

INSPECTION REPORT

WIGMORE HIGH SCHOOL

Leominster

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116953

Headteacher: Mr G J Sharratt

Lead inspector: Mr R Palmer

Dates of inspection: 18th – 20th October 2004

Inspection number: 268518

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	503
School address:	Ford Street Wigmore Leominster Herefordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Swinfen

Date of previous inspection: 22nd – 26th February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wigmore High School is much smaller than most other secondary schools. It has nearly 100 more pupils than at the time of the previous inspection and is over-subscribed. Boys outnumber girls in most years. The school had the status of Beacon School until March 2004 and is a lead school in the Western Collaborative Partnership of schools. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is above average. Boys and girls come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds that are above average overall. Very few pupils are from ethnic minorities. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, about one in five, is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average. Most of these pupils have specific or moderate learning difficulties or have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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21954	T Chipp	Team inspector	Art and design
33324	J Fullwood	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
4676	M Griffiths	Team inspector	Physical education Special educational needs
23188	J Maunder	Team inspector	Science
19214	G Price	Team inspector	English
18846	P Priest	Team inspector	Music
31879	D Rhodes	Team inspector	Mathematics
4381	R Sharif	Team inspector	Citizenship Work-related learning
23891	P Slape	Team inspector	Design and technology
1845	R Tweed	Team inspector	History Religious education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with many features of a very good school. It provides **good** value for money. Achievement is very good by Year 11. Standards rise from slightly above average when pupils join in Year 7 to well above average by the end of Year 11. Boys and girls of all capabilities receive a good education. Teaching and learning are very good overall, as are leadership and management.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The GCSE results are well above average and, in 2004, indicate very good achievement.
- Very good teaching and good assessment help pupils to improve their work.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes promote learning.
- Very good senior leadership and management lead to continued good improvement.
- The very good quality of care and support, together with outstanding careers education and very good out-of-class activities, enhance and enrich pupils' all-round development.
- Pupils do not receive their curricular entitlement to religious education in Years 10 and 11.
- In a few subjects, there is not enough use of ICT to support pupils' learning.
- Some inadequate accommodation holds back even higher standards in a few subjects.

Improvement since the previous inspection in 1999 is **good**. GCSE results and achievement are higher. Teaching is now even better and motivates pupils to do their best. Very good leadership and management tackled the previous key issues well, although improvement has been unsatisfactory regarding provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A	A	A	D

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

Standards are well above average by Year 11 and indicate **very good** achievement for boys and for girls. Results in national tests for English, mathematics and science taken in Year 9, and in GCSE examinations, are consistently well above average and improving steadily. In 2003, results in these tests show good overall achievement for Year 9 pupils, compared with their attainment on entry. GCSE results, in 2003, were slightly below those of similar schools but show satisfactory achievement compared with pupils' earlier attainment. In 2004, nine out of every 10 pupils in Year 11 gained five or more GCSE grades A*-C and more than a quarter of all grades awarded were A* or A. These results were much higher than expected from predictions based on pupils' attainment on entry in Year 7. Pupils make faster progress in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9, mainly because teaching is better and they have more opportunities to work independently. Pupils of all capabilities, including those who are gifted or talented and those who have special educational needs, make equally very good rates of progress. Standards in Year 9 are currently close to being well above average and indicate

good achievement overall. Standards are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. They show that pupils are achieving very well in mathematics, well in English and satisfactorily in science. Currently, standards by Year 11 are well above average and indicate very good achievement in English and mathematics. They are above average and show good achievement in science. Achievement by Year 11 is good or better in most other subjects although it is unsatisfactory in religious education.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good** overall. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and their attitudes very good. Attendance is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is **good**.

Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Learning is very good throughout Years 7 to 11. Teaching in Years 7 to 11 is good or better overall in all subjects, but is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 in science. Pupils with special educational needs receive good teaching and support that enable them to make the same rates of progress as other pupils. Those pupils identified as gifted or talented achieve as well as others, because they usually receive work matched well to their capabilities. Procedures for assessment are generally good, but do not ensure that pupils are always clear about how to improve. Marking is thorough in most subjects, although it lacks consistency in science. High expectations and good management of classes ensure that pupils work productively and at speed in the vast majority of lessons. Teachers use their subject expertise very well to give clear explanations and to conduct very good discussions. In the very few unsatisfactory lessons, the work was either too easy or too hard for many pupils.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but does not provide pupils with their entitlement to religious education in Years 10 and 11. Pupils enrich their learning and personal development through very good out-of-class activities. The quality of care and guidance is very good. Partnerships with parents and other schools are very good. Links with the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. Governance is **good** overall, although the school does not meet two of its statutory requirements. The very good leadership of the headteacher and very effective senior management set a very clear direction for continued improvement and have a strong focus on raising standards further. Leadership and management are good overall in subjects and ensure good teamwork. Financial management is good. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and set ambitious, but attainable targets.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have very positive views of the school. Parents have no major concerns and say their children enjoy coming to school. They like, particularly, the school's high expectations and standards, its deservedly very good public image and its friendly ethos. A few pupils had concerns about unsatisfactory behaviour by a small minority. However, exclusions are very low, behaviour is much better than that found in many other schools and it was excellent during the inspection.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- implement a suitable course and raise achievement in religious education in Years 10 and 11;
- provide better computing resources and access to ICT facilities across the curriculum;
- improve the accommodation in a few subjects, identified in the report;

- and, to meet statutory requirements:

- make provision for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils
- and make provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 (a key issue at the previous inspection).

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards are well above average by the end of Year 11. The achievement of boys and girls of all capabilities and backgrounds is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in 2004 were high and show very good achievement for pupils of all capabilities.
- Pupils' very good competence in literacy, numeracy and ICT promotes very good achievement.
- Pupils' achievement in religious education is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 because of lack of curricular provision for the subject.
- Insufficient access to ICT facilities holds back even better achievement in a few subjects.

Commentary

1. The school's previous designation as a Beacon School and its receipt of the School Achievement Award from the Department for Education and Skills in 2001 and 2003 indicate its success in adding value to the academic achievements of boys and girls. Since the previous inspection, standards of attainment are higher and achievement continues to rise.
2. The results in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science have been consistently well above average over the past five years. Overall, there is little difference between the performances of boys and girls in these tests. In 2003, the results matched those of similar schools. They indicate good achievement for boys and girls of all capabilities, compared with their standards when they joined the school in Year 7. Provisional results, in 2004, are well above the national averages for the previous year and show that the school met its suitably challenging targets. Results are improving at the national rate of improvement. They represent good performance because the school's results have a high starting point.
3. The GCSE examination results have also been consistently well above average over the past five years. In 2003, results, though well above average, were slightly below those of similar schools. They indicated satisfactory achievement compared with pupils' prior attainment in the Year 9 national tests. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was well above average in nearly all subjects. The results improved considerably in 2004 and the school exceeded its challenging targets for performance in the GCSE examination. They represented very good achievement for boys and girls of all capabilities, including those with special educational needs, compared with predictions based on pupils' earlier attainment. Nine out of every 10 pupils in Year 11 gained five or more GCSE grades A*-C. The proportion of A*/A grades was double the previous year's national average and

shows that higher attaining pupils achieved very well. Girls usually attain higher GCSE grades than boys, as they do nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.5 (36.8)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	38.4 (37.4)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	36.0 (35.8)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 109 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	74 (73)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96 (100)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	40.9 (44.4)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 92 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Current standards of work in Years 7 to 9 are well above average, overall. They match those attained in the most recent Year 9 national tests and teachers' assessments and show that pupils are achieving well. In Year 9, standards are well above average in English, mathematics, French, geography, ICT, music and religious education. Standards are above average in science and all other subjects, apart from citizenship, in which they are average. Achievement by Year 9, compared with pupils' attainment in the subject when they joined the school, is very good in English, mathematics, French, ICT, music and religious education. It is good in all other subjects apart from science, citizenship and personal, social and health education (PSHE), in which it is satisfactory.
5. In Years 10 and 11, standards are currently well above average and show that pupils are achieving very well. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science and in all other subjects, apart from citizenship. No work was inspected in PSHE in Years 10 and 11. Compared with their attainment at the end of Year 9, the achievement, by Year 11, of boys and girls of all capabilities, including the gifted and talented and those who have special educational needs, is currently very good in English, mathematics, design and technology, French, history, ICT, music and physical education. Achievement is good in science, art and design and in geography and it is satisfactory in citizenship. The inadequate provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 prevents pupils from building on their well above average prior attainment in the subject.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets, because, in this small school, teachers have a good knowledge of their individual needs and provide work that is of suitable difficulty to keep pupils interested. Effective help from the learning support assistants and sensitive teaching account for their good achievement across subjects in Years 7 to 9 and very good achievement in Years 10 and 11. GCSE results attained in 2004 by pupils with special educational needs represent very good achievement. The school has identified pupils who are gifted or talented. Its good procedures for assessing and tracking their progress help to ensure that these pupils achieve equally as well as other pupils.
7. Pupils make at least good progress in the vast majority of lessons throughout Years 7 to 11, because teaching is often very good. They use their well above average literacy and numeracy skills very competently to develop their work in the different subjects. Pupils make effective use of their well above average ICT skills to support their learning in many subjects such as English. However, the limited availability of specialist computing resources restricts pupils' use of their ICT skills to enrich and enhance their work in subjects such as art and design, design and technology and music.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Pupils' behaviour is excellent and their attitudes are very good. Attendance is very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' excellent behaviour around school and in lessons assists their all-round development.
- Very good attitudes contribute greatly to pupils' very good achievement.
- Excellent relationships result in pupils developing confidence and high self-esteem.
- Very good social and moral development enables pupils to work together very well.

