

INSPECTION REPORT

Colton Hills Community School

Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104395

Headteacher: Mr K Byatt

Lead inspector: A Briggs

Dates of inspection: 13th – 17th September 2004

Inspection number: 268784

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

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Terms that may be used in this report

Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are at Key Stage 3, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools after Year 6. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are at Key Stage 4 of their education. Those pupils who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the sixth form, in Years 12 and 13. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for pupils and pupils of all ages at school.

At the end of Year 9, pupils aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the pupils know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, pupils aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) or the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). Sixth form students may take further courses leading to these awards, including the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE), or to those of the General Certificate of Education at Advanced level (A-level). Students may take examinations leading to the Advanced Subsidiary award (AS), equivalent to half the difficulty of the full A-level, which is gained by further study beyond AS standard. Some students may also take Advanced Extension Awards (AEA).

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

The Key Stage 3 National Strategy is designed to support schools to address the learning needs of 11-14 year old pupils. It operates across all subjects as a whole-school improvement strategy. It provides a platform for professional development across the school through its emphasis on teaching and learning. It supports personalised learning by promoting an approach in which careful attention is paid to pupils' individual learning styles, motivations and needs. Lessons are designed to be varied and enjoyable within a clear structure.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	996
School address:	Jeremy Road Goldthorn Park Wolverhampton
Postcode:	WV4 5DG
Telephone number:	01902 558420
Fax number:	01902 558421
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms S Cook
Date of previous inspection:	13 th –14 th November 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Colton Hills Community School is about the same size as other secondary schools. It is a mixed 11 to 19 school situated near the southern boundary of Wolverhampton. There are slightly more girls than boys on roll. Most pupils come from the areas between the school and the city centre, which overall, are below average in terms of social and economic measures when compared to the national average. The majority of pupils are of Asian origin although there is a wide range of cultural diversity within the school. The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is much higher than in most other schools and there is a sizeable group of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with well below average standards in English, mathematics and science. On average, one in ten pupils join or leave the school each year at times other than the start of Year 7. This is much higher than other schools. The proportion of pupils who have identified special educational needs is broadly average.

In addition to being a community school, Colton Hills is part of the Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiative and the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG). It received the Sportsmark award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2002.

A large number of students continue their education into the sixth form. It is a similar picture at the end of Year 13 with many continuing into higher education. Students join the sixth form to follow traditional A-level courses and an increasing number of vocational courses. Very few students leave the sixth form at the end of Year 12. Their attainment is below the average attainment of students entering sixth forms.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15208	A Briggs	Lead inspector	
19653	E Dickson	Lay inspector	
34521	R Westbrook	Team inspector	English; sixth form English; English as an additional language
31238	G Clubb	Team inspector	Mathematics; sixth form mathematics
3242	M Newman	Team inspector	Science; sixth form biology
29742	P Fyans	Team inspector	Sixth form chemistry and physics
32785	W Allt	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT); sixth form ICT
33135	K Ropek	Team inspector	Art and design
11258	I Rushforth	Team inspector	Design and technology; sixth form art and design
22953	P Dacombe	Team inspector	Citizenship
33002	J Woodhouse	Team inspector	Geography and history
33242	S Wall	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
30297	G Spruce	Team inspector	Music
3726	M Bean	Team inspector	Physical education
23307	N McDonough	Team inspector	Religious education
33244	R Chambers	Team inspector	Special educational needs
4922	J Banister	Team inspector	Sixth form sociology
33018	A Lyons	Team inspector	Sixth form business education

The inspection contractor was:

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	10
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	14
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	21
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	54

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Colton Hills is a good school providing good value for money. Teaching and the curriculum are good. Pupils achieve well when compared to their well below average standards on entry to the school. By the end of Year 11, they reach standards that are overall just below average but rising. Sixth form students achieve satisfactorily. Leadership and management of the school are good and pupils are very well cared for within a community where everyone is respected.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils achieve well because of consistently good teaching, a balanced curriculum and a positive attitude to work
- The headteacher and other leaders share a clear vision to provide a high quality education which raises pupils' and students' aspirations and expectations for what they can achieve
- Pupils are underachieving in music and citizenship
- The school does exceptionally well in ensuring that all pupils are treated equally and that all can achieve well
- The school has developed very good partnerships with other schools and colleges and uses these links really well to enhance teaching and learning
- The library does not have enough books or multimedia resources to help pupils and students improve their independent learning skills

The school has made good progress since its last inspection. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations have improved and standards are now higher. Teaching has considerably improved, with a much higher proportion of very good and excellent lessons. Issues identified in the last report have been resolved successfully. However, there is still further work to be done on improving examination results at A-level.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	-	D	D	C
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	E	E	E	

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
For Year 11, Similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9. The C in the box above indicates that compared to similar schools, pupils' achievement in GCSE examinations was satisfactory compared to their results in national tests at the end of Year 9.*

Pupils' achievement is good, considering they arrive at Colton Hills with standards that are well below average. Because the school has effectively incorporated the new Key Stage 3 national strategy, standards are now average by the end of Year 9 and improving. Current standards, early in Year 9, in the core subjects of English and mathematics are average. In science, standards are below average. Standards are below average by the end of Year 11 but are also improving. In the sixth form, standards have improved since 2003 so that by the end of Year 13, they are now below average, rather than well below, and students achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are particularly gifted and talented, make good progress throughout the school, because of the additional support they receive. The school admits a large proportion of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English and these pupils achieve well. Overall, results in 2004 indicate an improvement on those of 2003.

Pupils' personal qualities and their overall spiritual, moral and social development are good. Pupils' behaviour is good in the main school and very good in the sixth form and has a positive effect on their achievement. The very good relationships throughout the school make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and self-esteem and are reflected in their positive attitudes to work. Despite the school's best efforts, attendance is below average and punctuality is unsatisfactory in the main school but satisfactory in the sixth form.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education.

Teaching is good, with a high proportion that is very good and excellent. The overall quality and the high level of consistency in the teaching enable pupils to learn quickly and achieve well overall. Teachers have strong subject expertise and expect their pupils to work hard and to do well. Lessons are well planned to ensure all pupils achieve as well as they can. Teaching in music and citizenship is unsatisfactory so pupils do not learn as well as they should and standards are not high enough. A small number of lessons provided by temporary teachers, although mostly satisfactory, can be mundane and lack structure so pupils do not do as well as in other lessons. Teaching in the sixth form is overall satisfactory, with much that is good.

The curriculum is good. It is broad and wide-ranging and provides a good combination of vocational and traditional courses, and very good work-related learning. The very effective links with local schools and colleges have a positive impact on learning. Pupils are very well cared for and receive very effective guidance to help them achieve well. The school does not publicise itself effectively and consequently the local community is not aware of just how good it really is.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and has had a significant impact in the school. Management is good in the sixth form. Subject management is generally effective; it is very good in mathematics and modern foreign languages. The leadership and management of music and citizenship are unsatisfactory. A relative weakness in management is the level of support provided to short-term temporary teachers. Governance is strong. Governors do a good job overall but do not meet their legal obligation to provide a daily act of collective worship.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally satisfied with the school. They highlight good teaching, good progress, high expectations, and induction procedures, as strengths. They were concerned about behaviour, but the inspection team found this to be good. Parents were also concerned about the extent to which the school sought their views, with which the inspection team agree. Pupils were positive about their school. They felt it was a good school to be at, they were taught well, work was helpfully assessed and they were expected to work hard. Some felt their views were not always valued enough. They agreed with parents about concerns over behaviour but inspectors did not share this concern. All pupils believe they are treated fairly because the school includes everyone in its work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Improve the curriculum and teaching in music and citizenship so pupils do not underachieve
- Improve the quality of temporary teachers by establishing more effective support mechanisms
- Improve the library resources and increase the use of the library as a learning resource for all pupils and students

also, in the sixth form

- Improve the performance of students studying A-level courses
- Ensure students have a more structured independent study time in school to help them become better independent learners

and, to meet statutory requirements

- Provide a daily act of collective worship

THE SIXTH FORM AT COLTON HILLS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

A larger than average sixth form drawing students from a wider area than the main school and providing a range of GCE and vocational courses

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school has a satisfactory sixth form which is cost-effective. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with much that is good; resulting in satisfactory achievement. A wide curriculum choice provides well for the needs and aspirations of the students through an effective consortium of three establishments. Examination results are below average overall, but are improving. Students have very good attitudes, are very well behaved and are very positive about the school. They are prepared to work hard in all their studies. The sixth form is effectively led and managed.

The main strengths and weaknesses are

- The positive attitudes of students contribute well to their overall achievement
- The sixth form successfully provides a curriculum that caters for all aspirations
- Leadership has a clear vision for the future and this is helping to make the sixth form successful
- Achievement in GCE A-level subjects is much weaker than in vocational courses
- Arrangements for independent private study are not sufficiently structured or monitored, and there are not enough reference books in the library

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Satisfactory in English literature
Mathematics	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory in biology, chemistry and physics
Information and communication technology	Very good. Students achieve very well because teachers have an enthusiastic approach to teaching that encourages students to work hard
Humanities	Good in sociology
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	There was no focus subject in this area
Visual and performing arts and media	Good in art and design
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	There was no focus subject in this area
Business	Very good. Students achieve very well because teaching builds sequentially on students' knowledge and skills, making very good use of situations from the real world of business
Health and social care	There was no focus subject in this area
General education	There was no focus subject in this area

The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the school. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.

Most other subjects were sampled, including the key skills programme. Pupils were achieving satisfactorily or better in all the lessons seen.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Access to support, advice and guidance, including that for further study and careers, is very good throughout the sixth form. Impartial careers advice supports career choices well and the school makes good use of the local community to develop mentoring. Good systems are used to analyse examination performance and monitor students to check how well they are doing. A formal progress check is carried out every three weeks for all students, which leads to targeted support and guidance. The very good induction arrangements help students to understand the expectations of the sixth form. Students do not spend enough time improving their independent study skills in school because opportunities are not structured enough.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are good. There is a clear vision for developing students' learning and raising standards. Overall, leadership and management of sixth form subjects are good. The systematic observation of lessons and tutor periods helps to ensure students receive good quality teaching, support and guidance. Data analysis is used well to provide information about student performance and as a result senior staff are well aware of the strengths of the vocational courses and the weaknesses of the GCE A-level courses offered. Staff have not established a rigorous approach to independent study so students are not good independent learners. In addition, research and study opportunities within the school library are poor.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students have a very positive view of the school. They feel they are treated equally and like adults and this encourages them to behave very well and work hard. They appreciate the cultural diversity and view it as a community that treats all equally. They value teachers taking time to offer individual guidance and help when necessary. Students are happy with their courses because they are nearly all able to take the subjects of their first choice. They appreciate the added dimension the sixth form consortium offers. Students view the sixth form as a place where relationships are harmonious.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

The vast majority of pupils join the school in Year 7 with standards of attainment that are well below average and by the time they leave Year 11 their standards have improved to just below the national average; pupils achieve well overall. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils in all years.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school because of the consistently good teaching they receive
- Results in national testing at the end of Year 9 are improving at a faster rate than the national trend
- Pupils underachieve in citizenship and music because of unsatisfactory teaching and weaknesses in the curriculum
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those that are particularly gifted or talented is good overall
- Students studying A-level courses underachieve, while those following vocational courses do really well

Commentary

1. Results in the end of Year 9 national testing in 2003 were well below the national average. They have shown steady improvement over the last three years. Results in English fell while those in mathematics and science rose, particularly the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels. Mathematics results are strongest at the highest levels, while those in English are weakest. Early indicators show that results improved in 2004. In comparison with similar schools, that is schools whose pupils gained similar end of Year 6 test results, results in English and mathematics were above average and in science were average. The school did not meet the targets that it had set for the proportion of pupils reaching National Curriculum Level 5 in each of these subjects. On average, over the three years to 2003, boys and girls performed equally well. The trend in results over the last five years is above the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34 (33)	33 (33)
Mathematics	36 (32)	35 (35)
Science	33 (30)	34 (33)

There were 136 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The standards seen in Year 9 were, overall, average. They were higher than the 2003 test results would indicate and reflect the improved teaching found during the inspection. In English and mathematics they were average and in science below average. In most other subjects standards were average or below average. In design and technology, standards were well below average.
3. Pupils now achieve well in Years 7 to 9 because of the good teaching they receive. They are making faster progress than might be expected from their earlier standards. Pupils' good and improving attitudes also make a positive contribution to their achievement. Their achievement is very good in modern languages and mathematics and good in all other subjects apart from design and technology where it is satisfactory and music and citizenship where pupils underachieve. Boys and girls achieve similarly. Pupils with special educational needs, those identified as particularly gifted and talented and those who have English as an additional language achieve as well as their classmates.

4. In the 2003 GCSE results, a below average proportion of pupils gained 5 or more grades A* to C and grades A* to G, but these results were average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils who left with at least one GCSE pass was in line with the national average and above average when compared to similar schools. The school did not meet the targets it had set. Overall, results in 2004 have risen but the school still did not meet its very ambitious targets. Improvement is broadly in line with the national trend.

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	40 (42)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	93 (94)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	94 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	32 (32)	35 (35)

There were 172 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

National comparators are not yet available for GCSE results in 2004.

