements of English and mathematics are unsatisfactory. The standard of teaching is generally satisfactory in all other subjects, apart from personal, social and health education (PSHE). The productive working relationships in most lessons promote learning. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory; they are not sufficiently rigorous in monitoring progress. The quality of marking in some subjects is unsatisfactory.

Overall, the school provides pupils with a satisfactory curriculum. The caring and supportive ethos, which is evident in the school, helps pupils prepare for life after leaving. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good.

The school provides satisfactory support and guidance for pupils. Links with parents and the local community are also satisfactory. The school has a good local reputation for the support it gives pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and special educational needs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management in the school is satisfactory. The school is effectively led but there are some inefficiencies in management. The leadership of the headteacher is **satisfactory**. There is a good and supportive team ethos. There is satisfactory administration of the school. Appropriate monitoring systems have been put in place, although there is some inconsistency of practice in departments. The overall governance of the school is **satisfactory**. Governors are involved in strategic planning, but are not so involved in monitoring and evaluating the impact of development on standards. The financial management of the school is very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally supportive. Generally, they are pleased with the progress their children are making, the high expectations of staff and the arrangements that were made for induction into the school. Some concerns were expressed by a relative minority of parents about the behaviour of pupils and the quality of the information they receive about how their children are doing. Whilst behaviour is not a serious issue, the quality of reports is unsatisfactory.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are:

- Improve performance in the higher grades of GCSE examinations, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Address the underachievement of boys.
- Improve the effectiveness of management in the monitoring of outcomes.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics and English.
- Improve assessment procedures in order to monitor progress better; improve the quality of marking.
- Raise levels of attendance and improve punctuality.

And, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide for the inclusion of ICT in the teaching of mathematics and art.
- Carry out regular risk-assessment audits.
- Provide for a daily act of collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 are below nationally expected levels. Examination and test results over time have been consistently well below or below the national average. The overall achievement of pupils is unsatisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9; it is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Girls are performing relatively better than boys in tests and examinations. All groups do not make sufficient progress. Standards in English, mathematics and science are generally below average, although test results in Year 9 in mathematics improved significantly in 2004.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The results in examinations and tests are well below the national average.
- Standards of work seen in mathematics and science are consistently below national expectations; they are well below in English.
- In comparison with similar schools, results at the end of Year 9 are broadly the same, being better in mathematics.
- Achievement as seen in lessons is unsatisfactory. The value added from Year 10 to Year 11 is well below national expectations.
- Standards in GCSE examinations have not improved significantly since the last inspection.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.6 (31.0)	n/a (33.4)
mathematics	35.0 (32.7)	n/a (35.4)
science	31.5 (30.3)	n/a (33.6)

Figures in brackets are for the previous year. Note - comparative national figures for the National Curriculum tests of 2004 were not available at the time of the inspection but reference is made about the results and trends.

1. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9, the combined results were below the national average. Standards were well below in English, below average in science, but close to the average in mathematics. The combined result in these subjects was broadly the same as those for similar schools. The trend in test performance has been improving in mathematics and science; it has been more variable in English. At the end of Year 9, achievement in lessons in the core subjects reflects the test results. In English it is unsatisfactory, but is good in mathematics and science. In general, pupils achieve as well as they should and make satisfactory progress in their studies.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	31 (27)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	88 (84)	89 (84)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	28.5 (24.5)	34.9 (34.7)

There were 176 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Performance in GCSE 2004 examinations was well below the national average and the trend in improvement was below the national picture. Performance in comparison to similar schools was below average. Results in English and mathematics were well below the national averages. The percentage of pupils obtaining the higher grades A* to C was below average in the majority of subjects but, in history, it was well above average.
3. In 2004, the school failed to meet its targets for GCSE examinations, but exceeded them in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests in mathematics and science. The shortfall in performance was particularly significant in English in Year 9 and for the overall average points score in GCSE examinations.
4. In Years 7 to 9, standards of work are below national expectations. They are well below average in English, geography and music. However, in mathematics, ICT and physical education they are broadly in line with the nationally expected levels. Standards seen during lessons and in samples of pupils' work generally reflect below-average performance. Achievement by the end of Year 9 is broadly satisfactory. However, the picture is variable. Achievement is good in science, ICT, design and technology, physical education and religious education. It is unsatisfactory in English and music. Achievement in the basic skills of literacy is unsatisfactory, but it is satisfactory in mathematics.
5. In Years 10 and 11, standards continue to be below nationally expected levels. Standards in ICT and physical education are in line with expectations. Overall achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. The difference in levels of achievement between the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11 is due to the variability in the attitudes of the pupils and insufficient consistency in monitoring of progress.
6. Gifted and talented pupils are not appropriately challenged by the work in some lessons and, in consequence, are not reaching their full potential. However, there are exceptions and lessons in science develop the potential of the most able pupils.

7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs) and their statements of particular needs. In mathematics, science, design and technology and physical education, pupils with special educational needs achieve particularly well. They also achieve well in modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9. In English, their achievement is satisfactory and this is better than their peers. However, the achievement of these pupils is unsatisfactory in music and religious education.
8. GCSE examination results in 2004 show that over half of those on the school's list of pupils with special educational needs attained at least five A* to G grade passes and all attained at least one A* to G grade pass.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Attendance rates are **below average** but are comparable to similar schools. Exclusion levels are relatively low. Attitudes and behaviour are **satisfactory**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many pupils have good attitudes to learning.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are often good.
- Poor attendance of some pupils has a detrimental effect on achievement.
- The learning support unit has brought about significant reductions in the number of exclusions.

Commentary

9. Attendance rates are below average and have a negative impact on the achievement of some pupils. In the autumn term only Year 7 achieved attendance rates above 90 per cent. The school has made significant efforts to improve attendance, but attendance rates have not improved significantly. 'First-day calling' has been introduced but, unusually, this has not been successful in raising attendance rates. Much effort is made to analyse attendance figures but the records produced are not always useful. For example, attendance has not been rigorously monitored in terms of gender, academic ability or achievement. The computerised registration system is not used to its full effect to reduce truancy and improve attendance. Pupils with poor records of attendance are identified and encouraged to attend school regularly. The school appreciates the very good support it receives from the educational welfare service.
10. Punctuality is unsatisfactory. Some pupils just drift into school in the morning and some are dilatory about getting to lessons. However, most pupils enjoy coming to school. They join in activities and are enthusiastic about sport and practical lessons.
11. Attitudes to learning are satisfactory and attitudes in class are often good. There are often good relationships between teachers and pupils, based on good humour and respect. This assists the good management of pupils' behaviour and helps the pupils gain confidence. Sometimes, pupils continue to behave well, even when the lesson is

not demanding and they are clearly bored. However, others are not highly motivated and this can contribute to unsatisfactory achievement.

12. Behaviour is satisfactory. Most pupils behave appropriately around the school. The majority have good manners and hold doors open and say 'please' and 'thank you'. There are a small minority who act inappropriately in crowded areas and can be physically boisterous. Pupils report that racism is not a significant issue. The school has good quality policies in place and carefully records and reports racist incidents. The school takes positive steps to address incidents of bullying.
13. The recently established learning support unit has been used effectively to bring down exclusion rates by working with those pupils at risk of being excluded. Staff in the unit ensure that sanctions are applied while pupils continue to be actively involved in learning. New programmes are being followed, designed to bring about positive changes in behaviour in younger pupils. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in the unit are good. Pupils have access to a good range of teachers who are subject specialists and a fairly balanced curriculum. Staffing is generous and there is room to develop the team further. It is too early to judge the full impact of the unit but enthusiastic management has the capacity for continuing innovation and improvement.
14. Assemblies taken by the headteacher have a strong social and moral theme. 'Thought for the day' is used well to create interest and promote understanding and most pupils listen well.
15. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Spiritual education is addressed well in religious education and pupils have opportunities to explore the values and beliefs of a wide range of religions. Spirituality is especially strongly developed amongst the pupils with special educational needs, including those with physical disabilities, as the school promotes a strong sense of self-worth.
16. Moral development is satisfactory. Pupils are keen to raise funds for charity and have contributed well to Tsunami appeals. They clearly know the difference between right and wrong. This is particularly emphasised in the work of the learning support unit. Moral considerations, such as the use of renewable resources, are sensibly discussed in lessons such as geography and design and technology. Social development is satisfactory. Citizenship makes a significant contribution to social development. Pupils of all abilities have opportunities to develop responsibility and initiative. Physically disabled pupils are given every opportunity to participate in school life. The appreciation of multi-cultural aspects of society through work in lessons has helped pupils to value cultural diversity.
17. In normal lessons, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs are generally no different to those of their peers/classmates. Where teaching assistants are present to support pupils with special educational needs, this is accepted well by all and other pupils often take advantage of their presence to seek extra help themselves. Year 11 pupils with statements of special educational need are particularly appreciative of the help, support and guidance they have received from the learning support staff throughout their time in school.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	801	44	4
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	26	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	6	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	29	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	1	0	0