Commentary

8. Pupils are alert, interested and very much involved in the school's activities. They are quick to volunteer and give mature, sensible answers to the teacher's questions. Their strong desire to learn promotes their achievement. Pupils of all social and economic backgrounds, justifiably, view the school as a very friendly and close-knit community. They enjoy meeting their friends, taking part in lessons and out-of-class activities, such as music, drama and sport. Staff place a strong emphasis on self-discipline. Pupils value the trust that is placed in them. They respond extremely well to teacher's high expectations of behaviour and, as they move through the school, welcome the increasing opportunities to exercise high levels of independence and responsibility and to show initiative. As a result, behaviour is excellent. The atmosphere in places such as the dining hall is friendly, informal and warm, and not regimented. Pupils respond in a very mature manner to the staff's encouragement to be sociable and participative. When teaching is occasionally dull, pupils do not misbehave, but do their best to concentrate and pay attention. Relationships are excellent. Pupils know that they can express themselves without fear of derision or discouragement from teachers or pupils. They develop poise and self-confidence, which, alongside high aspirations and very good academic achievement, contribute very well to their all-round development.
9. The attitudes and values shown by pupils with special educational needs are very good and indicate that they enjoy coming to school. These pupils integrate easily with all their peers, because all pupils and staff treat one another with consideration and respect.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	501	3	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other white background	1	0	0

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

10. Attendance is well above average in all years. Parents encourage their children to attend school regularly. Good methods for monitoring attendance ensure that the very few pupils with unsatisfactory attendance are quickly identified and followed up. The school's tough stance against pupils taking holidays in term time contributes to high rates of attendance. Very good attendance promotes very good achievement, because it allows pupils to take consistent advantage of much very good teaching. Punctuality is good. Pupils move quickly between lessons and little time is lost. However, most pupils travel to school by

bus and, occasionally, lateness is unavoidable, because the buses are late, as a result of such circumstances as inclement weather and heavy traffic

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	1.0
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

11. Pupils' social and moral development is very good, cultural development is good and spiritual development is satisfactory. Provision for spiritual development has shown little improvement since the previous inspection. It does not feature prominently in departmental schemes of work, although teachers do promote pupils' spiritual awareness as occasions arise, for example, in discussions about plays or poetry in English. Pupils often reflect on, and increase their knowledge and understanding of, different faiths and beliefs, during religious education lessons in Years 7 to 9. However, the lack of religious education in Years 10 and 11 denies similar good opportunities to the older pupils. The regular whole school assemblies do not ensure a daily act of collective worship and often leave little time for reflection, as was evident in an otherwise good and very pertinent assembly about the courage of Christopher Reeve.
12. The school provides a very good range of events and activities, enabling pupils to acquire very good social skills that help them to work very well together. They develop very good skills of collaboration and co-operation and learn from each other. Regular residential visits of high quality reinforce the school's sense of community and encourage pupils to think outwardly. Pupils react very easily and maturely with others in physical education lessons, for example, and many respond positively to encouragement to participate actively, and in good numbers, in local sports groups. Pupils have a very strong sense of right and wrong. Their care for each other, the school and the local environment is very evident. The school's strong commitment to pupils' social and moral development results in self-discipline and contributes substantially to the high academic standards. Pupils develop a good appreciation of their own cultural traditions through such subjects as English, music, drama, art and design and history. However they have too few opportunities to appreciate the cultural diversity in Britain, particularly in view of the school being in such a rural and relatively isolated area.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good in Years 7 to 11. Teaching and learning are very good overall and assessment is good. The curriculum is satisfactory. The quality of care, guidance and support is very good. Links with parents, the community and other schools are very good overall.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching overall helps pupils to gain well above average GCSE examination results.
- Pupils assist their own progress by working hard and co-operatively in class.
- Good planning helps pupils with special educational needs to achieve as well as other pupils.
- A very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching hampers progress in a very few lessons.

Commentary

13. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. The proportion of very good teaching observed has increased. Teaching and learning in design and technology were identified as a key issue for improvement. Teaching in this subject is now good throughout the school. In resistant materials, pupils have improved the presentation of their work and their skills in research and making. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching remains small. Teaching is better in Years 10 and 11, because teachers provide the older pupils with better opportunities to work independently.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 93 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
12 (13%)	29 (31%)	36 (39%)	13 (14%)	3 (3%)	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.

14. The quality of teaching is very good throughout Years 7 to 11 in mathematics, history, ICT, music and physical education. In English, it is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching in science is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is at least good in all other subjects.
15. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs takes place in mainstream classes. They achieve equally as well as other pupils, because teachers and the learning support assistants collaborate well to provide effective, additional help, when needed. The pupils identified as gifted or talented are known well by staff and generally receive work that stretches them. Staff are familiar with the individual needs of all pupils and, for the most part, plan their work taking these needs fully into account.
16. Pupils contribute considerably to their fine progress in class. Even when the teaching is sometimes dull, as in a few lessons in Years 7 to 9, they work hard and want to learn. They work productively and at a fast pace. Their extremely good behaviour and very good relationships with each other and, with the staff, help to create a purposeful and positive climate for learning to take place. As a Year 11 pupil commented in a mathematics lesson, "there is an excellent atmosphere for working and all pupils are immersed in the learning process". Pupils learn quickly, because they make effective use of their very competent skills in literacy, speaking and numeracy to support their work across subjects. Teachers provide many activities, particularly in Years 10 and 11, for pupils to practise, apply and develop these skills. When they have the chance to use computers, as seen in English and a few science lessons, pupils make very good gains in knowledge and understanding. They develop good skills in research and use the Internet maturely to collect, interpret and represent information. In design and technology, pupils learn how to

model and trial their ideas. They make increasing use of computer-aided design and manufacturing tasks that motivate them to work with interest and commitment. However, in subjects such as art and design and music, insufficient access to ICT or appropriate computing resources restricts pupils' achievement and limits the range of learning activities.

17. Senior managers work hard to ensure that teachers and pupils have equally high expectations for academic success. They monitor the quality of teaching and learning closely and are largely successful in spreading good practice. They know that science teaching has lacked consistency in Years 7 to 9 and are taking appropriate action, through the reorganisation of science teachers' responsibilities, to improve the quality of teaching of pupils in Years 7 to 9. The generally good implementation of the National Key Stage 3 Strategies for teaching and learning has helped to provide a consistently good or better quality of teaching and learning in nearly all subjects, and particularly in English and mathematics. Very good planning provides a range of different and suitably challenging activities to interest all pupils in the class. Teachers usually check carefully that pupils have understood previous work well and that they know exactly what the current work is about and its relevance. Teachers use their very good expertise in their specialist subjects to give very clear and detailed explanations and to provide a good sequence of activities. Through good discussions in groups or as a whole class, they review and consolidate what pupils have learned. In many lessons, and especially in physical education, pupils reinforce their learning through rigorous evaluations of their own and others' performances.
18. In the lessons that were satisfactory rather than better, largely in Years 7 to 9, pupils found the work boring at times. This was because the teacher directed too much of the work and gave them little opportunity to think for themselves. In the three unsatisfactory lessons observed, teachers did not manage the class well enough and the work did not take full account of pupils' different capabilities, so that some found the work too easy while others struggled and made insufficient progress.
19. Good procedures for assessment, including those for pupils with special educational needs, help pupils to improve their work. Teachers' assessments are accurate and lead to effective target setting for pupils. Systems for the collection of data are very good. Staff make good use of information about pupils' attainment, progress and potential to identify any underachievement in a subject at an early stage. Once a pupil is found to be underachieving, the school takes quick and suitable remedial measures, including guidance and mentoring of pupils, and keeps parents fully informed.
20. Marking is generally thorough, although, quite often, it does not provide sufficient written comments to inform pupils what they need to do to improve. Oral feedback in lessons is often good and gives pupils a clear awareness of how well they are doing and pointers for improvement. In a few subjects, such as physical education, art and design and music, pupils' self-assessment and evaluation of other pupils' work assist their achievement, while influencing teachers to adjust what and how they teach. However, senior managers recognise that the school should make more use of assessment to influence the teaching programme and, as a well-considered response, has introduced an 'assessment for learning' policy. Pupils generally know what their targets are and what to do to achieve them. The use of homework to support learning is good.

THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Extra-curricular provision is very good. The quality and amount of accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good extra-curricular activities greatly enrich pupils' academic and all-round development.
- Pupils do not receive their entitlement to religious education in Years 10 and 11.
- Provision for careers education is of very high quality and prepares pupils very well for later life.
- A few shortcomings in accommodation restrict pupils' achievement.

Commentary

21. The curriculum has improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection. It is good in Years 7 to 9 and has breadth and balance. It meets well the needs of pupils of all capabilities and aptitudes. Well-planned schemes of work ensure continuity and progression that support pupils' achievement. The teaching of drama to all pupils enriches pupils' learning experiences. In Years 10 and 11, the curricular provision is satisfactory, rather than better. This is because, despite many very positive features across subjects, pupils do not receive their entitlement to religious education.
22. The programme for PSHE has improved since the previous inspection and meets statutory requirements. It is good throughout Years 7 to 11, though the quality of teaching lacks consistency. The sex education programme is good, because it enables pupils to consider, in a mature manner, such important moral issues as trust, loyalty and outside pressures. External agencies, such as the medical profession, contribute well to the teaching of sex and drug education.
23. Opportunities for enrichment are very good and are a real strength of the school. Pupils and parents value these activities greatly. Active participation by large numbers of pupils in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities enhances the taught curriculum and contributes considerably to pupils' learning and their personal and social development. These include several team sports, such as netball, football, hockey and cricket. Many subjects help pupils to raise achievement further, by providing 'drop-in' clubs that offer study support and extension activities. Pupils develop their social and cultural awareness through a variety of subject-related experiences, as well as through French exchange visits. In English and drama, a good range of theatre visits, competitions, drama festivals, public speaking, and school productions enhances academic achievement and pupils' all-round development. Many pupils use the school's facilities and classrooms in different subjects at lunchtime, voluntarily, to get on with their work quietly and sensibly.
24. Careers education is excellent and ensures that pupils prepare very well for the next stages in their education and future careers. The work experience programmes are of high quality. The work-based courses in Years 10 and 11 make very effective use of the resources at local colleges and obtained from the Education Business Partnership and the Connexions service.

25. Very good inclusion of all pupils is a very positive feature of the curriculum. All pupils have full access to the National Curriculum and other courses. In Years 10 and 11, the development of vocational courses and the emphasis on work-related learning are successful in meeting well the needs of pupils of all capabilities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Since the closure of the school's special educational needs centre, support for these pupils now takes place within the mainstream classes. Subject departments plan well to match the work to pupils' individual needs. The work of the learning support assistants is generally good, but a few are new and in need of further training to enable them to support these pupils as effectively and efficiently as possible. Departments have identified the gifted and talented pupils and are, increasingly, providing them with work of suitable challenge and difficulty, both in and out of class.
26. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum, including the large number of peripatetic music teachers, is good overall. The low turnover of staff aids the continuity of pupils' learning. However, the school has experienced difficulties in providing enough suitably qualified teachers for religious education.
27. Resources for teaching and learning are adequate to meet curricular requirements. Very good use of the computing equipment in the three specialist ICT rooms encourages high standards in ICT. Insufficient access to ICT resources in a few subjects, such as art and design and music, restricts higher achievement. The library's facilities are satisfactory, although the book stock and the lack of physical space do not enable pupils to use them as frequently as they should.
28. The overall effect of accommodation on pupils' education is satisfactory. Many building improvements have taken place since the previous inspection, for example in science, ICT, modern foreign languages and physical education. However, a few parts of the accommodation remain unsatisfactory, for instance in art and design, science, design and technology and music. A few rooms, in other subjects, are very small for the size of class. In art and design, the cramped accommodation restricts the teaching of ceramics and three-dimensional work.

CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The quality of pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is very good. Pupils receive very good support, advice and guidance, based on monitoring. Systems for seeking and acting upon pupils' views are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent careers guidance helps pupils to make very well informed decisions about the future.
- Very good monitoring and support tackle underachievement quickly and effectively.
- Pupils are respected very well and their views are taken seriously.

Commentary

29. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are well looked after and safe at all times of the day. Problems relating to school buses, identified in the previous inspection report, have been rectified. Pupils' excellent behaviour and the very effective supervision by senior staff ensure that buses arrive and depart safely. There is good regard for safe working practices in science, design and technology and physical education lessons. However, the science department lacks a functioning fume cupboard. Arrangements for school visits are very thorough. The school site is a welcoming environment. Arrangements for child protection and the care of vulnerable young people are good, but the recently appointed child protection co-ordinator awaits further training.
30. In this small school, staff have excellent relationships with pupils. They have a comprehensive understanding of pupils' academic achievement and personal development. Links between achievement and pupils' attitudes are carefully analysed. Pupils who are at risk of underachieving are identified quickly and given immediate and effective extra help. Very good induction procedures ensure that pupils' transition from primary to secondary school is very smooth.
31. Clear procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs are the result of good links with primary schools and the collection of as much relevant information as possible. Very good procedures for identifying pupils who are gifted and talented are developing well and are shortly due for review. Informative and well-followed individual education and behaviour plans are in place for pupils with special educational needs. The frequent and careful monitoring and follow-up of these plans, and the very effective reviews of pupils who have a statement of educational need, help these pupils to achieve equally as well as other pupils and to increase their self-esteem. Targets are specific to individuals and are both realistic and achievable. Very effective tracking procedures ensure that records of pupils' progress are comprehensive throughout Years 7 to 11. Staff take a very keen interest in pupils' progress after they leave the school, and, for example, check how well they do in university and college education.
32. Extremely effective careers guidance starts in Year 9, when pupils receive very useful advice and support in deciding their option choices. The outstanding careers education programme in Years 10 and 11 links pupils' personal qualities very well to their future career aspirations. It teaches pupils how to find relevant information about jobs and post-16 education. The biannual careers convention, hosted by the school, is of a very high quality, particularly in view of the school's rural location. It involves representatives from a very wide range of professions, as well as education and training providers. Close links with a variety of colleges ensure that pupils are very well aware of all local educational opportunities. All pupils have access to the excellent support from the Connexions service. Careers education has been improved even further by the appointment of a careers librarian, who provides encouragement and support to ensure that pupils make very effective use of the very good careers section in the school library. Pupils are

prepared very well for decisions about their future, even before they have their careers interview. Work experience and a good emphasis on work-related learning enable pupils to benefit from practical experience of the world of work. The school traces leavers' destinations carefully and celebrates and values the different successes of all pupils. Excellent careers advice ensures that pupils have appropriately high aspirations and are able to reach their goals, which range from studying at prestigious universities to local employment.

33. The school council is developing well and is a good example of citizenship in practice. It has been instrumental in bringing about changes to the school uniform. It gives pupils an effective voice in the school's developments. The school seeks pupils' views frequently, analyses very carefully the findings from questionnaires and, when appropriate, acts upon these findings. In PSHE classes, teachers take account of pupils' evaluations of lessons to adjust the content and style of teaching.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good information for parents helps them to support their children's work very well.
- Very effective links with other schools and colleges assist the spread of good practice.
- Very good links with primary schools ensure a smooth transition between primary and secondary school.

Commentary

34. The school works very effectively with parents to support learning. Parents feel a strong sense of partnership, based on mutual trust. As a result, the school is very popular and enjoys a deservedly good reputation in the local community. Parents are very supportive of their children's education. The successful Friends' Association raises substantial amounts of money, through a variety of social events. Information to parents is of a very high quality. Teachers communicate clearly with parents about what their children know, understand and can do. They point out how improvements can be made. Pupils write their own very specific targets. Very good reports on performance in the mock GCSE examinations make it very clear what pupils have to do to secure improved grades. Very detailed information supplied by the school and parents' strong support for their children's academic progress make important contributions to pupils' very good achievement. Good community links develop through the public use of the school's sports facilities and through the use of external support agencies, such as visitors from the medical profession. Because many pupils live some distance from the school and travel by bus, there are fewer opportunities than in many schools for their day-to-day involvement in the small local community. The school makes good use of local facilities to make lessons more interesting, for example, through participation in local cultural events and study of the attractive local environment.
35. Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are good. Active parental involvement in the review processes helps the school to acquire a good, all-round picture

of each of these pupils and their needs. This helps to reinforce the school's aim for a three-way partnership of pupil, parent and school, to determine the targets and programme for improvement. Parents' attendance at annual reviews is good.