5. The standards seen in Year 11 were below average overall. They were well below average in design and technology and music. In relation to their attainment at the beginning of Year 10 and their capabilities, pupils' overall achievement is good in Years 10 to 11. Their achievement in modern foreign languages and religious education is very good as a result of the very good teaching they have. Standards are not high enough in music because the teaching does not provide enough musical content to enable pupils to make sufficient progress, and in citizenship standards are not as high as they might be because not enough time is spent teaching the subject and not all of the curriculum is covered. Consequently, in these subjects pupils underachieve.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils; they meet the targets in their individual education plans and improve their social as well as their academic skills. They respond well to a wide range of material and many are developing into sound independent learners. They achieve well across the full range of curriculum subjects and are fully involved in the life of the school. Teachers provide suitable work for pupils, and learning support assistants give well-focused support.
7. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form. The co-ordinator compiles a register annually, which is distributed to all staff. Teachers effectively identify gifted and talented pupils in their lesson planning. Most departments provide suitable extension activities but they are not attempted in all subjects. A number of special projects have been launched which have involved specialists from elsewhere who have stimulated work of a high standard with identified gifted and talented pupils. These have included the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Wolverhampton Art Gallery.
8. The school admits a high proportion of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. They are provided with a very good quality of support and so make rapid progress. Most pupils make good progress through the early stages of learning English. Achievement of these pupils in years 7 to 11 is good.
9. Standards of literacy are below the national expectation. Many pupils are fairly confident speakers but poor writers. They read with reasonable understanding and are generally able to find information using appropriate reference materials. Higher attainers have a wide taste in their personal reading. Standards of numeracy and skills using information and communication technology (ICT) are generally average.

Sixth form

10. Students enter the sixth form with below average levels of attainment for vocational courses and well below standards for the traditional A-level courses. Standards, early in the year, are below average and overall, students are achieving satisfactorily.

11. Results in 2003 were well below average but higher than the previous year. Results in 2004 were higher again but the increase is more modest. Results in nearly all examined subjects, in 2003, were below or well below average. Results for vocational courses were significantly better than those for traditional A-level courses.
12. In the subjects inspected in detail, students attain average standards in English, mathematics, ICT, art, business education and sociology. Standards are below average in chemistry and biology. The standards achieved by girls are slightly better than those of the boys. Standards in physics are well below average because disruption to staffing and management has resulted in teaching that does not always provide them with work that is well matched to their individual needs.
13. Within the current overall satisfactory picture, students achieve very well in vocational subjects. The structure of these courses combined with imaginative teaching techniques allows them the opportunity to excel. Students achieve very well in vocational business studies because of the very good teaching they receive. At the same time, students do not achieve as well as they could in the traditional A-level courses. This is due to various factors, such as the suitability of the course, lack of variety in teaching, too little focus on assessment or restrictions in access to resources and the library for independent research.
14. The achievement of students whose first language is not English in years 12 and 13 is satisfactory overall. The language needs of higher attaining pupils in years 12 and 13 are not being provided for consistently across all subjects. There is, however, good practice in sociology and business studies where there is a focus on technical vocabulary at the start of every lesson. This includes key words from the subject and other words like allocation and competition. Several students with identified special educational needs continue their education into the sixth form, successfully completing AVCE Business Studies and GNVQ Leisure and Tourism courses.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	87.4 (72.6)	85.5 (92.1)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	11.0 (12.4)	27.6 (33.8)
Average point score per pupil	148.2 (141.0)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 103 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

National comparators are not yet available for GCE results in 2004.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes to learning and to school life are good. Behaviour in and around school is good. Attendance is below average, and a significant number of pupils arrive late for registration and for lessons. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good attitudes pupils have to lessons and learning help them to achieve well
- The ethos is very positive and pupils feel included and part of a caring community
- The school sets high expectations for behaviour and successfully achieves good standards
- Attendance is slightly below the national average and punctuality is unsatisfactory

Commentary

15. Pupils show good attitudes towards learning and each other. The vast majority come prepared to work hard and make the most of the opportunities offered. They settle quickly in lessons, and are keen to do well. Where lessons are lively and stimulating, pupils become actively involved. They listen attentively, and ask and answer questions enthusiastically. For example, in a Year 7 ICT lesson, pupils listened and watched closely while the teacher demonstrated how to produce a power point presentation and were then able to do this successfully themselves. These positive attitudes were seen across all year groups and subjects. In a small number of lessons observed, where teaching provided too little challenge, and the pace of learning was slow, some pupils were easily distracted and consequently they did not learn as much as they otherwise might.

16. Most pupils are helpful, considerate and consistently behave well. Behaviour in nearly all lessons is good and the majority of pupils respond well to teachers' expectations. They are courteous towards staff and visitors, willing to help one another. Around the school, behaviour is generally good, although pupils are sometimes boisterous, jostling and pushing in tight corridors and stairways, particularly when moving between lessons.
17. The level of fixed term exclusions was particularly high last year. The school's policy for exclusion is clear and there are proper procedures for reintegration after returning. Short periods of exclusion have been used to deal with specific instances of inappropriate behaviour such as fighting at break times. It appears that some pupils, particularly boys from a Caribbean background, have disputes with others outside school and these continue inside the school gates, particularly at the start of a week. This behaviour seldom, however, spills over into the classroom. There were no permanent exclusions last year. Bullying is not perceived as a problem by pupils. The overwhelming view of pupils is that any incidents which arise are handled well. Pupils are regularly reminded, for example in assemblies and tutor periods, of their responsibilities to one another. The very positive atmosphere and very good relationships across the school inspire pupils and make them want to do their best. Racism is not a problem; there is a strong emphasis on creating a community in which everyone is valued as an individual, whatever their background or personal circumstances and this works really well. A strong characteristic across the school is the sense of pride and belonging, shown in the pupils' neat appearance and their good manners and friendliness towards each other.

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	153	25	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	8	2	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	29	9	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	3	0
Mixed – White and Asian	9	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	18	8	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	635	50	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	25	7	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	1	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	9	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	84	36	0
Black or Black British – African	8	1	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	5	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	4	0	0

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

18. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. Assemblies, where pupils are always attentive and well behaved, make a positive contribution to their personal development. They are carefully planned to contain a spiritual element, and the 'thought for the week' is discussed and reflected upon during morning tutor periods. Some subjects, such as English, religious education and drama, create an environment where pupils can be reflective, and where they can explore their feelings to certain situations and experiences. Pupils really value the way in which all are treated equally.

19. The strong ethos of the school ensures that the difference between right and wrong is clearly understood. Teachers are positive role models, treating pupils with respect and consideration. As they progress through the school, many pupils gain a sense of maturity and confidence. In some areas of the curriculum, for example science and ICT, they are developing good independent learning skills. They develop their social skills well in most subjects, for example through very good interaction in drama and effective teamwork in physical education where their appreciation of each other's contribution is good. They enjoy taking on responsibilities around the school. In Year 11 they are chosen as prefects, and all pupils take turns in acting as receptionists, greeting visitors and taking messages for staff. Each year group is represented on the School Council, which makes decisions about how to improve the school environment. Pupils of all ages use the school's residential facility in Wales, which gives them an opportunity to develop independence and confidence. Subjects such as English and religious education contribute significantly to extending pupils' cultural awareness, through the sensitive and very positive exploration of texts from a range of cultures and religious traditions. As at the last inspection, however, there is still scope for increasing the celebration of the cultural traditions reflected both in the school and in Britain as a whole.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.5	School data	1.6
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.

20. Pupils' attendance is just below the national average. Lack of punctuality is an issue, both at the start of the day, and after break times. A significant minority of pupils show little urgency in getting to lessons. This means that a number of lessons are slow in starting and can be disrupted by latecomers. Although procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory overall, pupils who arrive late to school in the morning are not always appropriately challenged.

Sixth form

21. Students enjoy their time in the sixth form and behave well. They particularly value the very good relationships they have with their teachers and amongst themselves. The rate of course completion for both those taking A-level courses and those taking vocational courses is high, showing a commitment to their studies. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. In lessons, students are attentive and hardworking. They show interest in their studies, and rise well to challenging lessons, as was seen in a Year 12 German lesson, where students achieved very high standards as a result of the teacher's very skilful questioning and high expectations. Overall, students do not work independently enough during their study time.
22. Many sixth form students are happy to help younger students; they take on roles such as paired reading and mentoring. They organise a range of activities to raise money, both for the school's residential centre and a number of charities.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The learning opportunities provided for pupils through the curriculum are good throughout the school. Opportunities for enrichment are satisfactory. The quality of support and guidance for pupils is very good and has a significant effect on academic achievement and personal development. The school works soundly with parents and the community. Links with other schools and colleges to support pupils' achievement are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good with over a third of teaching being very good or better. Assessment is used effectively to help pupils make progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in religious education and modern foreign languages, leading to very good achievement
- Teaching is unsatisfactory in music and citizenship and as a result, pupils underachieve
- Teachers have very secure subject knowledge that they use very effectively to ensure their pupils achieve well
- Planning of work that meets pupils' needs and provides challenge and achievement is a strength of many subjects
- A few temporary teachers do not structure their lessons as well as the permanent staff do and their teaching can be mundane and unimaginative on occasions
- Elements of good practice found in teaching in Years 7 to 9 are not as evident in Years 10 and 11

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 156 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12 (8%)	39 (25%)	58 (37%)	40 (26%)	6 (3%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)

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

23. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 is very good in religious education and modern foreign languages and is good in all subjects with the exception of design and technology, where it is satisfactory and music and citizenship where it is unsatisfactory. Overall, it is consistently good and pupils get a really good deal. Although drama was not inspected in detail, the quality of teaching in the lessons seen was excellent.
24. In the best lessons, learning objectives are clear and planning reflects a range of approaches to meet the needs of the individual pupil. Pupils' views are highly valued and all are encouraged to contribute. Pupils achieve well because teaching is exciting and incorporates a good range of interesting topics that ensure pupils are motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. In the few less successful lessons, teachers do not account for the range of need in their planning and consequently do not help all pupils learn through questions, discussion and paired working, which normally creates opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to learn from their classmates.
25. When teaching is most effective it is characterised by very secure knowledge of the subject; teachers use this well to ask demanding questions and motivate the pupils. Lessons are very well planned and provide steady development, year on year, covering all aspects of the subject fully and so increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding well. This is a particularly strong feature of the teaching in Years 7 to 9 where the school policy on using the Key Stage 3 National strategy has had a significant impact on the quality of pupils learning. These lessons have a clear structure ensuring pupils are aware of what they are going to learn followed by a variety of interesting tasks and a summary of what they have achieved. Pupils are actively involved in their learning and really enjoy the imaginative and exciting ideas they are presented with. Many subjects ensure the pupils are really pushed in lessons through a variety of interesting well-planned tasks. The teaching of citizenship is adequately planned but does not take place often enough for pupils to achieve as well as they should. Teaching in music fails to ensure lessons have a musical focus and does not integrate the main elements of composing, performing and listening into each activity. The teaching of composing in Years 10 and 11 is poor.
26. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and also how pupils should behave. Pupils know that they are expected to work hard and do so usually without any fuss. Pupils have a positive attitude towards work, which helps them to learn well. They make the best of every lesson they have, even if on occasions, the teaching is dull and mundane. Pupils really appreciate the lessons that actively engage them in interesting topics, such as those in religious education, drama and modern languages. A small number of lessons do not motivate the pupils because the teachers talk for too long and the pace of learning becomes very slow. This lack of challenge results in the pupils becoming bored and misbehaviour occasionally follows.

27. The school has a high percentage of temporary teachers covering for absent permanent staff. These teachers are not planning their lessons as well as their permanent colleagues. Several are inexperienced and this shows in their choice of material and control of the pupils. Because the pupils receive such a consistently good diet of teaching, they are unimpressed when the quality falls below their expectations. It is on these occasions that they can become uncooperative and disillusioned.
28. The school considers the needs of all pupils extremely well to ensure all achieve equally. All pupils are monitored carefully to meet any special needs they may have and action is taken to give necessary support. Teachers are aware of any issues and pay particular attention to the needs of physically disabled pupils and those with a statement of need for learning difficulties. Learning support assistants and other support staff are employed well to maximise their effect and support the development of pupils' skills in thinking, reading and writing, speaking and listening. Subject teachers are aware of the wide range of language needs of the pupils in their classes and plan their work accordingly. Experienced staff support 48 pupils with English as an additional language, across a range of lessons. Pupils are withdrawn from English for more specific English language teaching. Assessment procedures are good. Pupils are assessed on arrival in the school and progress is monitored and recorded every term. Plans are drawn up and circulated to staff. They include strategies and information on ethnicity. Subject teachers are aware of the language needs of the pupils in their classes.
29. Assessment is good overall. The school has developed good systems to monitor pupils' progress and establish targets for future improvement. All pupils are given a grade in each subject, which is related to the national curriculum levels, or GCSE grades. These targets are reviewed regularly. The school also carries out an analysis of the achievement of pupils by measuring progress against national standards and their target grades. As a result, pupils who underachieve are successfully identified. Overall, this system is effective in ensuring that pupils and parents know current progress and have a future target. Managers ensure that teachers are provided with good information, such as reading ages, national test scores and targets, for all their pupils. Pupils' language skills are assessed on arrival in the school and progress is monitored and recorded every term. Plans are drawn up and circulated to staff. They include strategies and information on ethnicity. A relative weakness in the current practice is that target grades are not always used during lessons.
30. The overall quality of marking is good. In nearly all subjects, work is marked effectively and thoroughly, and pupils are made aware of how their work might be improved. All subjects follow the school system for grading work so pupils can understand the system and relate it to each of their subjects. The assessments respond well to the needs of the individual pupils and in helping them to understand how they can improve.
31. The Key Stage 3 National strategy has been implemented in many subjects and is showing a clear impact on standards and pupils' achievement particularly in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11, whilst incorporating some elements such as three-part lessons, teachers are slower to grasp the initiative and there is not yet a consistency of practice amongst all teachers.