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

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.6	School data	2.6
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The curricular provision is satisfactory and extra-curriculum provision is good. The provision for resources and accommodation is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is **satisfactory**. The general level of learning is **satisfactory**. Pupils have a variety of attitudes to learning: some are keen and interested, but others can be disruptive and unhelpful. Assessment procedures are **unsatisfactory**. There are inconsistencies in the monitoring of pupils' progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' knowledge of their subjects helps to promote and develop pupils' skills effectively.
- The active encouragement of some teachers helps to motivate pupils and leads to satisfactory productivity.
- Not all teachers follow the school's guidance on how to manage pupils' behaviour.
- Teaching methods are not effectively enough matched to pupils' levels of ability.
- The homework policy is not effectively implemented in departments; this hinders pupils' achievement.
- Assessment, including marking, is not used to satisfactory effect by all teachers to raise attainment.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 119 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (%)	13 (11%)	44 (37%)	50 (42%)	9 (8%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)

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

18. Teaching and learning are good in science, design and technology, physical education and religious education, and satisfactory in most other subjects. Weaknesses in the teaching of English and in a few classes in mathematics have adversely affected learning and older pupils are still not achieving as well as they should. However, these weaknesses have been identified and analysed and the school's management has taken positive measures to remedy the situation. On balance, therefore, despite these variations between subjects, the quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory and is likely to improve.
19. The hallmark of the teaching in the school is the lack of consistency. In the better lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and provide sufficient challenge to make appropriate demands, both intellectual and creative, on pupils. In these situations, pupils produce work of good quality. For example, in science lessons, teachers give clear explanations about important scientific ideas and about what pupils are expected to do and stress the importance of scientific enquiry. Teachers use resources well. The best teaching in ICT is characterised by the good use of interactive whiteboards to model ideas.
20. When pupils are motivated and interested, they learn well. For example, in art and design lessons, teachers stimulate learning through effective questioning, ensuring that pupils remain on task and indicating how pupils might improve. Where pupils are praised and encouraged, they learn effectively. For example, in a Year 11 physical education lesson on aerobics, there was a good level of involvement because of the motivating tactics used by the teacher.
21. The unsatisfactory teaching mainly occurs when teachers try to teach material that is not suited to the ability of pupils, where lessons lack sufficient challenge or pace or where they are poorly prepared. These factors in turn lead to pupils becoming confused and bored and then they start to misbehave. This happened in some mathematics and English lessons.
22. The inappropriate nature of the work set in some lessons reflects the low expectations of the teacher and the consequent lack of challenge contributes to the unsatisfactory

achievement of pupils. In PSHE lessons, pupils are too passive and this leads to a lack of involvement and engagement with the expectations of the programme.

23. There is widespread inconsistency in setting homework and in the quality of marking, particularly in English, mathematics and history. In design and technology, there is insufficient use of ICT to support the important aspects of pupils' learning.
24. Teachers have copies of pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) as well as very useful summary information provided about each pupil on the school's list of those with special educational needs. As a result, teachers are well aware of the needs of these pupils. Targets in the IEPs are precise, thus helping teachers plan to meet these widely varying needs. The targets are particularly helpful for the specialist support teachers working with the lower-achieving English and mathematics sets. In English, this enables pupils with special educational needs to achieve better than their peers. In some subjects, such as ICT and PE, teachers provide well-chosen and sensitive additional support and stimulus to enable these pupils to make good progress. Teaching assistants also provide effective and skilful support.

Assessment

25. The assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. There is now a whole-school assessment policy and the school has comprehensive information about pupils' attainment. This has been made available to all teachers and they have recently received training on how to interpret it. In some subjects, such as science, modern languages, physical education, history and religious education, the information is used well to track pupils' progress and set targets. In these subjects, pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work and they are often involved in evaluating their own and each other's work. However, this is not the case in all subjects and, in English, mathematics, ICT, art and design and music, the use of assessment information is unsatisfactory and does not inform pupils sufficiently about their progress or enable them to understand how to improve.
26. Insufficient use is made of assessment in planning to meet the needs of individual pupils. Assessment information is used to place pupils in teaching groups in Year 7 and this arrangement works well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and enables them to achieve well. Pupils are placed in groups according to their prior attainment. However, these arrangements are not always accurate for the majority of subjects and most groups contain a wide ability range. Teachers do not always take this into account and set general targets rather than plan for individual pupils or for much smaller groups. As a result, individual pupils do not achieve as they should. In many subjects, the quality of marking does little to help pupils improve. It is cursory or unhelpful and, in some cases, gives pupils an over-optimistic idea of how well they are doing. There has been insufficient improvement in assessment since the last inspection, when it was identified as a weakness.

The curriculum

The overall curricular provision is **satisfactory**. It is good in Years 10 and 11 where the varying needs of pupils from a range of backgrounds are well met. The provision for enrichment activities is good. Accommodation and resource provision are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curricular development since the previous inspection has broadened the range of courses available.
- There is very good provision in modern foreign languages.
- In-school opportunities for learning outside the school day are good.
- The extra-curricular provision in sport is good.
- Good planning for continuity gives all pupils equality of access and opportunity to participate in what the school offers, including those with special educational needs.
- The statutory requirement for ICT in art and design and music is not met in Years 7 - 9.

Commentary

27. The curriculum is appropriately matched to the varying needs of the pupils of the school. The physical education programme has particular breadth and balance, as recognised by the Sportsmark Award in 2003. The provision for modern foreign languages is very good. Two languages are available for the majority of pupils in Years 7 - 9. Early GCSE entry for gifted and talented pupils gives them access to AS-level courses in Year 11. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Teaching time has been increased and concerns over the length of time available for physical education have been addressed. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has been developed and includes vocational elements. ICT is now taught throughout the school and no pupils are disallowed from the National Curriculum. The 15-minute registration period, which begins most school days, is still rarely well used.
28. The curriculum in Years 7 - 9 is satisfactory. The normal requirements of the National Curriculum have been enriched by the provision of drama. Effective curricular links in English and mathematics smooth the transition from primary school. The statutory requirements for ICT in music and art and design are not being met.
29. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is now much broader. The range of applied GCSE courses available at the school or at two local colleges gives greater choice than at the time of the previous inspection. A small number of pupils in both years, including some who might otherwise have been at risk of exclusion and others who might struggle with purely academic programmes, benefit from links with external agencies. Other alternative pathways, including NVQ, are supported through courses offered by local colleges or training providers, using 'Increased Flexibility' funding. Individual pupils are well supported by mentors funded through the Excellence in Cities programme. A range of further courses is being explored. The provision for religious education suffers from a lack of teaching time and there are no courses leading to external examinations in this subject.
30. The specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They all have full and equal access to the curriculum and are fully involved in the life of the school. Alongside the traditional range of GCSE courses on offer, there are some other accredited courses as well as vocational courses to meet the full ability range of pupils in Years 10 and 11. Younger pupils have access to special support with literacy through the use of commercially produced ICT software. There are also social skills programmes for selected groups of pupils. The strong ethos of involvement and support for pupils with special educational needs has a positive impact on the social development and learning experience of these pupils as well as on those of all other pupils in the school. They have access to support in the learning resource centre before and during school.