36. The school is very outward looking, which enables it to continue to develop and improve, despite its geographical isolation. Its status as a Beacon School was very useful to several local schools, who appreciated the wide range of training opportunities arranged by Wigmore High School, including those related to the National Key Stage 3 Strategies. The school also contributed to its own improvement through Beacon initiatives, for example in developing more effective ways of teaching modern foreign languages
37. The school is now involved in the Western Collaborative Partnership of schools and is focusing this work on improving teaching and learning in science in this and other schools. Very good links with local primary schools have assisted curricular developments. Work in English, mathematics and science that links the teaching programmes for Year 6 and Year 7 ensures a smooth transition into the school and helps pupils to build quickly on previous learning. The school's involvement in the 'able pupil project' helps the highest attaining Year 6 pupils to raise their achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. Senior management is very good and middle management good overall. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership has resulted in good improvement since the previous inspection.
- A very positive outcome of leadership and management is the school's very good ethos that assists pupils' personal development considerably.
- Very good systems for monitoring performance are raising standards further.
- Statutory requirements are not met for religious education or for a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

38. The very good leadership of the headteacher ensures that the expectations of staff and pupils are high and that the school continues to improve. As reported in the previous inspection, he works very closely with a capable and supportive governing body and a very effective senior leadership team, to set a very clear direction for the school's work. As a result, improvement since the previous inspection, when the school was already performing well, is good. The School Achievement Awards in 2001 and 2003 recognise the school's successes in public examinations. The recent Beacon School status and current involvement as a lead school in the Western Collaborative Partnership of schools indicate that the school has much good practice, which it shares well with other schools. It takes care to learn from and use the good practice it sees in other schools. In views expressed in questionnaires and at the parents' meeting, parents said, with good justification, that the school is led and managed very well and that it has a deservedly very good standing in the community. They like, particularly, the school's happy and very purposeful ethos, which was evident throughout the inspection. A very impressive feature

is the very good climate for learning that enables boys and girls of all backgrounds and capabilities to work together harmoniously. At lunchtime, many pupils go to classrooms to work on their own initiative and are trusted to work well and to behave sensibly.

39. Senior management is of very good quality. The headteacher and senior staff do not settle for second best. Procedures for monitoring, evaluating, reviewing and following up the school's performance are rigorous and effective. For example, although standards in science are well above average, senior staff know that teaching, learning and pupils' achievement, though satisfactory, should be better in Years 7 to 9. A rigorous review, involving senior staff and the link governor, identified the strengths and weaknesses in the work of the science department and provided a good action plan for improvement and reorganisation. The changes proposed are being put in place currently. The very detailed and frank reviews by senior staff of the performance of different subjects take place at suitably frequent intervals. They result in ambitious but achievable priorities and targets for improvement. They also provide staff and governors with good information and ideas for development.
40. Governors have a very clear understanding of what the school does well and what should be improved. They monitor and review the school's performance frequently, have suitable procedures for calling the school to account and provide sensitive support, particularly through their individual links with different departments. They contribute actively to the preparation of the school's improvement plan and listen carefully to the professional advice they receive from school staff. Governors carry out their responsibilities very well, apart from those relating to the provision of religious education in Years 10 and 11 and for a daily act of collective worship.
41. The school improvement plan has sensible priorities for improving the quality of teaching and learning further. Generally good implementation of the Key Stage 3 National Strategies and the effective use of continuing professional development for staff succeed in sharing good practice within and across subjects. Performance management is good and operates well. It is effective in improving the quality of teaching and results in suitably challenging targets for raising standards further. Senior staff fulfil their line-manager roles very competently.
42. Financial management and planning are good. Systems for day-to-day management of finances work well. Governors and school staff take care to link the budget to the educational priorities of the school's improvement plan. They have appropriate procedures to achieve best value in their spending decisions. The balance carried through to the current financial year is larger than usual, but relates mostly to expenditure previously committed. The latest available audit of the school's finances, in August 1999, indicated that financial systems were 'reasonable and efficient'.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1 706 563	Balance from previous year	31 589
Total expenditure	1 658 389	Balance carried forward to the next	79 763
Expenditure per pupil	3427		

43. Leadership and management in subject departments continue to be good overall. They make a positive contribution to pupils' achievement and are very good in several subjects, including English, mathematics and physical education. Very effective pastoral management ensures that pupils receive a very good quality of care, support and guidance. The thorough tracking of pupils' progress and rigorous systems for identifying underachievement, and tackling it, ensure that achievement is very good overall and that pupils understand how they can improve.
44. Good leadership and management of special educational needs lead to good co-ordination of the work for these pupils across subjects. Increased provision of learning support assistants helps to ensure that these pupils integrate very well in mainstream classes and achieve as well as other pupils. The Code of Practice is fully operational and supports the school's very positive approach to the inclusion of all pupils.
45. The main aids to pupils' achievement are: much very good teaching; high expectations for pupils' achievement; very good senior leadership and management; pupils' exemplary behaviour, very good attendance and very positive attitudes to work; pupils' well above average skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT; and very good enrichment opportunities for pupils of all capabilities.
46. The main barriers to raising achievement are: lack of religious education in Years 10 and 11; limited use of ICT to support learning in a few subjects; a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching; and inadequate accommodation in a few areas such as art and design, music and science.
47. Taking into account the funding received by the school, the social and economic backgrounds of pupils and the current quality of education and achievement, the school provides good value for money.

Work-related learning

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school prepares pupils very well for their working life after school.

Commentary

48. Pupils have very good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills that contribute very effectively to their very good awareness of the rights and responsibilities attached to the world of work. During the inspection, no work-based lessons were observed. However, as recorded earlier, the quality of careers education is very high and pupils receive a very good grounding and guidance, particularly from the Connexions service, upon which to base their future careers. Discussions with the WRL co-ordinator and with pupils, a scrutiny of pupils' work and observations across subjects, indicate that the school does much to promote pupils' awareness of the world of work outside of school. Discussions with pupils show that they have a good knowledge and understanding of workplace practices and expectations, through their work experience programme.
49. Good leadership and management are developing a suitable policy for the teaching of WRL across the curriculum. The programme meets statutory requirements. The curricular audit in the summer of 2004 identified examples of WRL activities and opportunities within the curriculum where developments were needed and these are being tackled appropriately.
50. Specialist staff teach the life skills programme in Years 10 and 11, which has established very good links with those employers who provide the large majority of the work experience placements, which most pupils organise for themselves. The work-related 'Compact Week' for pupils in Years 10 and 11, provides these pupils with very useful and informative contact with industry, business and commerce. Pupils and parents value this programme highly. Although the school is at an early stage of developing pupils' work-related skills, the programme is developing a good system for assessing their skills, knowledge and understanding in WRL.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 11 pupils' work shows very good gains from when they joined the school.
- Much very good teaching ensures that pupils work hard and learn very well.
- Pupils achieve GCSE results that are consistently well above average.
- Very good leadership has resulted in very good improvements in recent years.
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are insufficiently encouraged to be independent learners.

Commentary

51. Pupils enter the school with above average standards of work. They build well on these so that their levels of attainment are well above average by the end of Year 9. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, both for boys and girls, were well above the average for all schools and matched those attained by similar schools. They show that pupils achieved well. Provisional results for 2004 are similar to those of the previous year. Results in recent years have been consistently well above average. Current standards of work in Years 7 to 9 are well above. Pupils of all capabilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve well but not quite as well as they do in Years 10 and 11. Boys and girls express themselves confidently when speaking. They use a good range of language. They read aloud expressively and show very good understanding. All pupils read regularly in and out of lessons. They make increasingly effective use of the library to develop their reading and research skills. Pupils enjoy writing. They write accurately and show good control of language. Written work is always very well organised and presented.
52. The GCSE examination results, in 2003, were well above average compared with those in all schools. They show very good achievement compared with pupils' earlier attainment. The proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades was well above average. Results in 2004 were well above the national average for 2003. Boys and girls achieved equally very well. Almost all pupils were entered for GCSE examinations and they all achieved at least grade G. Results in recent years have been consistently well above average. By Year 11, pupils' work is further ahead of the average than their already high standards at the end of Year 9. In Years 10 and 11 pupils talk readily and confidently in presentations and discussions. They have very good understanding of literary techniques. They write

sensitively and at length about difficult and challenging literature and media texts. They plan and organise their written work very well. Levels of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar are high. Pupils with special educational needs and the gifted pupils achieve equally as well as other pupils because teachers ensure that the work matches very closely their individual needs.

53. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. It is often very good in Years 7 to 9, but pupils have fewer opportunities to work independently in the first three years. As a result, they occasionally find that work is not fully challenging or interesting. Learning is very good in all years. Pupils assist their learning through their eagerness and commitment to do well. Teachers plan lessons very carefully to provide a variety of activities and to give good emphasis to developing language. As a result the language and literacy of pupils are well above average. Teachers insist upon very high standards of behaviour. They mark work conscientiously and in detail so that pupils are encouraged to work hard for improvement. Teachers make wide use of ICT in their day-to-day work. They provide good opportunities for pupils to develop confidence in using their computing skills. Lessons provide frequent opportunities for pupils to use ICT for research and to prepare and present their assignments. Levels of competence in using ICT are high.
54. Very good leadership ensures that teachers work closely together to help all pupils to maximise their achievement. Assessment is well organised. New teachers have very good support. A good range of additional activities and close ties with other departments are further features of the very good management. Close and effective links with primary schools help pupils to make a good start in Year 7.
55. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 now reach higher standards. The achievement of boys is better. The qualities of teaching and of leadership have improved well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Pupils make very good use of their well above average skills in literacy and oracy to develop their work in subjects across the curriculum. The very effective implementation of the National Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy ensures that teachers have a consistent approach to teaching language and literacy. In English, most lessons have a language focus so that pupils are continuously improving their standards of literacy. In most lessons in other subjects, teachers and support assistants encourage pupils to develop their vocabulary so that they use technical terms accurately. The school library has only a modest stock of books for research. It is not yet widely used for extending pupils' reading interests.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High GCSE results show that boys and girls achieve very well in French.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and high literacy skills enhance their learning.

- Very good management has established clear policies and plans, resulting in good teaching.
- Assessment does not often show pupils sufficiently how to improve.

Commentary

57. Standards in all years are well above average. Teachers' assessments, in 2004, show that nine out of 10 pupils reach at least Level 5 at the end of Year 9 and that boys achieve as well as girls. They indicate that pupils' achievement is very good. Current work in Years 7 to 9 shows that standards are well above average and that boys and girls of all capabilities are achieving very well.
58. The GCSE examination results in French are consistently well above the respective national averages for both boys and girls. In 2003, pupils attained higher grades in French than in most of their other subjects. Provisional results for 2004 were high for the large numbers entered, with two out of every five candidates in French gaining grades A* or A. Current standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above average and show that pupils are continuing to achieve very well, especially in spoken French. In 2004, GCSE examination results in German were slightly above the previous year's national average and indicated good achievement for the 11 pupils involved. No work was observed in German during the inspection.
59. Teaching is good, and learning is very good, throughout Years 7 to 11. Most pupils achieve very well because they want to learn. They use their very competent literacy skills very effectively to assist their language learning. Their very good attitudes and behaviour ensure that working relationships are very good in class. They concentrate very well and take pride in the presentation of work. Teachers continue to develop pupils' literacy skills by their consistent approach to corrections and their emphasis on speaking and listening, as well as by encouraging reading. They plan lessons very well to include a variety of ways to develop and reinforce learning. Tasks are short and well timed to sustain interest.
60. In Years 7 to 9, pupils enrich their cultural understanding and interest through the two trips to France. Pupils in all years learn about the customs of other European countries through the teachers' excellent use of film, food and music. Teachers provide work of suitable challenge and difficulty for boys and girls of all capabilities, including the highest attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make the same rates of progress as other pupils because the teachers work effectively with the support assistants to provide suitable materials and tasks and through careful seating and grouping arrangements.
61. Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and frequently and use the results to assist in the planning of lessons. Pupils have adequate opportunities to evaluate their own work. However, teachers do not indicate sufficiently in their marking the current levels at which pupils are working and how they can improve.
62. Good leadership and very good management result in very effective teamwork that provides consistency and clear planning for a broad and rich foreign language experience for pupils. The department has a strong focus on raising standards further. Staff monitor the performance of teachers and pupils very well and use the information well to share good practice in teaching, but not enough to track or mentor pupils. The department has produced very good resources to motivate pupils and to help them to learn. It provides a stimulating environment that encourages pupils to enjoy the subject.

63. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. High standards have been maintained. Programmes now include literacy and numeracy as well as ICT and resources and accommodation have improved well.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well above average attainment indicates very good achievement throughout Years 7 to 11.
- Very good leadership and management ensure very good teaching and learning overall.
- 'Little and often' homework motivates pupils and ensures proper reinforcement of their work.
- Marking does not often enough show pupils clearly what to do to improve.

Commentary

64. Results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above average. They indicate very good achievement compared with pupils' above average standards on entry in Year 7. The GCSE examination results in the same year were well above average and show that pupils achieved very well. Provisional GCSE results for 2004 show that these well above average standards are being sustained. High attaining pupils achieve particularly well, as shown by the consistently well above average proportion of pupils gaining A* or A grades in GCSE examinations. Current work, throughout Years 7 to 11, shows that standards are well above average and that the achievement of boys and girls of all capabilities is very good across all aspects of the mathematics syllabus.
65. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 11 and benefit from the effective implementation and use of the Key Stage 3 Numeracy Strategy. Very good planning of lessons means that teachers capture all pupils' attention quickly and provide them with tasks and activities of good challenge and suitable difficulty. Brisk starter activities in all lessons engage the interest of pupils, reinforce previous work well and ensure that pupils consolidate and develop their basic mathematical skills. The good deployment of learning support assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs perform as well as the other pupils in mathematics lessons.
66. Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers assess and track pupils' work and progress thoroughly. They use the information gathered to monitor pupils' progress effectively, so that potential underachievement is recognised early and remedial action taken. However, although marking is accurate, many pupils often do not know what they need to do to improve. Pupils use ICT well where appropriate, but inadequate resources prevent teachers from exploiting the benefits of using ICT to enhance teaching and their presentation of work. Pupils consolidate their learning through good use of short, frequent homework exercises.
67. Very good leadership and management place a firm emphasis on high standards. Very effective monitoring of teaching and learning has enabled the department to maintain

those high standards. Accommodation is barely adequate. All rooms used for mathematics lessons are also used frequently for other lessons and they are very cramped for all but the smallest groups. The extremely good behaviour and very positive attitudes of pupils help to minimise the difficulties posed by the accommodation.

68. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Standards have risen and are now sustained at well above national expectations.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Pupils use their well above average computational, statistical, graphical, interpretational and measuring skills competently to assist their work across the curriculum. In many lessons, pupils have good opportunities to practise and develop their numeracy skills, as seen, for example, in science, design and technology, ICT, art and design, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. Staff have developed an exemplary whole-school numeracy policy following extensive consultation among subjects. Approaches to all aspects of numeracy have been agreed across the school and all staff have easy access to very good guidance and materials. The very effective implementation of this policy ensures that the teaching of numeracy is good overall.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE attainment is well above average, and in 2003 represented good achievement.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes assist their good progress in lessons.
- In Years 7 to 9, teachers occasionally provide work that does not match well the needs of all pupils.
- Planning and monitoring are not rigorous enough to ensure consistency of teaching.

Commentary

70. Results in the 2003 Year 9 national tests were well above average and matched those of similar schools. They indicated satisfactory achievement compared with pupils' levels of attainment on entry in Year 7. Boys' performance was better than that of the girls. Provisional results for 2004 show a slight increase in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 or above. The GCSE examination results in 2003 were well above average both for boys and for girls and indicated good achievement when compared with their earlier attainment at the end of Year 9. Girls' performance was above that of the boys, overall. Provisional results for 2004 show an increase in the proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C.
71. Current standards are above average by Year 9. They are slightly lower than those reflected by national test results and show that pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards are well above average by Year 11 and show that pupils are achieving well. Most pupils, throughout Years 7 to 11, acquire scientific knowledge and understanding quickly and apply it well in new situations. However, in a few classes in Year 7 to 9, higher attaining pupils and pupils who have special educational needs do not always make as

good progress as the other pupils. This is because teachers too often pitch the work to match the needs of pupils in the broad, middle range of ability and do not provide work of sufficient challenge and difficulty for the rest. Higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 have fewer opportunities than those in Years 10 and 11 to research appropriate information, think critically about it and produce original extended writing. Consequently, many younger pupils often give answers lacking in depth and understanding. Overall, pupils' practical and individual investigative skills, though generally above average, are not as strong as their work in the knowledge-based areas of science.

72. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. However, it lacks consistency because not all teachers make effective use of the Key Stage 3 National Science Strategy. Teaching is good in Years 10 and 11. The quality of learning is consistently good throughout Years 7 to 11, because pupils behave very well, work hard and productively, and use their very competent skills in literacy and numeracy to support their work. Teachers generally plan and structure their lessons well. In the most effective lessons, they sustain pace and excitement throughout, keeping pupils motivated and focused on their work. They use good starter activities to settle pupils and to engage their interest quickly. Pupils are aware of what they are going to learn from the outset. They have an interesting main activity and are involved actively in practical work, as in a Year 9 lesson, in which they investigated which tube loses energy more quickly, one with a dull black surface or a shiny silver one. In many satisfactory lessons, the teacher did not provide enough opportunities for all pupils to discuss and consolidate their work in groups or as a whole class. In the two unsatisfactory lessons the range of learning was too narrow, pupils found the work dull and the pace of learning was too slow.
73. Satisfactory leadership and management have resulted in satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Assessment is adequate overall, but marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Pupils generally know what they need to do to improve. A good start has been made in compiling pupils' performance data as a means of establishing targets for raising standards. However, many of the end of topic tests in Years 7 to 9 do not stretch the higher attaining pupils enough. The science curriculum has improved recently through the introduction of a new and more appropriate course in Year 7. Departmental monitoring is not rigorous enough to ensure that teaching is more consistently good or to promote the sharing of the good practice that exists in the department. Deficiencies remain in laboratory accommodation, which restrict the amount of practical work for pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very high standards have been maintained as a result of very good teaching and assessment.
- The recently introduced GNVQ course meets very well the needs of a wide range of pupils.
- A few subjects, such as music and art and design, have insufficient access to ICT facilities.

Commentary

74. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 show that standards are well above average for both boys and girls. They show that pupils achieve very well compared with their attainment on entry in Year 7. In 2003, the GCSE examination results were well above the national average and pupils' achievement was very good, compared with their earlier attainment at the end of Year 9. In 2004, provisional results in the newly-introduced GNVQ course, taken by all pupils, indicate that high standards are being maintained, with a large proportion of A* and A grades.
75. Pupils begin Year 7 with a wide range of ICT experiences, but overall, standards are above average. All pupils study ICT as a separate subject throughout Years 7 to 11. Standards are currently well above average by Year 9 and show that boys and girls, of all capabilities, are achieving very well. In Year 9, pupils use complex formulae very competently and accurately in work on spreadsheets. They produce desktop published work, which is both relevant and of very good quality.
76. In Years 10 and 11, boys and girls of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, are achieving very well in the GNVQ course and standards are high. Pupils set up complex relational databases and test their practicality and efficiency very effectively. They use their very good computing skills to carry out project work and exercises related to the workplace. They are enthusiastic about their learning and the support and guidance they receive. As a result, they make very good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding.
77. Teaching and learning are very good in all years. Assessment is good overall. Teachers and pupils have high expectations. Teachers make very effective use of their very good expertise in the subject and awareness of pupils' individual needs to motivate pupils and to provide very confident and accurate presentations. They encourage pupils to work productively through a wide range of interesting and challenging activities. Teachers ensure that pupils know clearly the requirements of the examination syllabuses and the arrangements for the assessment of their work. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace because pupils know exactly what they have to do and teachers review their progress frequently. Pupils consolidate their learning very well through their own and the teacher's evaluations of the work. They make very good progress in acquiring advanced skills in relation to web page design and spreadsheet work. Pupils of lower attainment and those who have special educational needs achieve equally as well as other pupils because, when needed, they receive very good one-to-one support from the teacher, from the learning support assistant or from other pupils. The ready availability of drop-in support, outside timetabled lessons, promotes pupils' achievement well.
78. Very good leadership and management have a clear purpose to improve and develop teaching and to ensure that pupils achieve as well as possible. The very good review and evaluation systems ensure the spread of good practice and are effective in setting ambitious but achievable targets for pupils and the department. Assessment is good and enables staff quickly to spot underachievement and to provide appropriate remedial action. The department's success in recruiting and training staff of very good quality has a positive effect on standards in all years.

79. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements and standards are even higher. Resources for ICT are good, but the network is now at full capacity. The department recognises the need to enhance the capability of the file server.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. Pupils make satisfactory use of their above average ICT skills to support their work in subjects across the curriculum. The quality and amount of computers are satisfactory. A few teachers use the interactive whiteboards to provide good demonstrations and explanations. In many subjects, pupils enhance their study and research skills through effective use of computers. However, the limited facilities for computer-assisted design and computer-aided manufacture restrict pupils' progress in design and technology. Technical limitations associated with the current network hinder pupils' work on imaging processes in art and design. The limited use of computers in music restricts the breadth of the music curriculum.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results rose substantially in 2004 and show that pupils achieved very well.
- Very good emphasis on fieldwork enables pupils to develop higher order skills.
- Very good assessment and good teaching help pupils to make good progress.

Commentary

81. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work at the end of Year 9 in 2004 show that standards were well above those reported nationally in 2003. They indicate good achievement compared with pupils' standards on entry in Year 7. The GCSE examination results were above average in 2003 and indicated satisfactory achievement for the pupils involved. Provisional GCSE results in 2004 show a substantial improvement, reflecting a pattern set before 2003. They show very good achievement, for both boys and girls, and, particularly, for the higher attaining pupils. One in every three pupils, out of a large entry, gained GCSE grades A* or A in 2004.
82. In Year 9, current standards are well above average. They show that the achievement, both of boys and girls, is good, compared with their above average standards on entry. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are, similarly, well above average, representing further good achievement for pupils of all capabilities. Teachers are increasingly effective in helping the lower attaining boys to improve, by giving them good guidance and extra teaching, especially in approaches to literacy and the planning and presentation of written work. Standards are high, partly because of the rigour with which pupils are encouraged to evaluate and follow up their work.
83. Teaching is good and learning is very good in Years 7 to 11. Teachers are very well organised and stimulate pupils' interest through their knowledgeable explanations and good responses to questions. The high expectations of teachers and pupils ensure that work generally proceeds at a fast pace, as in a Year 9 lesson that introduced work on the human and physical geography of Brazil. Occasionally, in a few Year 10 and 11 lessons, the work does not always match the needs of all pupils, so progress, though satisfactory, is slower. Teachers, particularly in Years 7 to 9, do not always provide enough opportunities for pupils to think for themselves or to work independently. Pupils make a very positive contribution to their high standards by working hard and productively. They make good use of their very competent skills in literacy and numeracy to present their work very well.
84. Very good assessment helps pupils to improve. Teachers track pupils' performances closely and pick up and deal with any underachievement quickly. They use information from assessment to set well-considered and challenging targets for pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11. Pupils in all years know how well they are making progress, but a few middle and lower attaining pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve

their work. Pupils with special educational needs make broadly similar progress to that of the other pupils. However, the current deployment of support assistants does not always ensure that pupils with behavioural difficulties have enough help to maintain concentration throughout the lesson. The ample and well-structured opportunities for local fieldwork, in all years, enrich and extend pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of practical work very well. They give pupils useful practice in formulating and testing hypotheses, for example in research on the central business district of a small city.

85. Good leadership and management provide a clear focus on raising standards further and have appropriate priorities. The very good systems for assessment ensure that teachers know their pupils well but are not currently used well enough to help pupils to develop their skills of independent study. The department has made very good progress in developing the subject skills of learning support staff, so that they provide effective assistance to pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers promote pupils' learning through good use of ICT, which has improved, as more equipment, including a digital projector, is now available. However, the monitoring of teaching is not fully effective in ensuring consistency of teaching, which varies from very good to satisfactory.
86. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Large and increasing numbers of pupils opt for the subject. The department has the willingness and capacity to improve further.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well above average GCSE results show that pupils' achievement is very good by Year 11.
- Very good teaching encourages pupils to discuss historical events in a lively manner.
- Pupils show consistent effort and concentration in lessons that support very good learning.
- Carefully planned visits to places of historical significance enrich pupils' knowledge.

Commentary

87. Teachers' assessments show that standards are usually above average at the end of Year 9 and that achievement is good for boys and girls, compared with their slightly above average standards on entry in Year 7. The GCSE examination results, in 2003, were well above average and indicated that pupils' achievement was very good. Provisional results, in 2004, were well above the previous year's national average and represent very good achievement for the boys and girls involved. Girls attain higher standards than boys, both in Year 9 assessments and in GCSE examinations.
88. Current standards are above average by Year 9. In Years 7 to 9, pupils of all capabilities, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in their understanding of how to use sources of historical evidence. They learn to interpret sources of evidence, using archaeological investigations such as that of the village of Wharram Percy. They develop good chronological skills by ordering the events leading up

to the Peterloo massacre. Standards are well above average by Year 11 and show that pupils of all capabilities are achieving very well. In Years 10 and 11, pupils learn to evaluate source material critically, using pictures, diaries and newspapers, as in their study of the industrial development of Coalbrookdale. They compare these sources very effectively with the first-hand experience derived from their field study. In following the syllabus of the Schools' History Project, pupils evaluate critically how medical practice has evolved over time.