Sixth form

32. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with much that is good. This results in students achieving soundly. Procedures for, and use of, assessment are also satisfactory.
33. Teaching, whilst satisfactory, does not contain the same variety of interesting tasks and is not structured as tightly as those for the younger pupils are; consequently, students do not achieve as well in all their subjects. In the subjects inspected in detail, the quality of teaching was very good in business education and ICT. In other subjects, it ranged from satisfactory to good. All teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and understand what is required for examination success. When teaching is very good or better, students are encouraged to participate in discussions. They respond extremely well to questions and contribute using a good range of vocabulary.
34. Whilst satisfactory, less effective teaching was seen in physics and mathematics, where work is not always matched to individual student needs and students are presented with few opportunities to discuss their thinking and philosophy beyond the requirements of the examination syllabus. Overall

the teaching of vocational subjects is more imaginative and involves the students much more in independent learning.

35. Assessment in years 12 and 13 is satisfactory overall. The small group sizes at post 16 result in an increased awareness of the level at which the individual students are working, and teachers are more able to share this information with the students. The quality of teachers' feedback on written work is satisfactory and provides sound guidance to students on how to improve. Students value the oral feedback and discussion that follows the written assessment of their work. In mathematics and biology the use of assessment to inform students of what they need to do to improve is good.

The curriculum

The curriculum in both the main school and the sixth form is good. It is broad and well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils in the 14 to 19 age-range benefit from an expanding range of vocational and work-related learning options. Very good collaborative arrangements in the sixth form extend the range of courses available to students. Resources are adequate and accommodation generally good but the library is a poor learning resource. Staffing has been disrupted because of long and short-term sickness absence. Overall, accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned and regularly reviewed to ensure that it is well matched to all pupils' needs
- A good range of vocational courses and work related learning opportunities help to raise standards of achievement for pupils
- Very good collaborative arrangements in the sixth form increase the range of courses open to students
- Not all the national curriculum programmes of study in citizenship and in music are covered adequately, leading to some underachievement by pupils
- There are very limited opportunities for pupils to take part in drama in Years 7 to 9
- There are weaknesses in staffing and the library resources are poor

Commentary

36. The curriculum is good because it is designed to cater for the needs of all pupils. This is supported in individual lessons where teachers' planning often offers opportunities for pupils to work at different levels. Pupils with statements of special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are very well supported and this helps them to achieve well. The permanent teachers know their pupils well as individuals and this helps them to choose tasks that will be motivating. For example in physical education, there is a flexible approach to the choice of sport at GCSE to accommodate pupils' interests.
37. In the longer term, there is good planning of examination courses to meet pupils' needs. For example, in ICT a good range of courses helps pupils achieve as well as they can. Regular curriculum reviews, and surveys of pupils, are used to make decisions about future developments. Pupils are given good opportunities to progress to the next stage of their education, for example with a mixture of traditional and vocational courses in the sixth form.
38. For pupils in the 14 to 19 age range the opportunities to follow vocational courses and an increased amount of work-related learning courses are very good. In Years 10 and 11 there are courses in motor vehicle maintenance, hair and beauty and plumbing. A large number of pupils follow a work-related learning option where they have regular work experience. The school is also embarking on a pilot GCSE course in vocational French, which involves increased use of ICT.
39. The time allocation for citizenship is low and some parts of the programmes of study are not covered adequately in the shared time within the personal, social and health education programme. In music, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to create their own music. In both areas, these shortcomings are limiting pupils' standards of achievement. Drama is popular and successful in Years 10 and 11, but it is not taught to pupils in Years 7 to 9 and as a result they miss a valuable opportunity for self expression. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship but does have high quality regular assemblies.

40. Pupils benefit from a satisfactory range of activities they can participate in outside of lessons. There is good provision for sports but in other areas the range is not extensive. The outdoor centre at Gelliwig in Wales provides very good opportunities for pupils to extend what they learn in the classroom with trips designed to enhance the curriculum. In addition, the practical activities such as cleaning and cooking and the teamwork this requires, make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. The centre has wheelchair access and is extremely well used by large numbers of pupils.
41. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language in Years 7 to 11, is very good overall. Many of the targeted pupils use the learning base before school, at break and lunchtimes for additional support with their work. Pupils value the effective support they receive. The base is well-resourced and includes internet access.
42. The school accommodation is generous and in good condition but there are some significant weaknesses in the provision for ICT, sociology and in particular the library. The ICT rooms are too small and as a result there are not enough computers for the size of classes and this adversely impacts on standards because pupils have to share machines. Accommodation for sociology is too small for the increased numbers. Library provision is poor. There are not enough books for the number of pupils in the school. The quality of the existing non-fiction stock is not sufficient to support the studies of pupils taking public examinations. A number of basic reference books like foreign language dictionaries are not available. The fiction stock does little to promote reading for pleasure. There are 19 computers in the Library which are well-used by pupils throughout the day but there is no stock of CDs or DVDs. Subject leaders have little involvement in selecting books for the library. The computerised record of transactions has not worked for some time.
43. The majority of departments are staffed with well-qualified teachers and this has helped to improve the standard of teaching and learning. However, English, design and technology and geography, have been affected by long-term staff absences due to illness and the consequent need to employ a high proportion of temporary staff. This lack of continuity and specialist teaching has had a major impact upon pupils' achievement. Governors and senior managers are working hard to tackle this problem.

Sixth form

44. The sixth form curriculum provides students with a sensible choice of A Level and vocational subjects. This enables students to build on what they have done in Year 11. The increasing number of well-matched vocational courses have helped to raise standards of attainment. The very good collaborative arrangements, through the consortium, with two partner establishments involving common timetables and organised transport provide students with a greater range of potential courses than one school alone could offer.
45. The match of teachers to subjects is good. Resources in the sixth form are adequate but the library provision is poor. In the library, book, periodical and CD ROM provision is poor and this together with the lack of a dedicated sixth form library is clearly having a detrimental impact on the quality of independent learning outside lessons.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of support, care and guidance given to pupils and students is very good and is based on their individual needs. The involvement of pupils in the main school through seeking and acting on their views is not sufficiently developed to be making a significant impact on the life of the school community. In the sixth form, students make a more positive contribution through expressing their views and this aspect is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are given very effective specific support, advice and guidance to help them enjoy school and achieve well
- Induction arrangements for Year 7 and Year 12 pupils are very good and ensure smooth transition between stages
- Very good relationships throughout the school ensure that pupils are confident about going to an adult if they need support or help

- Pupils with special educational needs including those with language difficulties are very well integrated and supported in the school so they achieve as well as all other pupils
- Career and further study advice is very good and is part of a well-planned structure that extends through the school
- The systems for involving pupils in the main school through seeking their views are not sufficiently developed to make a significant impact on the life of the school community

Commentary

46. Pupils get very good support and guidance. Provision is matched to individual needs and supplied by people from within the school and from the external community as appropriate. This philosophy enables pupils with special needs, whether learning, emotional, physical, language or behavioural, are enabled to achieve alongside their classmates and with equal success.
47. Systems for child protection are very good, well known and understood throughout the school and comply with locally agreed procedures. Very good relationships exist between pupils and adults so that pupils are confident about going to an adult if they need support or help. They are equally confident that any potential incidences of bullying or harassment will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately, although they report that such incidents are relatively few.
48. The school provides a very effective support system, which gives every pupil a member of staff to go to if they have any worries. Learning mentors are available to all pupils and some of the prefects act as mentors to other pupils. Form tutors carry out academic reviews with pupils in their class three times a week. Sometimes these reviews are for individuals and sometimes in small groups.
49. Form tutors and heads of year know their pupils very well. The systems for monitoring both academic achievement and personal development are efficient and enable teachers to target possible underachievers at an early stage, particularly in examination classes.
50. The provision for careers education is very good. Advice and guidance on further study and careers is well structured and readily available. It ensures that pupils are well informed and supported in their choices with regular access to the good quality careers library. The resources area in the library is well stocked and the librarian acts as an effective first point of contact for pupils, helping them to access resources and to make appointments with the Connexions advisers. Pupils are well aware of what is available and feel they have good access to the Connexions service. There is also a good ICT careers package which has the advantage that pupils can use it both at school and home.
51. A particularly good feature is the availability of a counsellor one day a week both for fixed appointments with individual pupils and as a “drop-in” service. Systems are effective for pupils to take advantage of this support. The school successfully ensures that help and advice is readily available for all pupils including those with special educational needs and at an early stage of English language acquisition.
52. A very good induction programme for Year 7 pupils ensures that the information about access to support is very clear. This is an important factor in making sure that the transition between primary and secondary school is smooth for the pupils.
53. Whilst the views of pupils are sought through the school council, and pupils clearly feel at ease in talking to adults in the school, the systems to acknowledge and act on their suggestions and opinions are not sufficiently developed to have a significant impact on the school.

Sixth form

54. Induction into the sixth form is very good and ensures all students experience a smooth transition at this stage and settle in well. Monitoring, in the form of three-weekly reviews plus termly review and guidance sessions, helps students to know how well they are doing and teachers to pinpoint quickly if and how a particular student needs extra help and support. Access to support, advice and guidance, including that for further study and careers, is very good throughout the sixth form. It is very evident that this is a significant factor in helping to form the very good and trusting relationships that clearly exist between students and adults.

55. The advice, support and guidance given to students are very good. The school provides effective support for application to university and post-16 education. Students benefit greatly from staff expertise and are given good guidance in choosing further study. Students value the independent advice provided by the Connexions service. Impartial careers advice supports career choices well and the school makes good use of the local community to develop mentoring. The very good quality guidance and support develops students' personal qualities well. As a result students in the sixth form have good attitudes to their work and relationships with others.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with other schools, including primary schools, make a very effective contribution to the school and to pupils' learning
- The school works hard to inform and involve parents of pupils with special educational needs
- Positive links between pastoral staff and parents mean that any problems are quickly identified
- Few parents are directly involved in the life of the school
- Reports to parents on what their children have achieved often lack sharp and measurable targets

Commentary

56. The partnership with parents makes a sound contribution to pupils' learning. Parents find the school approachable and feel their children are making good progress and are expected to work hard and achieve their best. In the pre-inspection questionnaires some parents expressed concerns about behaviour, but overall this was judged to be good by the inspectors.
57. Good links have been established between the pastoral team, including tutors and Heads of Year, and parents. Parents appreciate that staff are very approachable, and often contact home to celebrate success as well as to discuss concerns. A number of information evenings have been organised by the school to inform parents about new initiatives or provide guidance on how they can support their children at home, but such events are not always well attended. However, attendance at parental consultation meetings is rising, with over 70 per cent of parents attending. The school follows up those who do not attend.
58. Reports to parents about pupils' progress are generally satisfactory. They contain information about the gains in knowledge and skills pupils have made, but targets to help pupils improve are often not specific enough. The school recognises that it needs to keep parents better informed about their children's progress and aims to provide them with termly interim reports. A translation service is provided for those parents whose first language is not English. Staff in the Learning Support Centre make considerable efforts to reach out to parents of pupils with special educational needs, and keep them informed and involved.
59. Parents receive good information about school events and activities, including regular newsletters and a useful annual calendar. However, only a few parents are active in the life of the school. There is no parent teacher association, but those who are elected as parent governors give valuable time and are very knowledgeable about the school, often being used as 'sounding boards' for relevant issues. This year the school carried out a survey to establish areas where parents were satisfied and dissatisfied. The response was low but indicated that parents were generally happy with what the school provides.
60. The school has satisfactory links with the local community. Pupils benefit from visits in the local area to support their studies, for example to the Sikh temple and city art gallery. The care and support for pupils are enhanced by good links with a range of local agencies and support services. Members of the local community support the school's personal and social education focus days, and provide work experience placements. Beyond school hours, Colton Hills opens its doors to a large number of local organisations, which use the facilities for classes ranging from Asian languages to sword fencing.

61. Very good partnerships exist with other local schools. These extend well beyond regular meetings about curriculum issues and transfer arrangements. A particular strength is the way in which staff from Colton Hills visit local primary schools to teach a number of subjects including French, physical education and science. For example, a modern language advanced skills teacher works with partner primary schools where she teaches beginners' classes in French. She also works with other secondary schools within the LEA in a liaison and advisory capacity. Pupils from the feeder primaries are able to use facilities such as the swimming pool and design and technology areas. Prospective pupils have a number of opportunities to visit the school before Year 7, and pupils and parents hold induction arrangements in high regard. The close co-operation among secondary schools in the local consortium enables the school to share expertise and to strengthen the curriculum it is able to offer.