31. Provision for pupils with special educational needs across subjects is good, particularly in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, modern foreign languages and physical education. Link teachers keep departments fully informed of issues regarding special educational needs.
32. The satisfactory provision for work-related learning and careers education and the links with local colleges help prepare pupils for later stages of education or for employment. Access to the provision is generally open to all pupils. The option groups used in Years 10 and 11 are built after pupils have selected their courses and satisfy the needs of a very high proportion of them.
33. The quality of provision for personal, social and health education has declined since the previous inspection and is now unsatisfactory. This is mainly because there is no co-ordinator for the subject. The curriculum is not adequately monitored and there is no guarantee that pupils are being taught the required elements of sex and drugs education.
34. A good range of extra-curricular activities provides support for learning outside the school day. There are breakfast and homework clubs. Many subject departments offer revision, extension or catch-up programmes, especially for pupils in Years 9 and 11. The learning mentors are involved in the weekly programme, which also includes sessions specifically targeted at gifted and talented students. There are good levels of participation in a wide variety of sporting activities and a range of social and cultural provision gives opportunities for pupils to take part in activities such as musical and drama productions.
35. The match of teaching staff to the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory. There are sufficient qualified and specialist teachers in most subjects. Effective measures have been taken to cover long-term absences. The provision of support staff is good. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good specialist teachers, teaching assistants, physiotherapists and learning mentors. Support staff are very enthusiastic and committed and their effective deployment ensures the curricular needs of these pupils are met. The 'barrier-free' unit is very well staffed.
36. The accommodation is satisfactory, although the school is increasingly overcrowded as the number of pupils increases. There are adequate outdoor areas but staircases and corridors are narrow and congested between lessons. Accommodation for art, history, modern foreign languages and ICT is good but the music practice rooms are cramped and are not sound-proofed. The school is the local education authority's dedicated mainstream school for pupils with physical disabilities and has been modified to provide access to all areas for these pupils, as well as for visitors to the school who have physical disabilities. There are good ICT resources in the learning support faculty to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs. The premises suffer little vandalism or graffiti and the site manager, caretaker and cleaning staff maintain the premises in good order, almost litter-free.
37. The resources are generally satisfactory. They are good in mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, ICT and music but unsatisfactory in English and in design and technology. The way in which departments' spending on resources is linked to their improvement plans is a strength.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare and safety are **satisfactory**. Appropriate support advice and guidance are provided for pupils. There is **satisfactory** involvement of pupils in the school's work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils value the personal support offered by learning mentors.
- Year 11 pupils have good access to objective careers advice.
- Care and support for the most vulnerable pupils is good.
- Health and safety procedures are in need of improvement.

Commentary

38. Locally agreed procedures are followed regarding child protection and looked-after children are carefully monitored and supported. Pupils with significant problems are well known to staff and care and support for the most vulnerable pupils are good. Staffing problems have led to a decline in quality of health and safety procedures. In particular, routines for whole-school risk assessments are no longer followed. This is not satisfactory. Procedures for recording accidents need to be re-assessed.
39. Most pupils say that they have an adult in school that they can turn to if they have a problem, although this may not always be the form tutor. Progress in subjects is regularly assessed and, although some of this assessment is flawed, there are adequate procedures to identify and support pupils who are very likely to underachieve. In addition, subject departments run popular booster classes, coursework clinics and revision groups. Staff and pupils value the effective work of the learning mentors. Pupil referral procedures have improved and are now based on a discussion forum involving pastoral staff. Vulnerable pupils are well supported. Year 7 pupils appreciate the personal support given to them from Year 10 pupil mentors.
40. Induction procedures are satisfactory. Appropriate information is collected from the primary schools and used to ensure that new pupils are appropriately supported. Pupils have the opportunity to visit the school and experience lessons before they enter Year 7 but they do not meet their form tutor and form mates until their first day at secondary school. However, they reported having few anxieties about starting secondary school. An effective programme designed to help pupils deal with day-to-day life at secondary school is followed in form time.
41. Careers education is satisfactory but there is insufficient formal recording of the curriculum to ensure progression and continuity. Vulnerable pupils are well supported and all older pupils have good access to objective advice. The careers library contains a satisfactory range of information and is administered by pupils who do a good job of keeping it neat tidy and up to date. Careers education is enhanced by good links with *Connexions* and most pupils have the opportunity to experience a good quality work experience placement. Pupils in Year 11 are beginning to form realistic plans about future careers.
42. Pupils are consulted about their views through regular questionnaires. The school council also provides an effective forum for pupils to air their views. Most teachers listen to pupils and welcome their views and ideas. The school has very effective relationships with outside specialist agencies that extend the support and guidance available to pupils with special educational needs. Annual reviews of statements of special educational need are effective in setting and reviewing targets as they move

through the school. Parents' and pupils' views are taken into account at the reviews and at parents' evenings. The school fully meets the curricular requirements identified in the statements.

43. A wide range of assessment data enables leadership and management to guide the appropriate placement of pupils on the school's list of pupils with special educational needs and track their progress.
44. When appropriate, pupils with special educational needs also benefit from the work of learning mentors. Pupils with physical disabilities in the 'barrier-free' unit benefit from high-quality extra specialist provision and support. This includes provision by qualified physiotherapists and support for pupils' toileting and other needs throughout the day. These measures enable pupils to take a full part in the life of the school.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

The school has **satisfactory** links with parents. Links with the local community and with other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Newsletters are of very good quality.
- Links with feeder primary schools are good.
- Reports do not give a clear indication of progress in learning.

Commentary

45. Well-presented and very interesting and readable newsletters keep parents fully informed about the life of the school. The governors' report to parents and the prospectus are of good quality, meet statutory requirements and contain much useful information. There are regular events to inform parents about general issues such as drugs or how they can help their children in particular subject areas. Unfortunately, these events are not well attended and sometimes potentially valuable occasions, like the one on special educational needs, have to be cancelled through lack of support. In addition, there are appropriate parents' evenings where parents can discuss their children's progress with teachers. Written reports to parents about their children's progress are of unsatisfactory quality. They focus too often on pupils' attitudes to learning rather than on what they know, understand and can do, and the progress they have made. The targets set are often much too vague to be useful. Copies of reports are not retained by the school, which limits the access of information about pupils for references and transfers to other schools.
46. The local community association uses the school for weekly events and relationships between the school and the local community are cordial. Links with the local Rotary Club have reinforced the school's extensive fundraising efforts and its links with the local community. The physical education department has good links with local sports clubs, whose coaches help to improve the quality and range of provision for pupils. Local employers are helpful and provide work experience for many pupils. Links with local churches and Christian groups are strong and these are used well to provide extra support for more vulnerable pupils.

47. Links with local primary schools are good. There are curricular links in English, mathematics and science and strong links through the physical education department. Effective communication and planning during the transfer period help pupils, including those with special educational needs to settle quickly. Procedures regarding the transfer of information for pupils joining or leaving school after the usual start date are satisfactory. The school is working with other local secondary schools through the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) to raise standards and improve achievement. There are satisfactory links with colleges that ensure that pupils have accurate information about the post-16 opportunities available. Links with local universities give pupils a taste of university life and help to raise pupils' aspirations.
48. There are effective links between the learning support faculty and the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents attend annual reviews of the progress made by pupils with statements of their particular need and their views are recorded. Hence they are fully involved in decisions relating to their child's progress towards the targets set and are well informed. Parents and pupils are also involved in the setting and review of targets on IEPs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The school is effectively led but there are some inefficiencies in management. The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory. There is a good and supportive team ethos. There is satisfactory administration of the school. Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are satisfactory but they are not systematically implemented in all departments. The overall governance of the school is **satisfactory**. Governors are involved in strategic planning but are not so involved in monitoring and evaluating the impact of developments on standards. The financial management of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher has provided a clear direction for the school but this has not been consistently translated into practice.
- Senior managers and most middle managers carry out their delegated roles appropriately.
- The co-ordination and management of cross-curricular ICT, music and the PSHE programme are unsatisfactory.
- The leadership and management of the learning support faculty are very good.
- Financial management is very good; it is efficient and supports effective decision-making.

Commentary

49. The headteacher has provided a clear sense of direction for the school. He has successfully created an ethos that builds upon the principles of respect for the individual and a commitment to improve standards. However, there has been insufficient consistency within the system to sustain expected levels of improvement in standards of performance. To some extent, this has been attributed to problems of recruitment, leading to stop-gap measures. Equally, however, there has been insufficient rigour in the monitoring of the work of departments by senior managers and heads of department.

