

INSPECTION REPORT

THAMESVIEW SCHOOL

Gravesend

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118879

Headteacher: Mrs I Phillips

Lead inspector: N A Pett

Dates of inspection: 17th - 19th January 2005

Inspection number: 268946

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Modern (non-selective)
School category: Foundation
Age range of pupils: 11 - 16
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 757

School address: Thong Lane
Gravesend
Kent

Postcode: DA12 4LF

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Gingell

Date of previous inspection: 26th March 2003

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an 11-16 co-educational non-selective school which serves the immediate area of established housing. It is located in Gravesend, part of the Kent local education authority, where selection occurs at the age of eleven. The attainment on entry of the large majority of pupils is well below the national average. There are 757 pupils on roll, making it smaller in size than other secondary schools nationally. Pupils come from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds, although many experience social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. There is a significant amount of mobility amongst the population: the proportion of pupils joining and leaving school during the course of the year is higher than in most schools. Just over ten per cent of the pupils come from minority ethnic heritages, and a significant number of these pupils require support for English as an additional language. A small minority of pupils come from the travelling community, and they receive support from the specialist staff. A further minority of pupils come from families who are either refugees or are seeking political asylum. Approximately a third of the pupils are identified with special educational needs, which is well above average. The main categories are for specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) and for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and there is a learning unit to support pupils with behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils who hold statements to address their specific needs is above the national average. There is a physically disabled unit which supports a small minority of pupils, some of whom travel from outside the main area that the school serves. The recruitment of staff is difficult. The school receives additional funding from its involvement in the Excellence in Cities initiative. It is also part of the Gravesend Excellence cluster for raising achievement, in which the school is involved in developing and accessing a range of vocational courses.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17331	N Pett	Lead inspector	Work-related learning
14756	J R Lovell	Lay inspector	
28199	P Lawley	Team inspector	English English as an additional language
30699	A Kemp	Team inspector	Mathematics
16786	S Hodge	Team inspector	Science
18032	I Randall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Citizenship
20877	D Pink	Team inspector	History
31218	T Allen	Team inspector	Geography
12179	L Moscrop	Team inspector	Religious education Business studies
11672	P Harle	Team inspector	Music Drama Expressive arts
31685	V Girling	Team inspector	Art and design
2971	K Hooper	Team inspector	Design and technology
8183	G Keevill	Team inspector	Physical education
32252	Wring	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Health and social care
2198	J Wilson	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective and improving school because of the very effective leadership given by the headteacher, which has some outstanding characteristics. She is ably supported by her senior staff, and by the staff overall. The school does well in challenging circumstances, and teaching and pupils' achievement are improving well, although standards are below average. It gives good value for money.

The schools main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership and management are good overall.
- Although standards are below average, pupils' achievement is improving well.
- Low standards in language and literacy are a barrier to pupils' learning.
- The procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning are effective.
- Teaching and learning have improved significantly.
- Pupils' attitudes are good and their behaviour is satisfactory and improving, although a minority of them do not respond sensibly.
- Pastoral care is good, although risk assessments are not always effectively managed.
- Despite the very good procedures to promote pupils' attendance, it remains poor, and punctuality is unsatisfactory.
- Vocational opportunities in Years 10 and 11 are very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and for physically disabled pupils is very good.
- Extra-curricular activities are good.
- Provision for citizenship, physical education in Years 7 to 9, a daily act of collective worship, and for information and communication technology (ICT), numeracy and literacy across the curriculum, is unsatisfactory.

Improvement has been good since the last inspection in 2003, because of the quality of leadership and management. The pace of improvement has been good, despite the difficulties in the recruitment of staff. The high expectations set are improving the school's ethos, and raising pupils' achievement so that they are more successful in their examinations. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved. The quality of teaching has improved, although there are still shortcomings in the consistency with which literacy, numeracy and ICT are managed and taught. Assessment procedures are being developed well. Despite the now very good procedures to promote good attendance, it is only improving slowly. Most statutory requirements are now met, but there are still weaknesses in the provision for physical education and a daily act of collective worship, and in the overall management of aspects of risk assessments for health and safety.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. It is improving well. Standards on entry to the school are well below average, and achievement is affected by pupil mobility and poor attendance. The 2003 results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well below average, and results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were low in relation to the national average. However, the pupils' performance was better than might be expected based on how well they did in tests taken at the end of Year 6 in their primary schools and at the end of Year 9. Results were in line with the national average for the percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-G grades, which reflects the fact that

the school is non-selective. The trend for improvement in the average points score in GCSE examinations has been above that found nationally. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, with physical disability, and those who have English as an additional language, is good.