Sixth form

62. Relationships with neighbouring secondary schools and universities have been developed very well to strengthen the school's curriculum and to help students move forward into the next phase of their education. There is close collaboration with other schools in the local consortium on the teaching of some A-level and vocational courses. The school is developing better links with local colleges and universities through inviting a number of them to attend the sixth form open evening this term. Links with local employers effectively support the learning of those on vocational courses.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides very good leadership and he is effectively supported by the leadership team. All are excellent role models for other staff and take a lead role in ensuring the school has a curriculum that caters for the needs of everybody. The school governors give good support to the school and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to improve the school further.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong leadership of the headteacher and senior staff provide a vision for success and a drive for improvement
- Accurate self-evaluation is helping the headteacher and governors to focus on key areas for development
- The management of support for temporary staff is not sufficiently developed
- The leadership and management of music and citizenship are unsatisfactory
- The management of study support and library resources is restricting pupil progress

Commentary

63. The leadership of the headteacher is very effective. He has a strong presence and has steered the school through a very difficult time over the last three and a half years. He has not shirked tough decisions in his efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Because of his relentless drive to improve standards and honest 'warts and all' approach to reviewing school performance, the school has well-developed and very accurate processes for self-evaluation, and these form a very secure basis for planning for development. In addition to their effective management, the headteacher and senior staff set exemplary standards in their teaching, acting as really good role models for all staff.
64. There is a shared vision for the future success of the school. In the time the headteacher has been in post the school has embarked on a programme of improvement in the behaviour and attitudes of pupils, attaining higher overall standards in examinations and ensuring that the school is inclusive in all its activities through a curriculum which meets individual needs. The quality of the curriculum is a strong feature of the school; it is planned to take into account all individual pupil needs and sets learning challenges. All pupils are valued and the rich diversity of cultures adds to the very inclusive nature of the school. Leadership to promote excellence for all is very good.
65. The school improvement plan is formed from the vision for success and focuses well on three main areas of priority: standards and achievement, leadership and management and inclusion. The performance management policy, which is designed to monitor teacher performance depending on

need is helping to raise the quality of teaching across the school. As a result, most teaching is now good and much is very good or excellent. Throughout the year, each teacher is observed teaching by a member of the leadership team and by the subject leader. Performance management is good in most curriculum areas and it is satisfactory in history and geography. There is a culture of identifying good practice and sharing this expertise. However, in design and technology, teacher objectives are not linked to the school improvement plan. There is a relative weakness in the monitoring of the teaching and curriculum content for citizenship and music.

66. Governors are fully involved in strategic planning for school improvement. They take their responsibility seriously. Many have been in post for a number of years, which has led to the governors developing an effective strategic role. They are extremely supportive to the school and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. They are prepared to take tough decisions to make sure that the headteacher and leadership team are able to do their jobs effectively. They keep a watchful eye on the budget and challenge school leaders appropriately. Governors have taken advantage of available training to make sure they fully understand data about the school's performance. They make sure the headteacher has a regular performance review and set appropriate improvement and development targets. However, governors are not ensuring that all pupils have access to a daily act of collective worship.
67. The school is well supported by most middle managers who share the headteachers' vision and the drive for improvement. Mathematics, modern foreign languages and special education needs are very well led and managed. In science, ICT, physical education and religious education both leadership and management are good. In history, art, design and technology there is good leadership and satisfactory management. In English and geography, leadership and management are satisfactory. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory in music and citizenship because programmes of study are not fully taught. Work-related learning is a strong, very well led and managed element of the school.
68. Induction arrangements for new staff are satisfactory. The school makes sure that information relating to pupils progress is available. This is used for planning schemes of work. Staff have received training in the use of ICT for improvement. The Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) is used to look at good practice locally and nationwide and the headteacher is currently attending the Head First training on data usage to improve assessment. The grant is also used well to bring about changes resulting from the school's workforce reform initiatives. This includes employing a data manager, examinations officer and off-site provision coordinator.
69. The school has had trouble in recruiting staff but is gradually increasing the number of permanent teachers and this is evident in the good teaching throughout the school. However, there are still a large number of temporary and supply staff and the level of support and management they receive is patchy at best.
70. There has been much improvement since the last inspection and standards have risen significantly. The quality of teaching and the school's performance in most subjects and courses is much improved. Collective worship, although not daily, is of high quality and assemblies are an uplifting experience for both staff and pupils.
71. There are good systems for financial management and the senior management team and governors effectively employ the principles of Best Value in all they do. Budget statements are checked by the school each month against the local education authority figures and financial reports go to governors. Action has been taken to implement the recommendations identified in the recent audit report. The senior management team takes decisions regarding departmental funding and all departments receive satisfactory resources. Small sixth form groups are cost effective because of the consortium arrangements with other schools. The financial resources allocated for pupils with statements of special educational need are used appropriately. The school receives a high level of funding for a variety of initiatives. Because pupils achieve well and teaching is consistently good, the school provides good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	4041914
Total expenditure	3736131
Expenditure per pupil	3405

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	163807
Balance carried forward to the next	136321

Sixth form

72. Leadership and management are good. Governors have a good grasp of issues relating to the sixth form. The head of sixth form provides good support for students and leads an effective team of tutors. There are courses to suit the aspirations of all pupils and the continuity of learning is satisfactory. Teaching quality and students' progress are monitored regularly. Vocational subjects are very successful but students taking GCE A-level courses are not achieving as well. Plans are in place to tackle this. The school is aware that sixth form students do not have a good enough approach to independent study because there are few structured opportunities for them to study in school. The lack of suitable resources within the school library prevents students from undertaking meaningful research work.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work related learning is very good. Statutory requirements are met. The planned strategy for the programme is broad and well balanced and builds systematically on the curriculum for all pupils in Years 7 to 9. Work related learning is very well managed. This ensures that the strong links with employers and training providers focus on clear learning objectives and that the progress of pupils on individual programmes is carefully monitored and assessed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's policy for work-related learning is comprehensive and is leading to very good practice and provision for pupils
- The curriculum is geared to the individual needs of pupils and they are motivated to learn about work
- The programme is being carefully monitored and pupils' achievements are systematically tracked
- There is very good collaboration with other institutions and training providers which offers a good range of choices to pupils
- Not all subjects have created opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the world of work

Commentary

73. The school has been able to build on its existing good practice to formulate a very effective policy on work-related learning. All pupils in Year 11 have the opportunity to take part in a week of work experience and this will be extended next year. A carefully structured programme of well-matched activities ensures that pupils are well prepared for this experience and are able to reflect on their learning afterwards.
74. The range of vocational opportunities open to pupils is considerably extended through collaboration with other institutions and training providers. Where appropriate, pupils are able to pursue their chosen course away from the school site, whilst still maintaining their basic education on site. All pupils on such individual programmes are carefully monitored and assessed and the strong links with employers and training providers focus on clear learning objectives. Pupils are therefore able to work in a very good variety of contexts in which they can both acquire and apply their learning. Other subjects have yet to fully implement activities to develop understanding of business or work, or to use work as a context for learning, but this has been identified as an area for development.

75. This area of the school's work is very well led. There is clear vision with well thought out planning followed by thorough monitoring and evaluation. The planned strategy for the programme is broad and well balanced and enables coherent progression for all pupils. They really value the opportunities presented to them through this developing programme. Assessment systems have been in place since the start of the academic year, but little is yet recorded.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

Most subjects were not reported in detail in the last inspection report so a judgement for progress cannot always be made.

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

In addition to the subjects reported on in detail two lessons of Panjabi were observed during the inspection. Panjabi is now well established as a GCSE course, with one group in Year 10 and two groups in Year 11. In the 2003 GCSE examinations pupils achieved results which were close to the national average with about two thirds of pupils gaining a grade A* to C.

Pupils in Year 10 worked purposefully in the lessons with some demanding and lively teaching which is helping them to make good progress and to achieve well. Pupils in Year 11 do not always make as much progress as they could because the behaviour of a small minority of pupils is distracting to others and slowed down the pace of the lesson.

English

Provision in English is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is well-planned and structured so pupils achieve well
- The curriculum ensures that all pupils benefit from the same range of learning opportunities
- Assessment is good, and involves pupils in the process
- Disruption to staffing has resulted in lower than expected standards
- Pupils do not use computers enough in lessons

Commentary

Examination results

76. Results in Year 9 tests in 2003 were below the national average but above the average for similar schools. Early indicators for 2004 show improvement at both levels 5 and 6. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were below average for both English and English Literature. Girls performed better than boys did. The percentage of A* to C grades increased for both examinations in 2004. The school analysis for 2004, based on prior attainment, indicates that boys underachieved in English Literature.

Standards and achievement

77. Standards are well below the national average when pupils enter the school. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is good. Scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection shows that current standards in Year 9 are average. Pupils' response to questioning is good when they have had an opportunity to prepare material beforehand. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not participate in drama activities enough to extend speaking and listening skills. There are not enough opportunities for reading complete works of fiction. Achievement is satisfactory in Year 11 because pupils have not had the same level of input from the national strategy the school has adopted. Higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 work confidently in preparing and giving presentations to the rest of the group. They listen carefully to each other in these situations. Pupils read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. They have a good understanding of audience and purpose. Pupils writing skills are

being well developed in all years. Pupils can write in a range of styles and for a variety of audiences. Lower attaining pupils are well supported to write and organise their work. There is not enough use of computers in the planning and redrafting of work.

Teaching and learning

78. Teachers plan and structure lessons carefully and objectives are clearly explained. In Years 7 to 9 the Key Stage 3 national strategy has improved the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' achievement. This is now beginning to have a positive effect on the quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 but has not yet had enough impact on the achievement of pupils. Teachers are careful to include all pupils in their questioning. Lessons are adapted well to meet the needs of different pupils including those who have English as an additional language. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour in lessons. Homework is set regularly and used to good effect to reinforce learning, particularly in extending vocabulary. Good use is made of teaching assistants who are aware of learning objectives, and support a number of pupils in lessons. Targets for improvement in reading and writing are set and understood by pupils. Marking of work is thorough, making pupils aware of their levels and grades and what to do to improve. A significant number of pupils make no response to marking and basic errors persist in their work. Most pupils are keen to participate in lessons. Their attitudes to learning are positive and relationships with teachers are good. They work together well, and are confident to share their work with others. They ask questions to further their understanding. Display is of a high quality and used to inform pupils about assessment information or to display pupils' work. The English curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Leadership and management

79. The post of Head of Department is currently vacant. A senior manager is co-ordinating arrangements until a new appointment is made. The department has identified priorities for development. Examination data is being used effectively to identify where improvement is needed. Monitoring of the teaching and learning has included lesson observation and work scrutiny. It has led to the sharing of good practice within the department. There is good teamwork. The department is well-resourced and classrooms are made a welcoming environment for pupils. Difficulties in staffing some groups over the last year and at the time of the inspection have adversely affected standards at all key stages. Teaching has improved since the last inspection but has not yet had full impact on standards and test results.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

80. Standards in speaking, reading and writing are below average overall. On entry to the school, the literacy skills of Year 7 pupils are well below average. By the end of Year 9, literacy skills are broadly in line with national averages. The skills of Year 11 pupils are below average. In all subjects, teachers pay attention to key words and subject specific terminology. Good use of display in classrooms puts a particular emphasis on literacy. The school lesson plan focuses on key words, vocabulary and spelling. The literacy co-ordinator involves staff in the identification of suitable priorities. All departments are represented on the Literacy Group. The group effectively identifies a six weekly focus over the year. The group then raises awareness with staff at meetings and through a range of posters.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in French and German is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in French and German because high expectations are set for all pupils
- The Key Stage 3 national strategy in Years 7, 8 and 9 is not taught consistently
- Pupils enjoy learning French or German and nearly all continue to GCSE level
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, allowing high quality learning to take place

Commentary

Examination results

81. Results in the 2003 GCSE exams in French were average. In German, results were well below average, particularly at Grades A* to C. However, German results in 2004 indicate significant improvement.

Standards and achievement

82. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with well below average standards. By the end of Year 9, however, standards in both French and German are average; this represents very good achievement and is a result of the very good teaching and learning that takes place. By the end of Year 9, pupils have command of a wide range of vocabulary and are starting to become proficient in using a variety of tenses in their oral and written work.
83. In 2003 German GCSE results were below average, primarily because of staffing difficulties. This issue has now been resolved and the improved 2004 results reflect more accurately the average standards observed during the inspection. In French, standards observed during the inspection were also average. In both languages, achievement is very good as a result of the very effective teaching pupils receive. By the end of Year 11, pupils have a good working grasp of a variety of tenses in their oral, written and comprehension work. The higher attaining pupils are also able to use increasingly complex sentence structure with confidence and accuracy.

Teaching and learning

84. Teaching in French and German is a real strength and encourages the pupils to make very good progress, particularly in their oral and listening skills. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use French or German consistently and skilfully in their teaching to develop very good listening skills. Teaching is conducted at a very good pace and this, together with detailed preparation and the wide range of activities in lessons, keeps the pupils motivated and interested. As a result, pupils are engaged in their learning and achieve very well. In one Year 10 German lesson, for example, a mixed ability group was captivated by learning and using new vocabulary and expressions to describe human personality characteristics. The hour-long lesson flew by because of the imaginative variety of activities prepared by the teacher, including good use of the electronic whiteboard. Teaching in French and German sets high expectations for pupils of all abilities and makes them aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Comments in exercise books are particularly helpful. There is, however, some inconsistency in Years 7 to 9 in both languages in the application of the national strategy. Aims and objectives are not always made consistently clear at the beginning of lessons and summary sessions at the end of lessons are frequently too rushed to consolidate and check on what has been learned. Homework is set regularly and reinforces learning well.