50. Developments in the school are based upon the very good quality of financial planning and control. This is reflected in the detailed and effective monitoring of the budget and strategic planning related to such issues as the impact of workforce reforms. The school improvement plan is closely linked to budgetary allocations. The plan clearly identifies whole-school priorities, such as raising standards, improving the curriculum and focusing upon the quality of teaching and learning.
51. The senior management team is ably supported by the headteacher. The team works well together and shows a firm commitment to the objectives of the school. Quality assurance procedures and data collection are comprehensive and support the intention to improve standards. For each subject, targets are drawn up with clear criteria so that success or otherwise can be measured. However, there has been a lack of coherence in the way departments have responded to these initiatives.
52. The overall governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors show commitment and are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work. They support the school well and have been particularly active in promoting improvements to the school's building and the surrounding environment. Governors have been encouraged to become more proactive in monitoring and evaluating the overall provision. The governing body has a good working relationship with the staff. The information given in the annual report is relevant and meets statutory requirements. However, statutory requirements are not met in relation to the ICT provision in some subjects or to the provision of daily acts of collective worship. There has been no recent risk assessment audit taken.
53. The quality of middle management is satisfactory. There are examples of effective management in a variety of contexts within the school. These are primarily in the areas of the learning support faculty, science, physical education and religious education. There are weaknesses in some subjects which require attention. These relate to the co-ordination and management of English, music, the PSHE programme and cross-curricular development of ICT. A more general feature is the need to achieve greater consistency in the use of assessment data in order to make the monitoring of pupils' work more effective.
54. Arrangements for performance management are satisfactory. Teachers are aware of their strengths and weaknesses but further development is required to improve the monitoring and evaluation of teachers' work. A structured programme of focused lesson observations, analysis of planning documents and review meetings is in place. Generally this works well in identifying areas of concern and strategies for supporting staff. However, the underachievement of some groups of pupils and associated behavioural problems indicate that the impact of this programme has been variable. Arrangements for the support of newly qualified teachers are good. The effects of in-service training are appropriately evaluated. All staff, including financial, administrative and site-management staff, are involved in training and make a significant contribution to the work of the school.
55. The school pays due regard to the Code of Practice for special educational needs and statutory requirements are met.
56. Leadership and management of the learning support faculty are very good. This has resulted in a very good whole-school ethos for the inclusion and support of pupils with

special educational needs. Leadership has ensured that this approach has a high profile and that staff are fully involved in pursuing it. There are good plans for future provision and development planning is well linked to whole-school areas for improvement.

57. Management has ensured teaching assistants are deployed effectively to provide the required support for all pupils with special educational needs and this ensures that they receive the breadth and level of support required. Teachers who have responsibility for special educational needs in these areas teach lower-attaining sets in English and mathematics. The monitoring and evaluation of the work of the support staff are well embedded, as they are included in the appraisal system. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3,025,417
Total expenditure	2,985,716
Expenditure per pupil	3,317

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	157,708
Balance carried forward to the next year	197,409

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 **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, although there are examples of good teaching and learning.
- The standards of boys are lower than those of girls.
- Pupils are unaware of their standards and it is not made clear to them how they are to improve.

Commentary

58. The 2004 results indicate standards that are well below average in both GCSE and the standard assessment tests. The trend over the last three years is inconsistent, although there is some improvement in standards at the end of Year 11. However, standards of work seen are still well below nationally expected levels.
59. Unsatisfactory identification of pupils' standards and target-setting that reflects low expectations have contributed to less-than-expected achievement in most year groups. The relatively new heads of faculty appreciate the problems and have started to analyse pupils' performance data more thoroughly. They plan to monitor marking, match work more closely to pupils' needs and structure classes, teaching and resources to improve standards. Pupils with special educational needs achieve better than their peers because of focused teaching, assessment and support. Boys achieve less well than girls because of lower expectations and some unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour.
60. Standards by the end of Year 9 are well below levels expected nationally. Pupils have developed a good spoken vocabulary. However, they cannot write as well as they can read and speak. By Year 11, pupils can analyse text but their critical thinking is under-developed. They cannot spell accurately and boys' literacy skills are a barrier to learning. Speaking and listening skills are not well developed; pupils sometimes interrupt, without regard for the listener.
61. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. In Year 9, a good lesson inspired the pupils because of a fast pace, clear structure and variety and the

teacher's clear expectations. In contrast, in a Year 10 lesson, a slower pace and ineffective classroom management led to unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour, which meant that little learning took place. Gaps in pupils' work are not always remedied. This adversely affects standards and discourages pupils from taking pride in their work. Poor attendance is having an adverse effect upon the progress of some pupils.

62. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory, although elements of management need improvement. The relatively new heads of faculty are working to improve standards but assessment problems, inappropriate work to match individual needs and inadequate resources are barriers to achievement. There is insufficient use of and access to ICT. Assessment is not used sufficiently well to set clear targets for pupils; pupils are not sure how to improve on their work. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory because of lower standards and unsatisfactory achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. Low standards in literacy are a barrier to learning, particularly for boys. Writing is a weaker area when pupils come into the school. Speaking and listening skills are also weak. For many pupils, their reading is hesitant and stilted. Departments such as special educational needs, history and modern foreign languages work well to improve pupils' basic skills. The National Literacy Strategy is not used effectively enough. In particular, the 'catch-up' programme to help pupils to move from Level 3 to 4 is not organised effectively or monitored closely enough.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good command of the languages they teach.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive, they have good relationships with their teachers and behaviour is good.
- The curricular provision in modern foreign languages is very good.
- Procedures for assessment are good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good and effective action has been taken to raise standards in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils achieve well.

Commentary

64. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards attained in GCSE results have improved significantly since the last inspection and have continued to rise steadily year on year.
65. GCSE results in 2004 were below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining A* to C grades was below average in French and well below average in German. The proportion of pupils attaining A* to G grades was broadly average. However, a higher proportion of pupils was entered for examination in French and German than is the case nationally, so that comparisons with national figures are unreliable. Most pupils achieved in accordance with their predicted grades in examinations.

66. Results in 2004 were significantly better than in 2003. As a whole, standards have risen and continue to rise steadily.
67. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are below national expectations, but pupils achieve satisfactorily. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievement. By Year 9, pupils can describe events in the past, present and future and express simple opinions. In Years 7 and 8, in both French and Spanish, all pupils are confident in speaking and listening; they respond promptly and appropriately to questions. Instructions are given in both languages and average and higher-attaining pupils speak at length and in detail about themselves and can find out similar information from others. Pupils with special educational needs and lower-attaining pupils also make good progress and, in Years 7 and 8, are keen to participate in oral work, giving brief answers to questions. Standards of literacy are below expectations and this sometimes hinders pupils' achievement when the emphasis in lessons is predominantly on reading and writing. However, standards are rising significantly in Years 7 and 8 and are close to levels expected nationally. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are below expectations; pupils achieve satisfactorily. By Year 11, pupils can write at length and in some detail. They can identify the main points from extracts of speech and short texts but most have difficulty identifying detail. In German and French, they respond promptly and appropriately to questions, referring to notes to help them. However, they do not link or compare and contrast their ideas readily and the range of language and structures they can use from memory is limited. Although progress in lessons is satisfactory, the achievement of some pupils in Years 10 and 11 has been adversely affected by recent staffing difficulties.
68. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers share lesson objectives with pupils and use starter activities very well. As a result, pupils are clear about what is expected and consolidate previous learning effectively. Pupils have good relationships with their teachers; they are concerned to do well and are not afraid of making mistakes. Teachers have a very good command of the languages they teach and use them effectively to conduct activities. Pupils therefore benefit from very good role-models and their listening skills are well developed as a result. Opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge higher attainers to interpret more complex or unfamiliar language for others and further develop listening techniques. Lessons are well planned, with appropriate and well sequenced activities so that pupils build effectively on previous learning, but planning for the progress of groups of pupils of differing ability in lessons, particularly the higher-attaining pupils, is not always detailed enough. Teachers monitor pupils' progress closely and give help where necessary but lower-attaining pupils have difficulty with listening activities because they are not always given appropriate support. New language is presented clearly using visual cues and the interactive whiteboard so that pupils rapidly understand and use the language successfully themselves. Pupils clearly enjoy taking part in games and work very well in group and paired work activities. It is during these activities that pupils make the best progress and gain in confidence. Pupils are well behaved and well motivated but, on the few occasions when they are not directly involved in activities or find tasks too difficult, they lose concentration and interest and the pace of learning slows for all pupils. Marking is regular and thorough and gives clear guidance about how to improve. Pupils are involved in evaluating their own work and that of others in lessons and this is having a positive impact upon standards achieved. New course materials have been successfully introduced in Years 7 to 9 and, although this has only happened recently, standards have already improved significantly. Lower-

attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils are well supported and make good progress in lessons.