89. Standards of writing in history are very good throughout the school and assist pupils' very good progress. Teachers ensure that pupils learn key vocabulary effectively, and ensure that they write well-structured essays. Pupils produce much very good extended writing, notably in an essay on the factors leading to the development of Quarry Bank Mill. Pupils use ICT with confidence and skill to produce very good work on the key figures in Renaissance medicine. This good use of ICT has a particularly positive effect on the achievements of boys. Delays in the installation of wireless connection to the history teaching rooms limit the opportunities to use computers more fully.
90. Teaching and learning in history are very good. Well-planned lessons have a very lively pace and strong narrative, which captures and maintains pupils' interest. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to discuss and debate issues through techniques such as role-play. In GCSE classes, particularly, teachers give pupils clear guidance as to how to achieve high results. Good opportunities for field study to historical sites, such as Coalbrookdale, contribute well to pupils' learning.
91. The very effective leadership and management of the department place a strong emphasis on continuous improvement. The detailed spreadsheet tracking of pupils' performance is an important factor in the good improvement made in the provision for history since the previous inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not receive their entitlement to religious education.
- Pupils' standards by Year 9 are well above the expectations set in the locally agreed syllabus.
- Much excellent teaching in Years 7 to 9 motivates pupils to achieve very well.
- The system for tracking pupils' achievement is very effective in helping them to improve in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

92. The school does not meet requirements for the teaching of religious education in Years 10 and 11. The school's life skills course contains insufficient work that is relevant to the locally agreed syllabus. No GCSE short or full courses are currently available. The school has been unable to resolve the staffing difficulties that have resulted in this unsatisfactory provision.

93. Standards in Year 9 match those shown in teachers' assessments in 2004, which are well above the average expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils demonstrate very good understanding of how different faiths approach moral issues. They compare the Christian, Islamic and Sikh moral codes and contrast these with their own values. Pupils show a very good understanding of how Gandhi's life and faith exemplify the moral dilemmas associated with pacifism, and relate this to their own experience and beliefs. In the context of their very limited knowledge of religious education on entry to the school, current standards represent very good achievement for boys and girls of all capabilities.
94. Teaching and learning are very good overall in Years 7 to 9. The specialist teaching in religious education is excellent. Skilfully planned lessons provide reasonably short, focused activities such as discussion and role-play. Pupils discuss their answers to questions in pairs, to ensure that they understand fully such key learning points as the links between the moral codes of different faiths. Very good opportunities for reflection on pacifism and violence contribute powerfully to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils of different capabilities, including those with special educational needs, show keen interest and are very responsive to their teachers. Pupils clearly enjoy the opportunities that religious education offers to reflect on topics of direct concern, such as how to behave ethically in challenging situations. They express a very positive interest in studying the subject at GCSE level.
95. Very good leadership and management of the subject in Years 7 to 9 ensure that standards are high and pupils enjoy the enthusiastic teaching. The commitment of the part-time specialist and advanced skills teaching has a good effect on the performance of the other teachers. The system for tracking pupils' achievement from entry to the school through to Year 9 is very effective. It informs individual pupils of their progress and highlights areas for development in the scheme of work.
96. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory in that the school no longer offers an appropriate course in Years 10 and 11. It has been unable to resolve the staffing difficulties and, as a result, does not provide access for all pupils to a suitable course in religious education.

TECHNOLOGY

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 leads to well above average GCSE results.
- Pupils develop good skills as independent learners through their GCSE coursework.
- Lack of co-ordination of work across the material areas in Years 7 to 9 slows pupils' progress.
- Good leadership helps to improve standards of designing and making in resistant materials.
- Some inadequate accommodation restricts the range of learning activities.

Commentary

97. Teachers' assessments in the past two years indicate that standards were well above average at the end of Year 9. Current standards of work are above average by Year 9. They represent good achievement for boys and girls of all capabilities, compared with their varied but slightly above average levels of attainment on entry. In Years 7 to 9, pupils experience a broad range of materials and processes. Pupils use their good research skills effectively to plan and develop their topics. They make prototypes and communicate the development of their design ideas well.
98. In 2003, the GCSE examination results were well above average and pupils did a little better in design and technology than they did in most of their other subjects. They show that boys and girls of all capabilities achieved very well, compared with earlier attainment at the end of Year 9. Provisional results in 2004 show further improvement and continued very good achievement. Results in resistant materials and food technology are particularly high, but pupils in all subject areas do broadly as well as they do in their other subjects. Current standards of work by Year 11 are well above average and show that boys and girls are achieving very well. In food technology, pupils identify their market and test, evaluate, modify and promote their products very well. In graphics and resistant materials, pupils integrate computer-aided design to enhance their work. In all areas, the application of ICT, though satisfactory overall, is inconsistent, because departmental resources are in demand and well utilised, but insufficient in quantity.
99. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are good. Teachers have high expectations of the quality and variety of design work. Pupils respond positively and make rapid progress in Year 7, despite varied prior experience. Teachers help pupils to develop a range of making techniques, including computer-aided design and manufacture. However, at times, pupils spend too much time copying up notes, rather than having time to concentrate on higher level skills in designing, making and evaluating. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 are very good. A good feature of class management and planning in Years 10 and 11 is that pupils receive much encouragement and good opportunities to develop their skills of independent learning. As a result, they make quick progress at whatever stage they are in their coursework. Teachers do not always make

enough use of techniques such as product analysis and debate to develop pupils' intellectual approach. Pupils' knowledge of industrial applications and the application of 'smart' materials is average and not as well developed as other aspects of the syllabus. Pupils enhance their practical work through good involvement in the national 'Young Foresight' initiative.

100. Good leadership and management make effective analyses and reviews of the department's performance. These have led to improved standards and sharing of good practice in teaching, particularly in resistant materials. However, the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 does not provide a co-ordinated progression of work across the different material areas. Assessment in Years 7 to 9 does not link sufficiently to National Curriculum levels to enable pupils to know clearly what to do to improve their standards.
101. Improvement is good since the previous inspection. Standards have risen, particularly with respect to the quality of designing and making in resistant materials. The resources for ICT have increased and improved, even though they are too limited to meet all the demands placed on them. Schemes of work now plan effectively for the use of computer-aided design and manufacturing. Accommodation is no longer shared, but there remains some inadequate accommodation that limits the scope of activities in food technology and resistant materials.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Two lessons in **drama** were sampled. Good teaching in these lessons enabled pupils to make good progress. Performances were confident and pupils evaluated their work well. Standards of written work for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are well above average. Pupils write knowledgeably about plays and show good awareness of the techniques used in scenes to create dramatic impact on the audience. The GCSE examination results for 2004 show that all pupils entering gained A*-C grades and achieved very well.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and enthusiastic teaching helps pupils to achieve well.
- The very knowledgeable teachers support pupils' learning in many media.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation limits the scope of the curriculum.

Commentary

102. On entry to the school standards are broadly average. Teachers' assessments show that pupils' standards were above average at the end of Year 9 in 2003 and standards were similar in 2004. Current standards in Year 9 are above average, representing good achievement over the first three years. Pupils of all capabilities, including the talented pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve well as a result of teachers' attention to the needs of individuals. Pupils receive a good foundation in painting and drawing skills and experience a good range of other media through well-planned projects.

103. The GCSE examination results, in 2004, were well above the national average for 2003, with almost all pupils gaining A*-C grades. The achievement of boys and girls was good, compared with their earlier attainment at the end of Year 9. Girls attained higher than boys by about one grade. Current standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above average and represent very good achievement, compared with these pupils' standards on entry in Year 7. Pupils become increasingly experimental in combining materials. They make effective use of ICT to scan their own images, as starting points for further paintings and collages. The size and shape of the art room, along with inadequate storage, inhibit working on a large scale, particularly in three dimensions.
104. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teaching targets pupils' individual needs well and, in all years, helps pupils of all capabilities to make good progress in lessons. In Years 7 to 9, well-prepared lessons, carried forward at a fast pace by teachers' enthusiasm, generate a very good response from pupils who are very keen to learn. Teachers show a very good knowledge of art and artists across a wide range of themes and media that inspires a confident approach in pupils' work. Well-pitched, probing and often persistent, questioning is effective in promoting pupils' use of a descriptive and evaluative vocabulary. In Years 10 and 11, a good mixture of challenge and praise maintains a busy working atmosphere that enables pupils to work well on their own.
105. Leadership and management of art and design are in transition and have made a good start. The new leadership is introducing innovative ideas to an already successful department. Management is successful in building the new developments thoughtfully into such existing, good systems as curricular planning and the use of assessment to support learning.
106. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Previous strengths have been sustained and the GCSE examination results have improved. However, the accommodation remains unsatisfactory and restricts the range of activities for pupils.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well above average standards by Years 9 and 11 show that pupils achieve very well in music.
- Very good and occasionally excellent teaching motivates pupils to enjoy music making.
- Inadequate accommodation and resources prevent the achievement of even higher standards.