Leadership and management

85. Leadership promotes good teamwork and consistency of approach across the languages department. It is dedicated to ensuring high standards and achievement in both French and German. There is a clear vision for the future. Pupils' progress is effectively monitored and analysis of the department's effectiveness is rigorously undertaken. Management is not afraid to embrace new developments in the interests of trying to raise standards and has recently changed examination boards and introduced a new GCSE vocational course. Newly appointed staff are effectively supported by more experienced members of the department. The departmental handbook is comprehensive and a real working document to guide and inform the work of teachers in the department.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Very good	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong leadership has ensured a steady improvement in test and examination results
- Pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 are achieving very well because of very good teaching
- Pupils have positive attitudes and work hard in response to the teachers' encouragement, support and expertise
- The assessment system used by the department is not linked to the pupil's target for improvement and is not promoting achievement
- Some lessons in Years 10 and 11 lack the structure found in Years 7 to 9 and this inhibits achievement

Commentary

Examination results

86. Results at the end of Year 9 are well below national averages but above the average for those schools with a similar intake. There has been a steady improvement over the last 5 years. The number of pupils obtaining the higher grades at the end of Year 9 is well above the average for similar schools. Results at the end of Year 11 in 2003 were below average but formed part of a trend of improvement. Early indications suggest that the 2004 results show continued improvement.

Standards and achievement

87. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment in mathematics is well below average. Pupils achieve well in all areas of mathematics, with major strengths in number and space and shape. In both written and oral work, pupils recall facts and apply skills confidently. An arithmetic activity at the start of lessons sharpens pupils' mental mathematics. In Year 11, good investigational skills were seen in well-presented coursework. In a Year 9 class, pupils were able to test whether numbers were rational or irrational, there is no evidence of differences in the achievement of boys and girls.

Teaching and learning

88. The experience and expertise of the teachers are significant strengths that ensure rigour in the teaching and thorough preparation of pupils for examinations. Teaching in all sets ensures pupils of different abilities do well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. The pupils have confidence in their teachers and there is mutual respect. This results in a stimulating ambience within the classrooms and pupils feeling confident to tackle difficult questions without fear of ridicule if they make mistakes.
89. The routine setting of homework successfully reinforces learning from lessons. Every pupil has a target for improvement in the subject. The department's assessment system provides each pupil with additional targets, an effort grade and a standard grade. However, the two systems are not connected and are not fully promoting achievement.
90. In one excellent lesson, the teacher used a wide range of teaching strategies including practical work, theory work, group work and a reinforcement of each individual pupil's literacy skills. These different approaches were combined with excellent classroom management skills. At the end of the lesson, the pupils understood how plane shapes could interconnect. In response to supportive teaching, pupils behave very well, concentrate and work hard.

91. The adoption of the national strategy has raised achievement in years 7, 8 and 9 through the delivery of structured and stimulating lessons. In Years 10 and 11 some lessons tend to lack the structure to which the pupils have become accustomed. This limits achievement.

Leadership and management

92. The focus of the department is clearly on raising standards. Teachers work well as a team and are mutually supportive. The leadership and management are providing a clear vision for future development. This has resulted in improved results and much improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

93. The provision overall is satisfactory. Pupils speak confidently and positively about their mathematical experiences in the school. A plan for the development of the cross-curricular use of the subject has been created. All subject areas are provided with information about the mathematical topic which forms the focus for the term. At present, there are few examples of the pupils being asked to use their mathematical skills in the wider context however, they are asked to convert Euros into Pounds in modern foreign languages; use graphical representations in geography and consider time lines in history. In physical education, graphs are used to investigate the connection between fitness levels and potential heart problems.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching has led to rising achievement, especially at levels 6 in Year 9 and in GCSE results
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, leading to a caring environment where all are valued equally
- The quality of the environment and the safety of working have continued to improve since the previous inspection
- Teaching and marking is not consistent because unqualified and temporary teachers are not given enough support

Commentary

Examination results

94. In 2003, tests for pupils at the end of Year 9 were below average, but they did well compared with their attainment on entry to the school. In 2004, thanks to well-targeted efforts, results improved further even at the higher level 6. In 2003 results at GCSE were below average but they are better than those achieved in other national curriculum subjects. There is no significant difference between the results of boys and girls.

Standards and achievement

95. Standards seen in lessons and in work samples matched the examination results. One strength throughout the school is the development of investigatory skills. Pupils are able to make simple predictions from Year 7, decide on the range of variables to measure and tabulate results well. This was seen in a Year 10 lesson, on falling under gravity. Pupils enter the school with well below average literacy. Provision in this area is satisfactory with good emphasis on key words and a

gradual improvement in pupils' competence. Numeracy skills are generally satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, are well looked after and more able pupils are also challenged well in lessons.

Teaching and learning

96. Teachers make good use of elements of the national strategy such as making sure pupils understand the learning objectives and independent work. Strong points include positive relationships and pupil attitudes. Good teachers promote high expectations where pupils were given the opportunity to work independently. In many cases, good teacher knowledge and understanding leads to good learning. Teachers use ICT effectively and good use was made of the new interactive whiteboards. There is some variation in the provision of teaching materials and in marking pupils work. With the exception of occasional lessons when pupils can be judgemental about unsatisfactory teaching, the attitude of pupils to their work is consistently good and in the classes of experienced teachers, very good.

Leadership and management

97. Current arrangements for departmental management are effective and are well supported by the core team, who act as good role models and who assist in day-to-day administration, such as management of long-term absence. Some aspects of leadership are very strong, such as departmental assessment, analysis of achievement, monitoring and management of performance and liaison with other schools for primary transition and for sixth form provision. The department is very good at targeting support for pupils and this has contributed to the good achievement. The policy of deploying a single teacher for all aspects of science and of seeking to maintain stability across the key stage has strengths including the development of close relationships. There is not enough dissemination of good practice, especially to the unqualified teachers. There is a need for some minor changes in timetabling and rooming to improve support for these teachers. Departmental teaching resources and formative target setting need further development. The library does not have enough suitable textbooks.
98. Since the last inspection, the department has made great strides in creating a safe working environment and good working practices, aided by good pupil cooperation and the skill of the technician team. The main feature leading to a judgement of good improvement is the year on year rise in examination results from 2002 to 2004.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The introduction of the Key Stage 3 national strategy into Years 7 to 9 and the support given to non-specialists teachers is raising the standards of achievement
- Good management has resulted in good progress since the last inspection
- Work is well marked with targets set, so pupils know what they must do to improve the standard of their work
- Long term staff absence in the previous academic year has meant that many pupils have been taught by non-specialists. This has limited their progress
- There are not enough up-to-date books or useful computer software in the library

Commentary

Examination results

99. Pupils are presently following a new vocational GCSE double award in ICT. Currently there is no validated data on the results of this course.

Standards and achievement

100. By the end of Year 9 many pupils are able to use computers confidently. They use a variety of tools to develop their own ideas on the design of a suitable logo and information flyer. They have a good understanding of control systems and sequencing, such as those related to traffic lights. Pupils produce accurate systems flowcharts to describe control systems. In Year 7 they can identify features of a presentation and apply these to their own work. Pupils use regular self and peer evaluation to extend their ideas and raise standards.
101. In Years 10 and 11 pupils understand the role of ICT in society and are able to give a sound evaluation in the use of ICT for social, academic and personal use. Many pupils have good skills in the presentation of reports incorporating digitised images, tabulated results and screen dumps. However, some Year 11 pupils lack the basic skills in the use of software tools. Standards have been severely affected by long-term absence of three key staff in the department and the fact that these pupils did not receive the recommended amount of time for ICT in Years 7 to 9.

Teaching and learning

102. The teaching of ICT by subject specialists and the learning by pupils in these lessons was never less than satisfactory and often good or very good. In one lesson it was excellent. Teacher support from an LEA strategy consultant is particularly effective. Very well prepared lessons involving many varied activities accelerate the pace of learning. Most teachers have a good grasp of the subject and are well supported by the available resources. However, some rooms are small and pupils have to share computers and this restricts their progress. Window blinds are ineffective in shading projected images.
103. Where lessons are well planned, the attitude of most pupils is good or very good. Teachers, even those new to the school, work hard to ensure they know their pupils. They know the abilities of the pupils and how they can be supported to achieve the best possible standard of work. In less successful lessons, planning was weak and available resources were not used effectively. Relationships are good and most pupils know that teachers expect good behaviour and hard work. In most lessons teachers circulate well around the room, helping and advising pupils. They use a good combination of humour and praise to encourage pupils to work well. Assessment of written work is good. Pupils know what they have achieved and what they need to improve.

Leadership and management

104. The management team has a clear vision and demonstrate great support for the subject. Planning of courses is strong. There is extensive documentation, which shows a comprehensive plan for the development of ICT. The leaders are good role models. This is evident in the support given to non-specialist teachers. The school has invested a lot of time and money into ICT and this has resulted in much improvement to the overall provision of the subject. However, library resources are very limited and out of date.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

105. This is satisfactory. The proportion of computers available for use by pupils is above the national average. ICT provision within subject areas has increased. Most teachers have completed New Opportunities Funding (NOF) ICT training, which was tailored to their needs and has enhanced their ICT skills. Many subject areas have their own ICT facilities. The school has used e-learning credits to enable departments to access more software and interactive whiteboards are used well in several subject areas. There are plans to develop this further. Data projectors are also well used as a valuable teaching resource. The school library has several computer stations but no CD ROMS and very limited software. The use of ICT in PE is particularly good and pupils use video evidence to support their KS4 courses. ICT policies are written into the schemes of work of several departments and good use of ICT is made in science, maths, modern foreign languages and art. The use of ICT

to support learning in subject areas is effective in Years 7 to 9. However, in science and business studies the ICT skills of some of the older pupils in Year 11 are still limiting the contribution that ICT can make to enhancing the curriculum. In music, although ICT equipment is available it is not used. This limits the composition skills of non-instrumentalists.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staffing difficulties have prevented standards from rising
- Pupils achieve well because of well planned effective teaching
- Assessment is effective so pupils know what they have to do to improve
- Some pupils do not complete their work and teachers do not follow this up to ensure it is finished

Commentary

Examination results

106. GCSE results were below average in 2003 with no significant difference between the results for boys and girls. Results have remained below average over the last three years.

Standards and achievement

107. By the end of Year 9, standards are below average. This represents an improvement as standards on entry to the school are well below average. Pupils achieve well and make good progress as a result of good teaching and their very good attitudes and behaviour. Because of staffing difficulties in recent years, standards remain below average by the end of Year 11, even though pupils achieve well and are keen to learn.

Teaching and learning

108. Teachers have good subject knowledge and set high expectations so that pupils achieve well. They use interactive whiteboards effectively to explain difficult ideas and processes so that their pupils understand them more easily. Lessons are well planned so that pupils can see what they need to learn and achieve. Assessment is good; pupils are told the level they are at and what they have to do to improve. The meanings of specialized geographical words are a key part of each lesson. Pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of English language acquisition are well supported by teaching assistants so they achieve as well as their classmates. Sometimes higher attaining pupils do not attempt, or fail to complete, more demanding tasks. The drawing and labelling of maps needs more care and attention.

Leadership and management

109. Well established management procedures have helped to prevent any decline in standards. The instability in staffing and the consequent difficulty in implementing an ambitious and committed programme of improvement have made it difficult to raise standards.

History

Provision in history is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An upward trend in GCSE results because of consistently good teaching
- Pupils achieve well as a result of well planned lessons and good attitudes to learning
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is not thorough enough so pupils do not always know how well they are doing
- Leadership knows what needs to be done to move the department forward

Commentary

Examination results

110. GCSE results were above average in 2003, with many pupils improving upon their expected grades. A high proportion of pupils achieved A or A* grades. Overall, results between 2001 and 2004 have been in line with national expectations and have shown an upward trend.

Standards and achievement

111. By the end of Year 9, standards are below average. This represents an improvement, as standards on entry to the school are well below average. Pupils achieve well and make good progress because of the good teaching they receive and their own very good attitudes and behaviour. Written work shows a steady improvement in Years 7 to 9 but more visual ways of representing and summarising historical information, such as time-lines, are less well developed. By the end of Year 11, standards are average. Pupils continue to achieve well due to effective teaching and very good attitudes and behaviour. They continue to make good progress with written work. Visual methods of representing information, such as diagrams of particular historical events, are used better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9.

Teaching and learning

112. Teachers have good subject knowledge and pupils are able to make good progress because lessons are interesting and challenging. Teachers bring history to life. In all lessons, they make sure that important key words are fully understood. Lessons are well planned so that pupils understand what they need to learn and achieve. Assessment procedures are not very thorough and lack consistency so pupils do not always know how well they are doing or what to do to get better. Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils who have English as an additional language, are well supported by teaching assistants and achieve as well as the other pupils.