69. Leadership and management are good. Curricular provision is very good. All pupils have the opportunity to study two languages and pupils benefit from contact with French and German native speakers in lessons. The department makes appropriate arrangements for gifted and talented linguists to achieve their potential. The use of ICT is being effectively developed in lessons for both teaching and learning, but the development of independent learning is restricted by the lack of appropriate subject-specific software in the school and unsatisfactory access to computers in lessons. Teaching and learning are monitored and the department works well together as a team to share ideas and spread good practice. However, there is not sufficient detail in the guidance given in schemes of work about what is expected of groups of differing ability so that sometimes pupils find work too easy or too difficult. Assessment information is analysed and appropriate strategies are put into place to raise standards. The department has continued to build upon its good practice in using assessment and is now leading the way in involving pupils in evaluating their own and each other's work against the National Curriculum's levels and GCSE grade criteria. As a result, pupils know how to improve and regularly track and plan their own progress in detail. However, since setting and banding arrangements are not flexible enough to allow pupils to change groups easily, the majority of teaching groups contain a wide ability range. The head of department has a clear idea of strengths and weaknesses and development planning is clearly focused upon raising standards. Staffing difficulties have hindered progress but now these difficulties have been resolved, the department has good capacity to improve further.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of achievement by the age of 16 are too low.
- There has been good improvement in standards of attainment at the age of 14.
- The marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.
- There is a lack of challenge in work set for middle-ability pupils.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils behave well in lessons.
- There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning.

Commentary

70. In 2004, standards attained in national tests at the end of Year 9 were in line with the national average, although above the average for schools with similar levels of prior attainment. Results at this level show a good improvement upon those of previous years. There was no significant difference between the attainment levels of boys and girls. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment by the age of 14 is in line

with national expectations. Overall, achievement is satisfactory but some under-achievement is noticeable in some middle-ability sets. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

71. The percentage of pupils obtaining GCSE grades A* to C in 2004 was well below the national average and well below the average when compared with similar schools. The performance of girls was better than that of the boys. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment and achievement by the age of 16 remain below national expectations.
72. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. In the period since the last inspection there have been staffing difficulties that have not been fully resolved and these are having a damaging effect on the quality of teaching. There is some good and very good teaching within the department but the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons is too high. Where unsatisfactory teaching occurs, pupils are set work that does not motivate or challenge them. This is particularly noticeable in some middle-ability groups where insufficient account is taken of the wide range of ability within the group. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in the top sets, where behaviour is good and pupils are motivated to succeed. These pupils also have the opportunity to gain extra accreditation by following the GCSE course in statistics. Teachers of lower-ability classes are aware of individual education plans that are provided for pupils with special educational needs and good use is made of teaching support assistants. Pupils at all levels are not receiving sufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology as part of the learning process.
73. Pupils relate well to their teachers and are willing to contribute to class discussion and questioning. When given the opportunity to do so, pupils share ideas and are able to work independently. Behaviour in lessons is good and only deteriorates when there is a lack of challenge in the work set.
74. Assessment is unsatisfactory. The marking of pupils' work is irregular and, in some cases, almost non-existent. Some teachers provide comments that encourage pupils and give constructive feedback but there are too many instances of incomplete marking and little or no feedback following completion of homework. There is often a lack of follow-up when poor work is presented and sometimes accepted. Pupils' prior attainment is used as a basis for planning lessons but it is not used effectively to set targets or monitor progress.
75. Leadership of the department is satisfactory, although aspects of management are unsatisfactory. The head of department is committed to raising standards but has had to contend with major difficulties in staffing. Recruitment has proved difficult and there are inexperienced colleagues who require support and guidance. The Head of Faculty observes lessons in order to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and there is some monitoring of assessment procedures, but the quality of marking is too variable.
76. Very good classroom displays raise the spirits and help overcome the effect of some cramped accommodation. There are few computers allocated to the department and access to the ICT rooms is a major problem. As a consequence, the department does not comply with statutory requirements regarding the use of this technology. The department is otherwise well resourced with regard to books, materials and equipment.

77. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Standards of achievement at GCSE level remain low and there is a greater proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. The staffing difficulties over recent years have been a major handicap to learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

78. Provision is satisfactory. The National Numeracy Strategy has been embraced within the teaching of mathematics and is being effectively implemented across all teaching groups. The numeracy co-ordinator provides support and advice for colleagues in all departments. The geography department in particular has welcomed this support and has produced a numeracy booklet that is extensively used.
79. Pupils are able to apply their numeracy skills in most subject areas. In geography, for example, pupils use and interpret statistical data; they are able to draw graphs and use scale measurements. In art and design, pupils show an understanding of perspective and are able to work to scale. In science, pupils measure accurately and display an understanding of linear graphs and their interpretation.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations are steadily improving.
- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well as a result.
- Teachers and support staff work well together as a team.
- Assessment is well used to monitor and track pupils' performance.
- Literacy and numeracy are well taught, resulting in better standards.
- Marking in Years 7, 8 and 9 is not sufficiently detailed or supportive.
- Boys perform relatively worse than girls in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

80. National Curriculum test results in Year 9 in 2004 were below the national average. They were also below average in terms of what might have been expected from pupils' prior attainment. Results in 2004 were an improvement on those of 2003. In 2004, the percentage of pupils achieving grades A* to C in the GCSE double award science examinations was below the national average. However, there has been a consistent improvement in pass rates over the previous three years. The latest GCSE results represent good achievement for the 2004 cohort.
81. Pupils enter the school with attainment which is well below average. In particular, low level literacy skills act as an initial barrier to learning. Many pupils, for example, are unable to spell scientific words correctly and this holds them back in their scientific understanding. However, as the result of predominantly good teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9, they make good progress so that, by the time they are in Year 9, standards improve to below national expectations. Many lessons concentrate on improving pupils' literacy skills. For example, in a lesson on the rock cycle, pupils were encouraged to write a story explaining how rock types are formed by natural processes. This helped their skills in literacy as well as improving their competence in the topic. Skills in scientific enquiry improve across this age range because most lessons involve pupils doing some experimental work. Current standards represent

good achievement for these pupils in relation to their starting point. Standards of work in Year 11 are also below expectations; this represents satisfactory achievement because pupils have maintained the progress seen in earlier years. For example, higher-attaining Year 11 pupils had a good understanding of the factors that affect inheritance. They could explain coherently how recessive and dominant genes determine the proportion of offspring with particular characteristics. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in their lessons because of the good support they receive from teachers and learning assistants. Although, in the past, boys have performed worse than girls in their examinations, the department is introducing a range of strategies designed to counteract this. For example, some pupils are entered for GCSE single award science in Year 10 and this has had the effect of improving boys' interest and motivation in the subject, leading to improved results.

82. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and objectives are made clear to pupils. The use of electronic whiteboards is improving the range of teaching aids, leading to better, more focused teaching and learning. Assessment is used well. For example, in Year 9, the department uses data from test results to plan the best ways of helping pupils who are under-achieving. However, in Years 7, 8 and 9, day-to-day marking is not effective in identifying pupils' strengths and weaknesses or in showing them how to improve. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and generally pupils respond positively, leading to better learning.
83. Leadership and management are good. There are good plans to improve standards and an effective team of teachers and support staff who are striving to do so. The department functions efficiently on a day-to-day basis.
84. Since the previous inspection, improvement has been good. Teaching and learning have improved, leading to better standards. The department is in a good position to move forward.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE examination results are too low.
- Because teachers know their subject very well, have high expectations of behaviour and control their classes well, pupils are learning well and making good progress.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work during lessons.
- Methods of assessing pupils' work are not sufficiently comprehensive to provide useful information to support raising standards.

Commentary

85. By the end of Year 9, standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils arrive at the school with varying levels of ability and experience, and standards are generally below average. During Years 7, 8 and 9 they develop a range of ICT skills because they have interesting lessons using good ICT resources. Their achievement during these years is good. The results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were poor. Less than one fifth of pupils entered gained the higher grades. Whilst standards have risen over the last three years, they remain too low because the level of improvement is

insufficient. A new, optional vocational course has been introduced for pupils in their last two years at the school. The standard of work in GCSE classes is in line with national expectations. A new team of teachers is more rigorous in their approach and is teaching the courses effectively. All other pupils study ICT for one lesson each week. Current standards in these courses are in line with expectations.