Commentary

107. Teachers' assessments of pupils' standards at the end of Year 9, in recent years, show that pupils achieve well and reach well above average standards. As a result, increasing numbers of boys and girls choose to study music in Years 10 and 11. Current standards are well above average by Year 9 and indicate that pupils of all capabilities, including the talented musicians and pupils with special educational needs, are achieving very well. In

2004, the GCSE examination results were well above the national average for 2003. All ten pupils gained A*-C grades, including eight pupils at grades A* or A. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are well above average and show that pupils' achievement remains very good, compared with their attainment on joining the school.

108. In all years, pupils use keyboards particularly well. Performance is a strength. One quarter of all pupils receive instrumental tuition in school. Composition does not have the advantage of computer use. Pupils in all years achieve so well because they have positive attitudes to learning and behave extremely well. Those with learning difficulties are usually equally keen to make progress, and benefit from the valuable help that they receive from other pupils, as well as from teaching and support staff. Pupils relish and respond earnestly to the high demands made of them and are keen to share their work. Limitations to achievement come from problems of space and resources.
109. Teaching and learning are consistently very good in all years. The teaching provides exciting learning experiences that engage pupils thoroughly, encouraging them to do their best. Very good planning and use of the limited space ensure the best use of the time available for learning. Some excellent teaching helped pupils in Year 7 to create an artistic and spiritual experience as they improvised over the reading of an American Indian prayer. Assessment is good and helps teachers to provide work matched well to pupils' individual needs and encourages pupils to do their best. However, it often does not ensure that pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve or that written targets are reviewed frequently enough.
110. Music has a high profile in the school because leadership is good, enthusiastic and well informed, with a firm commitment to raise standards higher. Very good management of the subject provides well-organised systems for efficient working, including instrumental teaching by nine visiting teachers. Much effort goes into music-making beyond lessons, including annual staged shows of good quality and regular small group performances in school. For larger ensemble experience, pupils join county groups. There are important limitations on pupils achieving even higher standards. The lack of access to computers or music software restricts their composing skills. Classroom instruments are too limited in number and range. The one music room has two small anterooms used for instrumental tuition almost continuously. In most class lessons, teacher and pupils are distracted by sound from these. No other spaces are available for group work. These adverse circumstances restrict the range of learning experiences in all years.
111. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Standards have risen even higher and teaching has further improved.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching helps pupils to achieve very well by Year 11.
- Teachers use very good assessment to inform pupils well and to plan their work.
- Very good leadership and management help pupils to enjoy their work in physical education.

Commentary

112. In 2003, teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 showed that standards were above average, indicating good achievement. Current standards are above average in Year 9 and show that boys and girls of all capabilities are achieving well, compared with their standards on entry. By Year 11, standards are well above expectations on the compulsory general course and pupils' achievement is very good. The school does not provide GCSE courses in physical education.
113. Throughout their time in school, boys and girls enjoy physical education and show a high level of commitment to improving their targets. Pupils of all capabilities acquire good basic skills in a range of activities, which include basketball, netball, dance and gymnastics. They are confident when working alone or in groups and they support each other very well. Safety is a prime concern and pupils exercise care in all of their activities. This is largely due to teachers' excellent class management and insistence on very high standards of behaviour. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good encouragement and guidance and, as a result, make good progress. Many of these pupils display very competent physical skills.
114. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. At times, teaching is excellent. Two well-qualified and experienced specialists motivate pupils through their own enthusiasm and excellent subject knowledge. Extremely effective planning outlines very clearly what is expected of pupils and enables them to meet the high levels of expectation and challenge presented. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils result in very productive learning. Very good extra-curricular sporting provision enhances the already high skills in team games that pupils gain through work in class. Many pupils respond very positively to the encouragement from teachers to develop their talents further, by active participation in a wide range of clubs and societies beyond school.
115. Assessment and its use are very effective. Pupils receive frequent and regular information about how well they are doing. The department's very detailed records give a very clear indication of what pupils have achieved over a period of time. Teachers use this information effectively to plan future work that matches well the needs of individual pupils and different groups of pupils.
116. Very good leadership and management have resulted in raised standards and heightened enthusiasm, and have ensured that improvement since the previous inspection is very good.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

This area was not a focus of the inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The focus was on citizenship and the personal, social and health education programme.

CITIZENSHIP

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Years 7 to 9 helps pupils to learn well in lessons.
- Shortage of curricular time and of staff training holds back higher standards and achievement.
- Pupils' very good general knowledge assists their achievement.
- Pupils do not know what progress they are making, because assessment is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

117. Standards are average in Years 7 to 11. They show that pupils are achieving satisfactorily throughout the school.
118. All pupils receive one lesson of citizenship every two weeks. This limited time hinders the development of their skills and understanding and means that pupils' standards are not as high as in most other subjects. By the end of Year 9, boys and girls have adequate knowledge and understanding about belonging to a community and of central and local government. However, they rarely have time to discuss and debate these issues in any depth. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not follow an examination course and have few opportunities to work in depth on some citizenship issues. The resulting gaps in their knowledge and understanding are not met fully by work in other subjects. However, in all years, pupils' very good literacy, research and discussion skills and their very good general knowledge make an important contribution to their standards and achievement in this subject.
119. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good, chiefly because the lessons are well planned. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss and debate issues in pairs and in groups. Pupils display good communication skills and debate and challenge each other, through discussions, on a range of social and political issues that affect them. Too few opportunities and too little time for pupils to use and develop their written skills restrict progress. No teaching was observed in Year 10 and 11. However, pupils' written work and discussions with pupils show that they do not have sufficient time to discuss and debate issues in depth. By the end of Year 11, they have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of young people. Pupils' responses to the

work on torture, euthanasia and moral dilemmas are short and show little independent thought or reflection. There is not enough use of homework to supplement the work done in class.

120. The lack of a comprehensive programme of monitoring and recording of pupils' achievement and progress, designed to show pupils how well they are doing and how to improve, hinders the achievement of higher standards.
121. The new, satisfactory and enthusiastic leadership and management of citizenship have improved the curricular planning and have produced well-thought-out ideas for further developments. Appropriate plans are being developed for the further training of subject teachers to ensure that expertise is sufficient to teach the programme of study effectively.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

PROVISION IN PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) IS SATISFACTORY.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils receive good teaching about matters relating to sex and drugs.
- The work does not always challenge the highest attaining pupils to think deeply.
- Good leadership has developed a good programme of topics.

Commentary

122. In all years, pupils' standards are above those seen in many schools. Pupils have wide vocabularies and their standards of oracy are well above average. They therefore express mature and complex ideas very well. Achievement is satisfactory but pupils are not always challenged to work at the highest levels.
123. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the previous inspection, the teaching of PSHE by form teachers resulted in considerable variations in the quality of teaching. The use of a specialist team of teachers to cover most of the teaching of PSHE now results in greater consistency. Teachers have a good knowledge of personal and social education issues and the teaching styles that work best. They make good use of group work for discussions and debate and pupils respond very enthusiastically. Although pupils work well together, teachers do not always give them enough guidance about how to bring ideas together. Occasionally, the teacher's instructions are unclear and lead to pupils being confused and time being wasted. The work provided is of suitable challenge and difficulty for most pupils, but does not always stretch the most capable pupils.
124. The curriculum for Years 7 and 8 has been well designed to meet pupils' needs. The programme of study in Years 9, 10 and 11 has a good focus on sex and drug education and ensures that statutory requirements are met. The sex education programme enables pupils to consider, in a mature manner, social and moral issues about such topics as contraception, HIV and sexually transmitted infections.
125. Good leadership is resulting in good improvements to the programme of lessons for pupils in Years 7 and 8 and helps to ensure that teachers use an interesting and wide range of activities that attracts pupils' interest. Management is satisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory overall and helps teachers to respond adequately to most pupils' individual needs. The department currently provides little monitoring of classroom practice to determine teachers' needs for professional development. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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