Leadership and management

113. The relatively new leadership has analysed the situation within the subject and this has resulted in clear management plans as to how the department should move forward. For example, for Years 7 to 9, there is a clear and thorough scheme of assessment of pupils' work. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively so that improvements can take place. Good practice amongst teachers is not shared enough. Planning for Year 7 pupils does not have enough focus on the development of writing skills.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is very good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good

The judgements apply to religious education as a core subject and as a GCSE examination subject.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very good subject knowledge is having a positive impact on the quality of lessons
- Planning to ensure a variety of interesting tasks is having a significant effect on pupils' learning
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour contribute really well to their achievement
- Marking in pupils' books does not always contain comments which will help pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding

Commentary

Examination results

114. GCSE results in 2003 were in line with national averages. Boys and girls' results were similar.

Standards and achievement

115. Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below average but by the end of Year 11 they reach average standards and this represents very good achievement. Boys' and girls' achievement is similar. By Year 9 pupils have achieved an understanding of discrimination and prejudice and are able to link this to the Christian beliefs as highlighted through the Bible and work of Martin Luther King. Pupils in the school come from a wide range of faith backgrounds and teachers encourage pupils to share ideals and religious practices with each other and this helps to develop independent learning and mutual respect. For example, by Year 11 pupils have a good understanding of Sikhism and the role of the Gurdwara. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make very good progress because of the effective support they receive.

Teaching and learning

116. Teaching ranged from good to excellent. In the best lessons, teaching is imaginative and challenging to pupils because teachers have really good subject knowledge and focus on different learning styles. They use a range of approaches in lessons including group-work and role-play. They make good use of resources and artefacts, for example, to show the attire for a Bar Mitzvah. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and as a result, pupils accept that they are required to be familiar with religious terminology. In lessons, pupils are tested on their understanding of key words. Ongoing assessment is a positive feature of lessons but when books are marked there are not enough comments to further help pupils to improve. Pupils arrive to lessons prepared to work. They have extremely positive attitudes, are cooperative and are very well behaved.

Leadership and management

117. Leadership ensures teachers have high expectations of pupils. There is a clear shared vision and a drive for improvement from teachers. The department plan is effectively linked to the whole school development. Performance management is having a positive impact on standards. Lesson observations identify good practice and this is shared by the teachers and training needs are identified. The curriculum follows the agreed syllabus and non statutory guidelines are followed when planning schemes of work. There is a good stock of resources including videos, textbooks and work sheets within the department. Interactive whiteboards have recently been installed in the classrooms and a programme of training is planned. Pupils have access to ICT and make use of

religious education websites for research. The department makes a good contribution to literacy in planning and teaching key words and ensures pupils correct spelling errors as part of school policy.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in food technology, which ensures that pupils achieve well in this area
- Pupils' behave well in design and technology and are keen to learn
- Good leadership is tackling the low standards caused by the long-term absences of key teachers in the last two years
- Some weak and unimaginative teaching in Year 11 results in low standards and achievement in resistant materials

Commentary

Examination results

118. In 2003 GCSE results were well below average and pupils underachieved compared to their performance in other subjects. There were significant differences between the different options in design and technology with food technology achieving the highest results whilst still below the national average. In 2004, examination results were similar.

Standards and achievement

119. By the end of Year 9 standards remain well below the national average but with signs of improvement due to more stable staffing in the current year. Achievement in design and technology is satisfactory overall but inconsistent across the different areas. In food technology, pupils achieve higher standards in the design and production of food products to a given brief and carry out accurate sensory analysis testing. In textiles they produce a reasonable standard of design drawings for a toiletry bag but struggle with the requirement to write design specifications. In resistant materials, lower attaining pupils achieve soundly by the preparation of thin metal sheets ready for marking and cutting out to shape. Standards in resistant materials have deteriorated significantly. In Year 11 textile lessons pupils can use ICT competently to access research information to help them in their initial design ideas. Gifted and talented pupils successfully experiment with a computerised sewing machine to produce simple design motifs. Design drawing and presentation is broadly of an average standard. Many pupils struggle with the theoretical aspects of the subject and have even more problems in generating design proposals and specifications. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates.

Teaching and learning

120. Some teaching is excellent and in those lessons standards and achievement are much greater. The long-term absence of specialist teachers over the past two years has resulted in a lack of stability and continuity especially in the teaching of resistant materials. The appointment of temporary teachers with more secure subject knowledge is now starting to improve the overall quality of lessons and standards. In those lessons where teaching is very good and excellent, pupils are highly motivated by the organisation, the variety of teaching methods, short deadlines and the opportunity to work together cooperatively. In many lessons however, pupils are too frequently offered activities that are less practical and enjoyable. The assessment of pupils' progress in

lessons and over time is good and as a result they are knowledgeable about their attainment levels and improvement needs.

Leadership and management

121. Leadership has a strong awareness of what is needed to improve standards. The good improvement plan being implemented is supported by the professional development of staff and specialist recruitment. The department now tracks the progress of pupils effectively and is carefully analysing examination performance, systematically monitoring teaching and evaluating where it needs to improve. There are not enough design and technology books in the school library. Recent initiatives working with feeder primary schools to improve the skills and knowledge of pupils on transfer to the school is beginning to have an impact on standards on entry.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

In addition to the focus subjects of art and music, two Year11 lessons of drama were observed. The quality of teaching was very good in one lesson and excellent in the other. Pupils achieved really well because of the exciting, inspirational and dynamic teaching they received. Pupils enjoyed the lessons and worked very hard in response to the high quality teaching. Both lessons expertly involved pupils whose have English as an additional language in gesture and mime so that they were able to achieve as well as the other pupils. Standards were average overall.

Art

Provision in art and design is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers’ secure subject knowledge and expertise enable all pupils to achieve well
- Pupils are keen to learn because of challenging and enthusiastic teaching
- Pupils have a wide range of experiences in art, including printmaking and ceramics that extend their learning
- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not use computers and specialist software enough in lessons
- Departmental planning and schemes of work are dated and do not follow a common structure

Commentary

Examination results

122. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were below average. This has been the trend over the last three years. Girls performed much better than boys did overall. Results in 2004 were similar.

Standards and achievement

123. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with attainment that is well below expected standards. They achieve well during Years 7 to 9, because of a series of well structured tasks and effective teaching. By the end of Year 9 standards have clearly improved. Pupils make good progress in learning new skills and by using a variety of media in both two and three-dimensions. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 experience lessons with different specialist teachers. This variety of experiences enables pupils to achieve well. Although GCSE results were below average last year, standards of work seen in the current Year 10 appear to be average. Pupils benefit from some interesting projects involving ICT but generally do not have enough opportunities to use specialist software and computers.

Teaching and Learning

124. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and expertise enabling pupils to do well. Lessons are well structured with a good pace. Teachers' interventions, reinforcing points that the whole class could learn from, are effective. Pupils needing one-to-one support are helped quietly and constructively. Teachers ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, make good progress. Marking and assessment are informative, enabling pupils to understand how to improve their work. Teachers use examples of previous pupils' practical work, regular demonstrations and their own work, to give pupils a thorough understanding of what is expected of them and how they can improve. Homework is used effectively to reinforce learning. Pupils and teachers relate very well to each other and pupils are supportive of each other. A strong feature of lessons is the positive attitude pupils have towards their work. Year 10 work on display showed how pupils have benefited greatly from completing a course at Wolverhampton art gallery using digital photography and ICT to generate images.

Leadership and Management

125. There is a strong sense of teamwork with shared teaching values. However, departmental documentation, whilst satisfactory, is out of date and not structured enough so teachers do not have clear guidelines to ensure consistency. Library resources for art are poor.

Music

Provision in music is unsatisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' underachieve because of unsatisfactory teaching and weaknesses in the curriculum
- Pupils are not given the opportunity to use the available computer-based technology to create their own music
- The teaching of composing in Years 10 and 11 is poor and pupils underachieve as a result
- Teachers' classroom management is very good
- Musically talented pupils achieve well because of additional support outside of lessons

Commentary

Examination results

126. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were above average. However, results in 2004 were much worse with fewer than half of the pupils entered gaining grades A*-C.

Standards and achievement

127. Standards in Year 9 are currently below average and pupils do not achieve at the level of which they are capable. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in developing basic keyboard skills and using appropriate musical terminology. However, recordings of pupils work show achievement in composing is poor with little progress being made in Years 7 to 9. The structure of the curriculum restricts pupils' musical creativity so they underachieve as musicians. Current standards in Year 11 are well below average. Pupils use appropriate terminology to talk about music but the majority have very limited keyboard skills. Achievement in composing is particularly weak due to pupils not being given the opportunity to work creatively with musical instruments or music technology.

Teaching and learning

128. Lessons are well-managed and teachers help pupils learn information about music and develop their basic keyboard skills. However, this learning is not used effectively to further pupils' musical understanding. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on Asian music, pupils did a 'listening test' without first listening to any examples of Asian music. The teacher talked to them at length about the differences between Western instruments and Asian instruments but did not play examples of either. Consequently, pupils' achievement in the test was poor. Pupils then practised several Indian ragas but did not use the Indian instrument sounds available on the keyboard. In another unsatisfactory lesson, half of all pupils spent the majority of the lesson on non-musical activities. Pupils were given no opportunities to work creatively with music and the lesson concluded with pupils practising fingering on cardboard cut-outs of keyboards. This was unsatisfactory both in terms of pupils' musical learning and the quality of their musical experience.
129. Teachers create a supportive environment for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching effectively helps pupils learn information about music and develop their basic keyboard skills. However, the teaching of composing in Years 10 and 11 is poor. Pupils complete all GCSE composing work in the early part of Year 10. This does not allow them to develop as composers during the course; neither does it allow them to make meaningful connections between composing, performing and listening. Pupils compose using a template. They produce impressive looking music but as they have not composed using a musical instrument or a computer programme, they have no idea what their compositions sound like. This approach is not only profoundly unmusical, it does nothing to develop real composing skills. The lack of opportunities given to pupils to compose using music technology significantly undermines their achievement. This also restricts the progress of those pupils who do not play musical instruments.
130. The one example of instrumental teaching observed was good. The learning of technique was effectively linked to the development of musical understanding and awareness within a highly practical session.

Leadership and management

131. Schemes of work are thorough but do not always reflect what goes on in the classroom. There are references to the use of ICT but this rarely takes place. The integration of ICT into the music curriculum is a long-standing target for the department but has not been acted upon. Assessment systems are thorough and feedback to individual pupils is good. However, assessment criteria do not always address all areas of musical learning. Management does not take into account all aspects that make up an exciting and musical curriculum; consequently, pupils underachieve, particularly in composing. There are hardly any library resources for music. The department supports a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities including a choir, wind band and keyboard groups. The support for gifted and talented pupils outside of lessons is good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching is helping pupils to learn appropriate skills in the different activities and so achieve success
- Very good links with feeder primary schools are beginning to raise the standard of physical skills of pupils when they enter the school
- Strong leadership of the department has brought about a consistent approach which in turn has encouraged a very good atmosphere for participation and learning

- The reduced curriculum time in Year 9 has an adverse effect on standards
- Pupils do not always know what they have to do to improve and reach the next level in each of the different activities

Commentary

Examination results

132. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average but indicate a rising trend in 2004. Difficulties with staffing the department, including illness, change of staff and use of teachers not qualified in physical education, have undoubtedly had an adverse impact on the results achieved in examinations over the last 5 years.

Standards and achievement

133. By the end of Year 9, pupils' practical skills are below average. They understand how to warm up appropriately for an activity and they work hard to complete tasks set by the teacher. However, basic skills such as trapping, controlling and passing the ball with accuracy in football, were less well developed with a Year 9 group than a Year 7 group. The recent very good links and support established with primary schools is having a clear impact on raising the standards of competence of pupils when they come to the school. The loss of an hour of curriculum time in Year 9 has an adverse effect on the standards pupils are able to reach in the teacher assessments at the end of this key stage. Standards in practical performance in Year 11 for sport generally are average although fitness levels are below average overall. In examination classes, standards of practical performance are average; for example, in dance pupils were able to perform elements of their set dance with accuracy and poise. Achievement was good in all lessons seen because skilful teaching enabled pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem, which increased the quality of their practical performance. Pupils with physical disabilities are very well integrated in the lessons and, because care has been taken to find out what is appropriate for each one, they are able to perform, learn and achieve success as well as their friends.

Teaching and learning

134. Whilst good overall, some examples of very good and excellent teaching were seen. All teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the various activities and are able to build progressively on what pupils know which enable pupils to learn the practical skills they need and to consolidate them. Very good class management and planning ensures that all pupils, whatever their particular needs, have equal access to high quality teaching and enjoyable sport activities. All teachers have consistently high expectations and are able to motivate pupils to work hard. Assessment is satisfactory but pupils do not necessarily know what they have to do or learn in order to improve their skills and move up to the next level of competence in the different sport activities.