86. The overall quality of teaching is good; sometimes it is very good. Teachers know their subject very well, plan lessons carefully, use interesting resources, have high expectations in terms of acceptable behaviour and control pupils very well. These features promote a good response from the pupils who, as a consequence, enjoy their lessons and learn well. They are making good progress and developing the skills and confidence to use ICT in a range of contexts. In a Year 7 lesson, a group of lower-attaining pupils enjoyed learning about computer control by acting out a number of events before using the computers to design more complex control sequences. Pupils in a Year 9 lesson responded well to their work, designing promotional materials for a theatre. Samples of real posters and leaflets provided a stimulating start to their study and generated meaningful discussion and evaluations. In a Year 10 lesson, because the teacher had very good control and the pupils' behaviour was very good, she was able to work with a group of higher-attaining pupils and challenge their understanding of how to design a spreadsheet to meet a specific need.
87. There is a new team of teachers and the head of department took up her post only three weeks before the inspection. She has good plans for the future, very high expectations and considerable experience and expertise. However, at the time of inspection, leadership and management were unsatisfactory, as much needs to be done if standards are to be raised. A key weakness is the way in which pupils' work is assessed. Assessment is not sufficiently systematic. Teachers do not use the range of methods of assessment available. As a consequence, pupils do not receive sufficient information and guidance about how to improve their work and teachers do not gain the necessary data needed to evaluate their work.
88. Two technicians provide effective support for the ICT systems throughout the school. They ensure that the good level of resources is well maintained. There are very good safeguards to protect pupils and staff from inappropriate use of the Internet.
89. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory despite a number of recent improvements. The quality and level of resources have improved. There is a new team of teachers, new courses are available up to GCSE level and all pupils are studying ICT. However, these have not yet had sufficient influence on raising standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

90. The use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. It is not sufficiently established in some subjects, such as mathematics. The school does not ensure that all pupils are using ICT to improve their achievement in all subjects. Good use of ICT is seen in science and physical education. In modern foreign language lessons, the pupils' use of the interactive whiteboard develops their skills and confidence. In design and technology, the lack of suitable equipment prevents pupils from learning about computer-aided design and manufacture.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have not been high enough.
- Some pupils continue to underachieve.
- Self-evaluation is now more thorough and rigorous. The department knows what is needed to raise standards.
- The subject's contribution to literacy, numeracy and citizenship is very good.

Commentary

91. Standards have not been high enough. Pockets of underachievement continue to exist. Most pupils who enter the school in Year 7 have very limited awareness of the world in which they live. The results of the recently introduced baseline test indicated that pupils in Year 7 had reached National Curriculum levels which are higher than those observed in the work seen during the inspection. By Year 9, teachers are better informed of pupils' progress than they were at the time of the previous inspection. End-of-unit assessments are linked more closely to National Curriculum levels. Standards are well below what is normally expected but, when compared to their prior attainment, achievement is satisfactory. Most pupils know what a developing country is and can name an example, although few can locate it on a world map.
92. In Years 10 and 11, pupils may opt for either GCSE geography or a double applied GCSE leisure and tourism course. Results in the geography course have been declining. In 2004, they were far below national averages. Pupils achieved results more than a grade lower, on average, than in their other subjects. Only one candidate achieved a grade C (or better) in leisure and tourism. The extent of low attainment hides any difference in the relative performance of boys or girls. Improvement in the provision for geography is now taking place. Coursework is better supported. The attainment of Year 10 pupils is rising. Year 11 geographers, however, remain handicapped by what has gone before and continue to underachieve.
93. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are taught in groups broadly related to ability. This arrangement helps teachers match the challenge of their teaching to the needs and capability of their pupils. Learning support assistants are well used so that less able pupils and those with special needs make satisfactory progress. Increasing opportunities for independent learning give the more able pupils a chance to stretch their knowledge and understanding. The attitudes of pupils vary. Some pupils are reluctant to complete work. Exercise books and folders are often untidy. Many pupils set themselves low standards. Their often low levels of literacy lead to a lack of depth when answering questions and completing written tasks. The presence of challenging behaviour in some classes affects the achievement of others because the flow of learning is interrupted whilst appropriate action is taken.
94. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is some good teaching, with well-planned lessons that stimulate learning because the variety of activities holds pupils' interest and keeps them on task. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Lessons are now planned with clear aims. Group work now figures regularly and ICT is increasingly used as a resource. The department makes a very good contribution to the development of both literacy and numeracy. Pupils are

encouraged to read, to make judgements and to justify those judgements. They are given interesting opportunities for creative writing. The use of literacy and numeracy homework booklets extends the provision still further. The department plans its contribution to citizenship very well. An explicit module in Year 8, for example, gives pupils a good insight into the make-up and working of the European Union. Pupils get the chance to evaluate their own learning.

95. The school has recognised the need for change. A new subject leader has been in charge since the beginning of this academic year; the quality of her leadership is good. She is an experienced, committed and enthusiastic teacher. She has the necessary vision but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching. Despite the temporary nature of her appointment, she has already identified greater accuracy in assessment and the re-writing of schemes of work as key areas for development. New strategies are beginning to drive up standards. The legacy of past underachievement continue to depress standards but the new arrangements should lead to significant improvement in the provision for geography in the near future. Pupils' understanding of geographical topics is limited by insufficient opportunities for fieldwork in Years 7 to 9.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards vary too much and in some classes are not high enough.
- Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall but there are pockets of underachievement.
- Learning is generally sound but at times pupils are not fully engaged.
- The management of the department is good.
- A coherent ICT programme and historical visits would further enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

96. Recent GCSE results have fluctuated but have generally been below the national average. However, in 2004, results were well above the national average and most pupils met or exceeded their predicted grades. Pupils performed better in history than in almost all other subjects.
97. Standards are below national expectations at the end of Year 9. Pupils have weak historical skills on entry; in consequence, their achievement over Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. However, good progress is made in some classes while, in others, there is insufficient. There is too great a variation in the quality and amount of work produced in different classes. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a basic grounding in historical skills. Most have a fairly sound knowledge and understanding of the main events and people of the periods studied. However, few realise their significance within the overall context of study and their knowledge of chronology is weak. Higher attainers, including the gifted and talented pupils, need to be stretched more. Average and low attainers' writing skills are not high enough. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when provided with learning support. Standards of work are below national expectations at the end of Year 11 but most pupils achieve satisfactorily. However, higher attainers often underachieve as work lacks sufficient challenge. Best GCSE coursework is good but closer monitoring and mentoring would produce better results. Most pupils make satisfactory progress on the certificate of education course but some are capable of attaining GCSE grades. Standards of work

in Year 10, where pupils are challenged well and there is greater pace and productivity, are broadly in line with expectations and pupils achieve very well.

98. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although this includes a range from very good to unsatisfactory. Teachers are caring, provide good guidance and have a good command of the topics taught. They manage pupils well through encouragement, praise and clear direction and this forms a good foundation for learning. The best teaching is enthusiastic, lively and purposeful and has brisk pace and high expectations. In these lessons, questioning is skilfully used to develop pupils' learning. When teaching was unsatisfactory, it was due to the lesson content, materials and tasks being unsuitable for a very low-ability class. At times, learning is not as high in quality as teaching and is unsatisfactory. There is considerable variation in the use of homework to support learning. Some well-prepared resources are used in teaching but there is insufficient use of visual aids. In some lessons, aims need to be more precisely focused and tested thoroughly for effectiveness.
99. Day-to-day management is good. Curriculum planning and assessment, including marking, are satisfactory. The monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress is starting to take shape but pupils' self-evaluation and targeting of individual pupils' needs are underdeveloped. There is insufficient use of ICT in lessons and more visits to places of relevant historical interest are needed. Book resources are good. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department makes a very strong contribution to the personal development of all pupils.
- Time allocation in Years 10 and 11 is still too low.
- The department is led and managed well.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The marking of pupils' work lacks rigour in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work.

Commentary

100. There have been no public examinations in this subject in recent years. In lessons seen and work analysed during the current inspection, standards in Year 9 are below those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. However, this represents good achievement as many pupils enter the school with very low levels of literacy and subject skills. Despite this, pupils from Year 7 onwards develop a sound knowledge of Christianity and other religions, such as Buddhism and Islam. Some good written work was seen from Year 9 pupils on the importance of festivals within Moslem communities. Higher-attaining pupils are able to write in depth on these topics and this has addressed an issue arising from the previous report on insufficient challenge at this stage. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, however, struggle with their written work and the department has made strenuous efforts to combat this with more appropriate materials to suit their individual needs. In Years 10 and 11, pupils also develop an understanding of spiritual and moral issues, such as family values and medical ethics. However, at this stage, there is insufficient time for

pupils to study these issues in depth. As a result, standards remain below expectations at the end of Year 11.

101. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are planned well and teachers set clear aims and objectives so that pupils know precisely what to do. Classroom organisation is effective and teachers use their knowledge of the subject well to promote good learning. For the most part, pupils have positive attitudes and respect each other's opinions. They are keen to take part in discussions and are encouraged to do so by lively and enthusiastic teaching. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to work in small groups.
102. The department is led and managed well. Self-evaluation is used very effectively to identify areas for improvement and documentation is thorough. The subject also makes a very strong contribution to the personal and multicultural development of all pupils. Resources have improved considerably since the previous inspection, especially in the use of ICT as a learning resource. However, teachers' marking does not give pupils in Years 10 and 11 a clear enough idea of how to improve their work. Pupils have good opportunities to listen to visiting speakers but there are no visits to sites of religious interest.
103. The department has made good progress since the previous inspection, especially in terms of staffing and resources. The key issue now involves the provision of more time in Years 10 and 11 so that a viable public examination can be offered in the subject.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Clear priorities for improvement have been identified and GCSE standards rose significantly last year.
- There are inconsistencies in relation to expectations, challenge and adopted procedures.
- The application of ICT, particularly computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD-CAM), is underdeveloped, and ICT/CAD CAM resources are inadequate.
- Curricular innovation is providing pupils with a wider range of appropriate opportunities.

Commentary

104. Teachers' assessments indicate that standards by the end of Year 9 are below the national average.

105. In the 2004 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher grades (A* to C) was below the national average. This figure has risen significantly since 2003 and the proportion of pupils gaining a pass has also risen and is now broadly average. However, pupils still do worse than they do in their other subjects. Standards in textiles are well above national expectations, and those in product design are well below. However, pupils generally do as well as predicted from their prior attainment except for average-attaining pupils in product design, who underachieve.
106. Standards of attainment in Year 9 are below expectations. Pupils' prior experience is very varied, and attainment on entry is well below average, particularly in designing. Their achievement is therefore good. Pupils experience a wide range of materials and processes. They can generate different design ideas when challenged and their construction of these projects is good. In textiles, they show very clearly how their design ideas develop. Overall, the application of research methods is limited, and the use of prototyping methods and the application of ICT varies between subjects.
107. Standards in Year 11 are below national expectations and achievement is satisfactory. Some pupils in product design show that they can generate innovative ideas and those in textiles sketch well and show logically how their designs develop. However, pupils' design coursework is not consistently well presented and they have not learnt how to develop a synthesis of design ideas. Pupils rarely have the opportunity to use ICT or CAD-CAM in their coursework, largely because of lack of access to resources. In all year groups pupils with special needs are well supported and achieve well.
108. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are good. In the best lessons pupils are challenged but well supported. Workbooks are provided which use clear designing and writing frames so that pupils know what is expected. Where workbooks are not well used, pupils merely copy out design briefs or notes, or produce largely cosmetic designs. The usefulness of day-to-day marking varies widely; this is unsatisfactory. Teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment is secure, but the assessment grids used by some teachers are not consistently completed. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are satisfactory. Teachers use a variety of teaching approaches, but there is insufficient use of product analysis and prototyping techniques across all subjects. In some teaching groups, particularly food and textiles, work is well monitored, the examination board's criteria are shared well with pupils and regular targets are set. Even in well-monitored class groups, not all pupils are motivated enough to keep up with coursework deadlines. In product design, some teachers effectively help pupils develop quick sketching techniques but this is not universal across the department.
109. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Priorities for development focus on raising standards and on ensuring uniform approaches to teaching and learning. The curriculum offered has broadened to offer appropriate vocational courses such as manufacturing. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and some rooms are being used at the limit of their capacity. There is inadequate ventilation in the food technology room. Resources are unsatisfactory because there is insufficient provision of or access to ICT, particularly CAD-CAM facilities. The department needs to build on good practice in a number of areas, such as the use of pupils' workbooks, ways in which pupils can develop ideas for design, and the need for design to be focused on the needs of a client or user. The scheme of work in Years 7 to 9 needs to be reviewed to provide sufficient opportunity for equally open-ended design in all specialisms.
110. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards are similar but improving. Designing and graphic skills are still weaker than making skills. Resources

and accommodation still have weaknesses. Pupils' attitudes are better and there is no unsatisfactory teaching.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Drama

Drama was not inspected in detail but some lessons were seen.

111. The curriculum is enriched by drama for all age groups. GCSE teaching is skilful and enjoyed by the pupils. Consequently, they work hard and improve their performance skills. However, drama teaching requires a different approach to classroom management and this needs developing so that the focus of the students is constant. In a Year 8 lesson, dramatic presentations were lacklustre and pupils could not sustain a character because of weaknesses in classroom management and insufficiently targeted lesson planning. Related extra-curricular activities, such as the drama productions, celebrate students' achievements and increase their involvement.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not yet high enough because there is insufficient good or very good teaching of basic skills.
- The positive way in which teachers relate to their pupils produces good attitudes to learning.
- The subject leaders have the energy, capacity, vision and ambition to improve provision.
- The pupils' failure to use sketchbooks is limiting their ability to learn for themselves and reducing the element of discovery in their work.
- There is limited access to ICT facilities, which restricts learning opportunities.

Commentary

112. GCSE results in 2004, although well below the national average, were amongst the best in the school. They were similar to the 2003 results but well below those at the time of the last inspection. Poor attendance contributes to these results. The work in Year 9 is below expectations but improving. Pupils draw from observation, usually in pencil, but few draw to record light, space or texture, or to investigate composition. They do not use sketchbooks to experiment with materials or record their surroundings. Pupils are more dependent on their teachers for guidance than is usual. Their writing describes their work rather than assessing its worth. Pupils work on a large scale with pattern and colour but their work in both two and three dimensions often reflects a lack of thorough preparation. They do not use computers to create or modify artwork. Recognising their low attainment when they enter school, achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress at the end of Year 11 although their work remains below expectations. Sketchbooks are again underused but pupils do experiment with different media and processes. Reference is made to other artists and cultures but this aspect is not central to the pupils' work. Too many rely on images taken from the Internet rather than on their own personal research. All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress.

113. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The department is very well staffed and teachers know the subject well. The way teachers talk to their pupils generates good attitudes and well-above-average numbers opt for GCSE art and design. Starter activities in lessons are well planned and are demonstrated with great skill. Teachers circulate well in lessons, maintaining pace and productivity, giving pupils a clear view of how well they are doing and how they might improve. The ends of lessons are less well planned and opportunities for pupils to reflect on their achievements are often missed. Insufficient time is devoted to teaching the basic skills of art. Assessment allows pupils a view of their current performance and provides them with short-term and long-term targets.
114. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed subject leaders have ambitious, clear views of the necessary future developments in the department. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly. Documentation is being updated to include a policy for the development of literacy and numeracy and to strengthen the pupils' spiritual and social development.
115. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Standards and examination results have fallen and pupils' knowledge of the work of other artists remains weak. The teaching of sculpture has improved and assessment has improved, although the data from assessment is not yet used to strengthen the curriculum.

Music

Provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils at the end of Year 9 and 11 do not achieve as well as they should.
- Good resources for music technology are not being used to meet the National Curriculum's requirements for the use of ICT in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils are offered lessons in a good range of musical instruments and in singing.
- Assessment procedures are insufficiently developed.

Commentary

116. Teachers' assessments for 2004 indicate that standards by the end of Year 9 are well below the national average. The standard of work seen in lessons is also well below national expectations. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with varied musical experiences and do not make enough progress by the end of Year 9. Achievement is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in planning and inconsistent teaching.
117. GCSE results for 2004 were low compared with national averages. This was largely due to staff illness last year and pupils were taught by different teachers during the course. The standard of work seen in Year 11 is slightly below national expectations. This improvement is the result of improved stability in staffing and because all pupils play instruments or sing and most receive tuition. However, pupils in Year 11 do not achieve as well as they should in relation to their other subjects. The lack of regular assessment of coursework and weaknesses in planning are contributory factors.

118. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Lessons have clear learning objectives and follow a three-part structure. Praise and encouragement are frequently used and, as a result, pupils behave well. Homework is regularly set to develop pupils' learning further. However, not enough consideration is given to the progression and pace of learning. This means that time is often used inefficiently and musical activities are not varied enough. As a result, pupils do not always make enough progress in developing their musical understanding and skills. The work is not challenging enough for the more musically able pupils.
119. The leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. The planning of teaching and learning lacks coherence and does not ensure consistency, continuity or progression, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Teaching and learning are not monitored or evaluated effectively and assessment procedures, including arrangements for standardising assessments in Years 7 to 9, are not fully established. This results in inconsistencies within the department and inadequate monitoring of progress. Performance data and assessment information are not analysed or used well enough to inform improvement.
120. There is a good range of instrumental and singing tuition provided which supports GCSE work well, but the range of other extra-curricular activities offered to students is limited. Music technology resources are good and have improved since the previous inspection but they are not currently being used to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum for the use of ICT in Years 7 to 9. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 in the common course as a result of good teaching.
- The proportion of pupils attaining A* to C grade passes at GCSE is improving and, in 2004, it was broadly in line with the national average.
- Good leadership and management provide a purposeful focus, ethos and direction for the subject.
- The good attitudes and behaviour of pupils result in a positive atmosphere in lessons and in extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils with the full range of special educational needs are effectively included in the school's sporting provision; they make good progress.

Commentary

121. Standards on entry for many in Year 7 are below age-related expectations. By the end of Year 9, standards seen are in line with national expectations. In football, for example, boys are developing their defensive skills well and, in dance, girls' choreographic skills are developing well. This represents good achievement. By the end of Year 11, standards on the common course are in line with expectations. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, building on and applying their skills and competencies learned in Years 7 to 9. There are no significant gender differences in standards. Across all

years pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the principles and procedures for warm-up. They also have a secure grasp of assessment and evaluation, both of their own strengths and weaknesses and of those of their peers, particularly in gymnastics.

122. Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils attaining A* to C grade passes has increased and, in 2004, this proportion was in line with the national average. It is not possible to comment on standards and achievement in the GCSE course in the present Year 11 as no lessons were seen and not enough theory work was available for analysis.
123. Teaching and learning are good. Learning objectives are made clear at the start of lessons so that pupils are immediately engaged and know what is expected of them. Effective use of whiteboards assists the good development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of correct terminology. Teachers know their subject well and have consistently high expectations as regards behaviour and discipline and the ability of pupils to work to their best. Attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils clearly value the supportive atmosphere within which the subject is taught, which enhances the quality of learning and promotes good attitudes in lessons. Lessons are well structured and purposeful and provide for progression and challenge. In a Year 10 table tennis lesson, for example, boys were involved in peer coaching, developing their use of the backhand topspin stroke. In a Year 11 aerobics lesson, effective use of questioning at the start of the lesson developed girls' understanding of the effects of exercise on the body.
124. Effective analysis and demonstration of skills by teachers ensure pupils know what they have to do to make progress. Pupils are routinely involved in productive paired and small group work. This would deepen their understanding further and help them modify and develop their own practice. Teachers circulate well and effective use of praise and constructive criticism makes pupils aware of their capabilities and what they need to do to improve. Pupils use ICT to present their coursework, for example, by taking digital photography of performance. At the end of lessons, there is sometimes too much evaluation by the teacher and not enough by the pupils as regards what they have learned.
125. Good leadership and management provide a very purposeful focus and direction for the subject in order to improve standards in both the common and the GCSE courses. Last year, for example, there was a very effective focus on improving the standards of theory work. There is a positive team ethos and a shared commitment to improve provision for all pupils in the school. Assessment is satisfactory. Procedures for the end of Year 9 have improved but procedures at the end of Year 11 could be more grounded in the assessment strands of the National Curriculum. Other positive aspects mentioned in the previous report have been maintained. Overall, improvement has been good.
126. Very good extra-curricular provision throughout the year, including both recreational and competitive fixtures, broadens pupils' learning opportunities, enhances their personal development and extends the learning opportunities for the more physically capable, as well as for the pupils from the 'barrier-free' unit in the school.

Comment on general sporting provision in the school

127. A very good extra-curricular provision enables pupils to spend more time participating in sporting provision. During 2004, 35 per cent of pupils attended extra-curricular activities. Eleven individuals attained county and district representative honours in a range of sports, four attained national representative honours and ten attended various sporting academies. Pupils from the 'barrier-free' unit have also achieved individual as well as team success in association football, boccia, swimming and table tennis. The physical education department is part of the local schools sports partnership scheme and as a result has developed very close links with five local primary schools. The department has also become involved in the wider Physical Education School Sport and Club Links Strategy (PESSCL). Established links with local community sporting organisations are of direct benefit to pupils.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Work-related learning

Provision in work-related learning (WRL) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of WRL are satisfactory and provision for WRL across the school is developing.
- Almost all pupils learn through work in well-planned and evaluated work experience.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn about and for work vary between subjects.

Commentary

128. The school has a WRL co-ordinator, who regularly meets the curriculum deputy. A comprehensive policy is in place and roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The provision of WRL has evolved over a number of years and is still developing. The school plans to achieve WRL kite-marked status.
129. Through its links with the local Business Enterprise Partnership (BEP), the intention is that all pupils undertake work experience over an arranged one-week work placement, usually in the October of Year 11. In practice, not all pupils can be placed in this time frame and a small percentage undertake their work experience later in the year. This learning is made more effective because pupils prepare for their work placements in the careers programme in 'lifetracks' activities. They are helped to complete application forms and write letters of application. Pupils evaluate their own experiences and review their employers' assessments. These activities are embedded in English, PSHE and citizenship. The school arranges some extended work placements for disaffected pupils unlikely to enter GCSE examinations.
130. In conjunction with the area Education Business Partnership (EBP), arrangements are made for about thirty pupils to follow M-Power-funded courses linked with several local colleges and with local employers. In this 'guided' curriculum option, pupils typically work towards NVQ Level 1 or 2 qualifications in areas such as hair and beauty care,

plumbing, motor vehicle maintenance or construction. It has not been possible for the school to arrange for all the pupils to undertake these activities on the same days but staff do their best to make sure that these pupils are still taught their 'core curriculum' entitlement when they are in school. The school is exploring the possibility of using 'catch-up' periods or of offering a reduced number of GCSE courses to help make the timetable more flexible.

131. The expansion of the vocational curriculum is partly funded by the 'Increased Flexibility' programme. Within the curriculum there are opportunities for all pupils to opt onto an applied GCSE in manufacturing, health and social care, ICT or science. The quality of provision is not always monitored off-site as well as it might be. For instance, in manufacturing, there is no opportunity for the teacher responsible to visit the externally taught element of the course with pupils.
132. All pupils learn about and for work in the PSHE and careers programmes. The careers plan builds from developing an understanding of career possibilities and options, job satisfaction and 'stereotypes' in Year 9. This leads to a well-planned range of activities in Years 10 and 11, such as preparing for mock interviews with representatives from the local business community, developing interview techniques and preparing curriculum vitae. The school is investigating the possibility of offering accredited nationally accredited courses in 'job seeking skills' or 'preparation for employment' through these programmes.
133. The cross-curricular element of WRL has not yet been fully developed. In English, pupils learn how to write letters of application and evaluate their work experience. There are strengths in ICT, where there are good links with local employers, and in the design and technology GCSE courses. In business studies, there are links with commerce. The school has completed audits of WRL and of enterprise activities in conjunction with the external enterprise adviser. These have identified the gaps in provision but subjects have not yet responded. A number of enterprise activities take place and 'Young Enterprise' is being considered for 2005.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is no subject leader at present.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in school life and to take responsible action.
- All subject areas have implemented clear plans to incorporate citizenship in their schemes of work.
- Methods of assessing pupils' achievement in the subject lack rigour.

Commentary

134. It is not possible to reach an overall judgement about standards and achievement as there is no public examination in citizenship and there has been little specific written work in the subject so far this year. However, in lessons observed where citizenship was clearly identified, pupils are developing a sound understanding of different

aspects of society and are honing their skills of enquiry well. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, pupils discussed the role of the media in shaping public opinion, using contemporary issues raised by television and newspapers. In the few lessons observed during the inspection where teachers worked from clear citizenship objectives, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Teachers help pupils to develop their skills of communication and encourage them to air their views in discussion. The limited amount of written work does not develop pupils' literacy skills in depth. There is, however, a programme of themed citizenship days that gives pupils good opportunities to examine topics, such as fair trade or the role of a Member of Parliament.

135. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate and take responsible action throughout the school. The school council is an effective channel of communication and pupils take further responsibility through the prefect system and peer mentoring.
136. There is, at present, no subject leader for citizenship and this is having a detrimental effect on the subject's development. All curriculum areas, however, provide clear and identifiable citizenship opportunities within their schemes of work and this is particularly effective in geography, history, religious education and science. Plans to record and report the subject have been implemented but more rigorous assessment procedures are required in order to give pupils a clear idea of their progress.
137. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress in citizenship. The key issues now are to provide leadership and management for this curriculum area and to sharpen assessment procedures so that all pupils are made aware of their levels of achievement in the subject.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	5
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Cost effectiveness / value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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