Leadership and management

135. Leadership has moved the department forward considerably. It has produced a consistency of approach which encourages full participation and the department as a whole is a very good role model of teamwork and harmony. Because of this, the school achieved the Sportsmark award in 2002. Development plans are comprehensive and show that strategies are being implemented to raise GCSE results. Good practice is shared well and this is beginning to have a beneficial impact on the attainment of pupils.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The main focus for the inspection was the vocational ICT course taken by all students in Years 10 and 11. This course is reported on in the ICT subject section. The school also offers good vocational courses which are teaching students specific skills, as well as giving good insight into the requirements of the workplace. These include motor vehicle maintenance, hair and beauty, plumbing and childcare. As nearly all of these courses are taught off-site, it was not possible to sample work in these subjects during the inspection. However, discussion with students and school staff indicate the students are responding well to the opportunities and that the courses have improved student motivation and achievement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship are taught over five whole days per year for each year group. The overall time allocation is low, particularly since it is shared with citizenship and some aspects of careers education. All pupils attend these sessions which cover most aspects of the National Curriculum requirements for Citizenship. Pupils say that they enjoy these days because there is a lot of learning through discussion and group work. Where necessary, themes from the block days are developed by tutors working with pupils through the academic tutoring programme. The overall provision for personal, social and health education is good. Citizenship is allocated on average one and a half days per year, which is very little. The inspection did not coincide with any of these days, and it was therefore not possible to observe any lessons.

Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is not enough time for the subject and the programmes of study are not fully covered so citizenship is not sufficiently distinct as a subject
- There is not enough work available to judge pupils' standards
- Development of the subject has been slow so assessment procedures are unsatisfactory
- There are some examples of good practice and there is potential within the wider school curriculum to develop the subject
- Citizenship is still at a very early stage of development because of ineffective leadership and management

Commentary

Standards and achievement

136. A very small sample of written work was seen, some of which was only loosely connected to the subject. There was not enough evidence available during the inspection to make judgements about pupils' standards. Pupils' awareness of citizenship is low and their understanding of the subject is generally superficial. When asked, they equate it with good behaviour. Many pupils are involved with the charity and residential experiences that form part of normal school life. They get some opportunities to develop skills of participation and responsible action through the good quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural activities of the school but this is not enough to fulfil the key requirements of the citizenship course. Because they do not get enough time for the subject they underachieve.

Teaching and learning

137. The teaching of citizenship within subjects is dependent on each teachers' own skills and interest and is not effectively coordinated. This results in a very patchy provision. The programmes of study for citizenship are not fully covered. The scheme of work shows where the skills and knowledge strand of the curriculum should be taught, as well as the second strand, the skills of enquiry and communication. However, there is not enough time for pupils to do research and enquiry and there is insufficient written evidence to show for this. The third strand of the curriculum, the skills of participation and responsible action, is hardly covered in the scheme of work and this is a significant weakness.

138. Citizenship is not sufficiently distinct as a subject. Pupils were not sure of the difference between citizenship and personal, social and health education and found it hard to say what they did in citizenship. Annual reports to parents use a combined comment box for both subjects and the comments do not give a clear indication of pupils' achievements in citizenship. The end of Year 9 report on the other hand, is specific and much more detailed.

Leadership and management

139. Development of the subject has been slow. There is evidence that the school provides some opportunities for active citizenship but there has been a lack of urgency shown in introducing citizenship into the curriculum of the school. Although planned for this academic year, no audit of the school curriculum has yet been done. This means that opportunities to capitalise on and co-ordinate work which is already going on elsewhere in the school have been missed. Assessment procedures are overall, unsatisfactory. Because of this and also the incomplete coverage of the citizenship curriculum, leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.
140. There is, however, some good practice in the subject. For example, the unit on global development in Year 7 has learning objectives which are well matched to the citizenship curriculum. There is also work going on in other subjects and school activities which makes a good contribution to pupils' citizenship education.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

The school recruits viable numbers for all courses and the retention rate is high for all subjects. In the inspection, nine subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

Most sixth form subjects were not reported on in the last inspection report so a judgement for progress has not been given.

The tables below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in **2003**.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	11	91	80	27	24	34	30
German	1	100	82	0	19	20	29
History	3	33	81	0	20	7	29
Information Technology	1	100	67	0	11	30	21
Mathematics	2	0	62	0	17	0	22
Other Languages	4	100	83	100	43	53	36
Other Social Studies	3	33	70	0	17	7	24
Physics	12	25	69	0	14	6	23
Sociology	1	100	72	0	18	30	25

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	6	100	99	17	50	77	88
Biology	16	69	96	0	39	36	79
Chemistry	10	80	98	10	49	46	85
English Literature	13	100	100	31	47	77	87
German	4	100	98	0	48	45	84
History	2	100	99	0	45	80	85
Information Technology	8	88	96	0	25	58	70
Mathematics	11	82	97	18	56	62	89
Music	3	67	99	0	39	27	81
Other Languages	4	100	97	50	65	85	94
Other Social Studies	4	100	97	25	43	75	82
Physics	1	100	97	100	45	100	82
Religious Studies	6	100	99	17	47	60	86
Sociology	6	100	98	50	44	80	84
Business (VCE)	52	96	65	6	15	54	60
Health & Social Care (VCE)	10	100	68	10	15	78	64
Leisure and Recreation (VCE)	4	100	63	0	10	55	58

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus for the inspection in this curriculum area was English literature. One lesson of French was observed in Year 12 in which teaching, learning and achievement were all satisfactory and standards average. There was an over reliance on using English to introduce a grammar point of gender. An excellent Year 12 German lesson was seen. It was highly organised, focused and demanding. The inspirational teaching led to very high achievement.

English literature

Provision in English literature is satisfactory.

	Year 13
Standards	Below average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well because teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge and good knowledge of examination and coursework requirements
- Students are confident in oral work when working in groups or pairs. They show less confidence when responding to a teacher's questions

Commentary

Examination results

141. Results in the 2003 A-Level examinations were below average. In 2002 results were well below average. School analysis for 2004 which is based on prior attainment shows that results are similar.

Standards and achievement

142. The course attracts students with a wide range of ability and many join with standards which are below average, but, they achieve well. The work of students in Year 13 which was seen during the inspection and the AS Level results they achieved in 2004 show that standards are improving. Year 12 students, new to the course, were reluctant to answer the teacher's questions on the opening scene of '*The Taming of the Shrew*'. However, paired work on detailed analysis of the same scene showed that they were able to discuss their ideas on the language of the play and the characters. Year 13 students were more confident in their use of specialist vocabulary and more willing to share their views. All discussed their personal interpretation of the final stanza of '*Ode on a Grecian Urn*'. Students are encouraged to read widely to support coursework and study of texts. There is evidence that they are enjoying doing this well. Higher attaining students show good analysis of language and support their views with good textual references.

Teaching and learning

143. Teaching in years 12 and 13 is good. Teachers know their subject well demonstrating a balance of knowledge and awareness of students' learning needs. They introduce a range of background information to support reading of the text and where possible link new material to previous study. Students find this very supportive and it promotes good learning. Lessons are well planned and structured, and provide a range of activities in which students take part in detailed analysis of the texts. They respond more confidently after working in pairs than they do in a whole class seminar. Students feel well supported in coursework. They have very positive attitudes to their studies. They are aware of their target grade, and their progress towards it. They know what they need to do to achieve it.

Leadership and management

144. The post of head of department is currently vacant. A senior manager is co-ordinating arrangements until an appointment is made. The day-to-day management of the course is being carried out effectively by teachers. The department has identified priorities for development and this has been informed by examination data. The teachers of the course provide good background material but the library does not contain supportive material in the form of biography, literary criticism, literary history and a relevant fiction collection to support the course.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

145. Standards of literacy across the subjects are below average. Students enter Year 12 with literacy skills that are below average. Year 12 students on vocational courses who have not achieved a grade C in GCSE English take the key skills communication course. Good teaching maintains interest and application and focuses on vocabulary, context and summarising techniques. Provision for A-level students is less consistent across departments. In most subjects, teachers give suitable emphasis to subject specific vocabulary, but there is less focus on developing skills for analysis and the use of argument in written tasks.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are experienced subject specialists who enthuse and encourage the students by providing challenging tasks
- Good teacher/student relationships promote achievement through creating a pleasant ambience in the classroom
- Students do not always discuss mathematics in sufficient depth or breadth

Commentary

Examination results

146. Results in the 2003 A-Level examinations were well below the national average. Standards are now average because the present group have a higher attainment level than those taking the examination last year and management has adapted the materials to ensure students do well.

Standards and achievement

147. The course attracts students with a wide range of abilities, many joining with standards that are only just average. The ability of the cohort varies widely between years. In 2003, just under a quarter of those who started the mathematics course gave up once they appreciated the rigours of the subject. Standards achieved reflect this range of ability. In lessons, students tend to work quietly but with enthusiasm. Work seen shows that they take a genuine interest in the subject and a pride in the presentation of their work.

Teaching and learning

148. Teachers are enthusiastic. This is transmitted well to students who respond accordingly. Lessons are well planned and organised. Students learn to work at speed through the use of timed exercises. Students are keen and willing learners and they respond well to work which is challenging but within their grasp. They answer questions confidently but rarely respond with questions of the teacher to extend the topic into new realms such as that beyond the syllabus. Even in good lessons, students are presented with few opportunities to discuss their mathematical

thinking and philosophy. There is an effective focus on examination and coursework requirements which prepares the students well for the final assessment.

Leadership and management

149. Lessons, rooms and equipment are well organised. There is a strong sense of teamwork, with both work and teaching values being shared, and an ambition for improvement being very apparent. Resources are good including a range of ICT which is available for use on the interactive whiteboards. All this is beginning to have a real impact on standards which are higher than the 2003 results would suggest.

Mathematics across the curriculum

150. The provision for mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Students in Years 12 and 13 speak confidently and positively about their mathematical experiences within the school and how these have prepared them for their present courses and for entry into higher education. The school library has a limited range of material to support independent study of the subject. Although evidence of students using their mathematical knowledge outside of subject specific lessons was limited a good example was found in physics where the students were called upon to use the trigonometric ratios.

SCIENCE

Biology, chemistry and physics were the focus of the inspection.

Biology

Provision in biology is satisfactory.

	Year 13
Standards	Well below average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very knowledgeable and the difficult concepts are explained well
- Students are very positive in their attitudes to biology and follow the work with intelligence and interest
- The subject is popular and all achieve equally well
- Students are well looked after, but recording A-level achievement is not formalised

Commentary

Examination results

151. Results In 2003 were well below average. In 2004, results appear to have improved. Boys did better than girls in biology, contrary to national trends.

Standards and achievement

152. The standards of work seen were difficult to judge at this early stage in the term. Year 12 students have practical skills that match A-level expectations and are able to talk about cells, tissues and organs with some fluency. There were signs of good achievement in Year 12. The current Year 13 students' standards on entry, in terms of AS results, were well below those normally found, although parents and teachers had consciously decided to give them the chance at the subject. Students' attitudes to work are very positive. They value the resource materials provided, particularly the text materials. They are positive about their ability to grasp difficult topics, such as the biochemistry of photosynthesis and genetics. Achievement by Year 13 is satisfactory. Although students are well below average in their comprehension of the genetics of mono and dihybrid crosses, they are catching up well.

Teaching and learning

153. Teaching is characterised by very secure subject knowledge and of the examination requirements. Relationships are very good and through informal methods students understand how they are progressing and what steps need to be taken to improve. They value the contribution made by their teachers. There is a good degree of independent learning in the biology classes with good use made of textual materials. Good use is also made of digital microscopes to generalise learning and focus questions. Some classes are very large for A-level. For example, nearly 30 in a Year 12 group, which presents difficulties both in marking and in maintaining the informal level of support that is currently on offer. The very good relationships contribute well to the atmosphere of self-esteem, which in turn promotes good learning.

Leadership and management

154. Teachers work well as a team. Policies have been updated and resources to aid revision and improve examination technique have been produced. There is not enough formal leadership in terms of setting standards and expectations within the subject. Assessment procedures and systems to record achievement are not used accurately enough.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is satisfactory.

	Year 13
Standards	Well below average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers very good subject knowledge and good relationships lead to stimulating learning environment
- Students have a very positive attitude to their learning
- Leadership and management have not developed the curriculum enough to increase achievement
- Data analysis is not rigorous enough to improve curriculum planning

Commentary

Examination results

155. Results in 2003 were well below average. 2004 results show some improvement.

Standards and achievement

156. Students start the course with a wide range of abilities, many joining with standards that are well below average. Their satisfactory achievement is demonstrated in the written work they produce and their determination to battle with ideas they find difficult. Students learn and recall facts well but find applying them to problem solving more difficult, especially when problems are numerical. In the large Year 12 group, there was an air of excitement amongst the students and they made very good progress during a lesson. Despite good teaching, students are only achieving satisfactorily rather than good because the curriculum does not yet fully match their needs.

Teaching and learning

157. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are keen on teaching the subject. They transmit this to students who are excited by the challenges that are presented. Lessons are carefully planned and timed so that the pace is brisk. Teachers are good at explaining chemical formulae and encouraging students to ask questions if they do not understand. Effective use is made of examination questions so that students know what is required of them. Marking is thorough and

students feel well supported by staff, finding them readily available. Teaching does not match the use of ICT and other materials closely enough to individual needs.

Leadership and management

158. Staff are good role models for students. They have high expectations of students and are passionate about providing opportunities for all who wish to study the subject. Lessons, rooms and equipment are well organised but development planning and use of data for curriculum planning are not emphasised enough. Health and safety procedures are very good.

Physics

Provision in physics is satisfactory.

	Year 13
Standards	Well below average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Insufficient evidence

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Accommodation and resources are good and enhance learning
- The reduction in curriculum time because of staff absence is having a detrimental effect on standards
- Students are not good at working independently and they do not always understand how they can improve
- Data analysis lacks rigour in order to help with curriculum planning

Commentary

Examination results

159. Students are taught jointly with those of a nearby school. Published data for this school only includes students from the school and does not necessarily reflect the performance of the whole group. In 2003, there were three students and therefore the group was too small for comment. In 2004, five students took the Advanced level examination and 100% pass rate was achieved.

Standards and achievement

160. Many students join the course with standards that are well below average. Despite the staffing difficulties due to illness, students' examination grades show that they make satisfactory progress. In lessons observed, students also made satisfactory progress despite having some difficulties with mathematical concepts. In Year 13 a few students did not concentrate on the work set.

Teaching and learning

161. Teachers plan lessons well and make good use of the available time. An appropriate range of subject matter is taught. The accommodation is light, airy and well maintained, creating a good environment for learning. Students have enough resources to work independently but they do not always understand how to do this effectively. Teachers explain work well but it is not always matched to individual student needs. Although students appreciate the efforts the school has made in a difficult situation, they feel that their grades have been affected and are not happy with the reduction in curriculum time.

Leadership and management

162. The school has worked hard to keep physics appropriately staffed. However, more time is required for students to learn to work more independently and boost their confidence. Due to staff absence, it was not possible to gather enough evidence to make a judgement on management at department level. The analysis of departmental data lacks rigour and does not match work closely enough to individual student needs. Despite this, the school has done well to ensure that physics remains a viable option in difficult circumstances.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good subject knowledge, plan lessons well and have an enthusiastic approach to teaching which encourages students to work hard
- The department is well managed; teachers work together and students are taught very well by using this wide expertise
- Long-term staff absence has resulted in some students having less well developed practical skills

Commentary

Examination Results

163. Students are presently following the AVCE double award vocational A level. Currently there is no validated data on the results of this course.

Standards and achievement

164. Early in Year 12 students have a sound understanding of ICT in organisations but they have some problems in the understanding of the concept of relational databases. However, by the end of Year 13 because of the consistently very good teaching they receive, students are able to effectively design computer systems, produce complex multimedia presentations, involving sound and video images and they are able to write procedures using Visual BASIC. They are also able to plan and execute Web Pages and design systems, which include relational database design. They achieve very well in a short time. Students present their work as well written reports, which incorporate annotated screen dumps and digitised images. Data flow diagrams are used effectively and they are able to evaluate their work, with most able to suggest how their work can be developed.

Teaching and learning

165. Students are taught by ICT specialists who have a very good knowledge of the subject. Teachers make good use of the data projector and visual aids, combined with an enthusiastic well-planned delivery which captivates the interest of all students. Students are given a large variety of tasks to complete and a good range of teaching styles maintain their interest in the lessons. Relationships between the teacher and students and within the group are very good. Group work is particularly successful and there is a suitable match of abilities to ensure all students achieve well.
166. The teachers know the students well and they respect each other. The attitude of the students is very good. They enjoy the subject and most Year 13 students continue studying this subject when they leave school. Written work is very well marked and there are clear guidelines about what students need to do to improve their grades. Moderation of coursework is very good. The department moderates this work to national standards and has been identified by the examination board as an A centre with regard to moderation requirements. The standard of the coursework is in line with national standards and improving.

Leadership and management

167. The departmental handbook shows good planning and effective deployment of staff and resources. The leaders are good role models, and share good practice within the department. Long-term staff absence has had a negative impact on some students' practical skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

168. As in the main school, sixth form students have good access to ICT equipment. ICT provision within subject areas has increased since the last inspection and most teachers have developed their ICT skills through New Opportunities Funding ICT (NOF) training. Many departments have their own ICT facilities. Interactive whiteboards have been installed in several subject areas and software has been purchased to develop their use. Data projectors are also well used as a valuable teaching tool. This was used particularly well in a Year 12 French lesson to develop vocabulary. Students used 'Le Figaro' on line to interpret headlines of current events, and used a word-processed text as part of a carousel of activities to reinforce the correct use of gender. ICT has been used very effectively to establish a video-conferencing link for the teaching of psychology. Most students have their own computers at home and are able to complete tasks started in lessons. The use of ICT is evolving, students have access to the Internet and modern ICT equipment in the library and they use this resource as a means of independent learning. However, the lack of any CD ROM or other multimedia resources in the library is detrimental to their achievement.

HUMANITIES

In addition to the focus subject of sociology, one lesson of history and psychology were sampled along with two religious education lessons.

In the history lesson, the teaching and learning were very good due to effective planning and appropriate levels of challenge so that students achieved well. Standards in history are in line with national expectations. In the psychology lesson sampled there was very effective use of video conferencing. The teaching was good and students achieved well. Students were successfully encouraged to become independent learners. Standards seen were below average.

Two lessons of religious education were seen where teaching was very good and excellent. Teachers are really knowledgeable and planning is very good. Students have every opportunity to take a full and active part in lessons and they are conscientious and work hard. In response to the high quality teaching they receive, students enjoy taking part in discussions and produced lively and well thought out responses to gender issues in Sikhism. Standards are below average.

Students in the sixth form follow a core religious education programme and this includes issues concerned with ethics, genetic engineering, the media and cultural development.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results are improving and group sizes increasing
- Students are highly motivated to achieve well by teachers' expertise and enthusiasm
- Young people's experience of a multi-ethnic environment is used creatively for very good coursework
- Accommodation is poor especially in view of the recent increase in group sizes
- Assessment for learning to raise standards and examination success is not fully in place

Commentary

Examination results

169. Results in the 2003 examinations were in line with national averages. 2004 results were similar but with a much larger group of students entered.

Standards and achievement

170. Students studying sociology have below average attainment when they start the course. Their good achievement is evident in the extensive and well-produced coursework they complete, and their awareness of technical language and accuracy in using it. The department is now aiming to enable all students to achieve as highly in external examinations.

Teaching and learning

171. Teachers motivate and support students very well. Teachers are knowledgeable and enjoy teaching sociology, encouraging thoughtful reflection on family and education experiences in Year 12. Year 13 students in a lesson on youth subculture showed real interest in the topic of crime and deviance. They benefit from the study of societies across the world, bringing a wide cultural awareness from their own diverse backgrounds. This is incorporated really well into their coursework. Students are given glossaries of technical words for each component and use this language well in groups and teacher led discussion. They are good at constructing hypotheses and structuring research projects. Some students are given valuable help to write fluently when analysing their findings, or answering examination questions. Not all students are aware how they could improve their written work.

Leadership and management

172. Leadership centres on student achievement. Many students go on to study at university with the confidence they gain from this course. Management of resources and coursework is very good but staff and students suffer from poor accommodation. Teachers ask for feedback from students and build improvement based on previous group experiences of the course, but do not assess learning needs early enough in order to support the independent learning of all students. The subject has recently gained in popularity and attracted boys in similar numbers to girls for the first time this year.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

This was not a focus for the inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design

Provision in art and design is good.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results are improving steadily
- The standard of work is high in sculpture and ceramics as a result of lively and stimulating teaching
- A wide variety of art disciplines is available to students so that all can succeed
- Enrichment projects with an external gallery and artists in residence are widening students' knowledge and understanding of contemporary art
- Standards of observational drawing are not high enough
- The lack of a sixth form art room restricts continuity of work in private study time and the scale and challenge offered to students

Commentary

Examination results

173. Results in 2003 improved upon the previous year but remained below average. Examination results in 2004 show a further improvement and almost all students gained a pass at grades A-E. Recruitment onto the course has risen and retention rates are good.

Standards and achievement

174. Current standards are average overall but the quality of work achieved in ceramics and sculpture is higher. Students' achieve well compared to their standards on entry to the course. They are making positive gains in their knowledge and understanding of art and design as shown by the good standard and thoughtfulness of work produced in sketchbooks and personal studies journals. The integration of digital media into printmaking is an exciting development which is starting to have a beneficial impact upon the expressiveness of the work produced. However, the standard of observational drawing and painting is not high enough and lacks enough attention to ensure the highest grades can be achieved. Students do not learn enough about the arts of different cultural traditions so that they lack knowledge, especially about contemporary artists representing the diversity of cultures found in the school.

Teaching and learning

175. Teachers are hard working and provide a good variety of creative opportunities so that all students can succeed and enjoy their studies. Teaching is knowledgeable, lessons well planned, prepared and promote a relaxed but purposeful ethos to which students respond well. It is effective in promoting good attitudes and behaviour from the students and as a result, they are conscientious, open and receptive to advice and increasingly willing to experiment and take risks. Assessment procedures are used well and linked to the examination criteria so that students have a sound understanding of what and how they need to achieve. The display of sixth form artwork around the school both enriches the learning environment and contributes to cultural development.

Leadership and management

176. The department forms an effective team and all contribute to the schemes of work, which build upon different strengths and expertise. There is a good vision for the future development of the department, and responsibility is shared well amongst the staff. Recent developments such as the liaison with the Wolverhampton Art Gallery on projects working with artists have successfully raised the profile of the subject in the school and consequently recruitment onto the sixth form courses is increasing. Other extra curricular opportunities are few apart from an open access to the studios in private study time. The lack of a separate art studio for the sixth form restricts their continuity of working and limits the scope and scale of artwork that can be tackled in school due to a lack of space.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

This was not a focus for the inspection. One lesson of leisure and recreation was sampled. The Year 12 course has just been re-introduced after a break of three years. It is taught jointly with a teacher from a partner school. The teaching demonstrated excellent subject knowledge and a good understanding of the requirements of the course, which was made clear to the students. Using a combination of praise and humour students were motivated to join in class discussions, drawing on their own experiences and their responses were encouraged. Teaching and learning were satisfactory. A variety of teacher-led and student centred activities, sustained the interest of students of all abilities, ensuring that their achievement was satisfactory.

BUSINESS

The focus was on advanced vocational (AVCE) business, but GNVQ (intermediate) business was also sampled. GNVQ students benefit from being well prepared for the course through a well-organised induction programme. In the lesson observed, teaching skilfully related the new subject material to the students' own experiences, for example, through groups drawing up organisational charts of the school. This led to good progress and achievement in relation to their abilities.

Provision in business is very good.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students benefit from the skills, experience and vocational background provided by the team of well qualified and experienced specialist teachers; while relationships between the teachers and students are very productive
- The course builds sequentially on students' knowledge and skills, making very good use of situations from the real world of business
- Many students achieve results that are well above what might be expected from their GCSE results
- Constructive guidance and feedback are given on students' coursework, enabling them to make very good progress
- There is not enough use of computers during lessons

Commentary

Examination results

177. Results in 2003 were below the national average. This was because while all students pass the examination, very few achieved the highest grades. In 2004, results were better with more students achieving the highest grades.

Standards and achievement

178. Standards are average, which represents very good achievement for students who tend to have well below average GCSE point scores for A-level students. By the end of the course, students can give a thorough descriptive account of the basic characteristics of different customers for chosen organisations, which are often large retail outlets. They can report the organisation's approach to customer service but this is often uncritical. Students can report the techniques used by organisations to monitor customer service and in the best examples are able to justify suggestions for improving customer service with secure reference to business theory.

Teaching and learning

179. Students learn very well because teaching is characterised by a strong focus on assessment and very good written and oral feedback. Relationships are very good. Teaching observed was consistently good or better and sometimes excellent. Teachers ensure very well that different groups of students are included in class activity and there is often a strong emphasis on the development of students' vocabulary, helping all students to achieve well in the subject.
180. In response to the very good teaching, students' attitudes to the subject are very good. They work hard throughout lessons and are extremely positive about the subject knowing that they make very good progress and attributing this to the motivation of their teachers. They appreciate that they receive one-to-one help and value the access to teachers out of lessons and the after school catch-up sessions provided. They believe that the approach in the subject encourages them to become self-motivated and they feel that the teachers genuinely "care" about their education and well being. Students work hard throughout the lessons and benefit from the vocational experience that teachers bring. Computers play an important role in students' learning, although access is sometimes too limited. Word processing and Internet research are used extensively, and dedicated business education websites are used well to support independent learning.

Leadership and management

181. The leadership of the department is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards and achievement in all courses offered. Business courses have now been established in Years 10 and 11 and this is providing an effective grounding for sixth form courses. The department engages in monitoring and is reflective in evaluating its practice. The match of staff to the curriculum is very good drawing on the relevant strengths from teachers' vocational experience. Staff willingly make themselves available to students out of lessons. Assessment and its verification are well managed, as are business visits that reinforce the vocational focus. Resources are good and there is access to computers for independent work, but there are insufficient computers for use in all lessons.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

This was not a focus for the inspection. One lesson of health and social care and two lessons of key skills were sampled. In the key skills lessons standards were below average. In one lesson, students developed an understanding of the value of decimal places. Teaching was satisfactory and students' attitudes were very good. In the other lesson, there was good teaching with good relationships and interest in the subject. Students had good attitudes. Students who had below C grade GCSE were developing the communication skills necessary for the GNVQ courses in business and health and social care.

In the health and social care lesson, students were able to make very good progress in understanding both the importance and the effects of non-verbal communication because the very good teaching focused on examples and experiences which were relevant to them and to the world of work they aspired to join.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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