Pupils' attitudes are good and their behaviour is satisfactory. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are now responding much better to the high expectations set, although a significant minority still does not respond sensibly and, consequently, the school has used a significant number of exclusions. Attendance is poor and punctuality unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is good. Teaching is satisfactory and showing continued improvement, with examples of good and very good teaching in a significant proportion of lessons. As a result, pupils' learning has improved. Assessment is satisfactory. The curriculum is good, and although not all statutory requirements are met, the vocational opportunities are a significant strength, and are raising pupils' aspirations. The provision for the formal teaching of citizenship is unsatisfactory. There is effective careers advice and very good links with other schools and colleges. Opportunities to enrich the curriculum are good, with an effective range of extra-curricular activities. The quality of individual care, support and guidance is good, although some aspects of health and safety require improved management. Pupil induction is very good. Links with the community are good. Staffing is unsatisfactory, reflecting the difficulties in recruitment and retention, although good strategies are used to compensate for this problem. The accommodation is good, with good access for those with physical disability. Learning resources are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The **leadership and management are good**, with examples of very good practice, and are strengths of the school. The headteacher leads very well and her very good vision and expectations are very well shared and supported by the staff, pupils, governors and many parents. The senior leadership team is effective, and staff with other key responsibilities manage well. The effective monitoring of teaching and learning has improved provision and is raising pupils' achievement. Governance is satisfactory overall: the governing body is developing its role well but fails to fulfil all its statutory responsibilities. Financial procedures are very good. There is good potential for continuing improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Only a very few parents attended the pre-inspection meeting, although a significant minority responded to the questionnaire. Parents recognise and appreciate that this is an improving school. However, not all parent and carers are sufficiently supportive, especially with regard to pupils' attendance and behaviour. Most pupils are proud of their school and most older pupils welcome and recognise the improvements which have occurred. They feel that they are well taught and effectively supported. They value the vocational opportunities they are being given.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in language and literacy, and in numeracy;
 - extend the use of ICT across the curriculum;
 - ensure that there is effective leadership and management of cross-curricular support for literacy, numeracy and ICT;
 - continue to implement the very good procedures to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality;
 - raise the standards of the minority of pupils whose attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory;
- and, to meet statutory requirements for:**
- the teaching of citizenship and physical education in Years 7 to 9;
 - the provision of a daily act of collective worship;
 - the overall management of risk assessments.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards are below average overall although, in relation to their prior attainment, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is improving.
- Pupils' language and literacy skills are well below average, and are a barrier to their achievement.
- Pupils are doing well in their GCSE examinations in relation to their previous attainment at the age of eleven.

Commentary

1. Pupils' standards on entry into Year 7 are well below average in relation to the levels expected for their age, reflecting the fact that it is in a selective school area. Pupils have well below average levels of literacy and this is a barrier to their learning. Additionally, there is a significant amount of mobility amongst the school population as pupils' families move in and out of the area. This adversely affects the pupils' achievement and also has a detrimental effect on results. Pupils' poor attendance is a further factor which undermines their performance. However, through the improving effectiveness of the teaching and learning, their achievement is improving.
2. The results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 (Key Stage 3) have been consistently well below average over the last four years in relation to the results in all schools nationally. The 2004 data has yet to be validated against national figures. The school data shows that results have improved well in relation to pupils' performance at the age of eleven. In mathematics and science it is above average and average in English. The targets set were challenging. They were exceeded in mathematics but not in English and science. Girls did better than boys.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.0 (30.7)	n/a (33.4)
mathematics	30.9 (30.8)	n/a (35.4)
science	28.6 (28.8)	n/a (33.6)

There were 137 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. At GCSE, the overall results in 2004 were well below average in comparison with those in all schools nationally for the percentage gaining five A*-C grades but were in line with the average for the percentage gaining five or more grades at A*-G, which is a much better measure when comparing results for a secondary modern school. Pupils are now performing much better than would be expected for their prior attainment at the ages of 11 and 14. Results were average, showing good added value. The targets set for 2004 results were not met at grades A*-C but were broadly met at grades A*-G. There was little difference between girls' and boys' performance. The trend for improvement has been above that found nationally, indicating that pupils are beginning to make better progress. This overall improvement has successfully addressed the key issue from the last inspection to 'reduce the number of pupils who leave the school with no formal qualifications'. What is not shown in the tables below is the fact that there are fast-track groups in English and mathematics who take their GCSE examinations at the end of Year 10. Pass rates at A*-C have been very good.

Standards in Key Stage 4 at the end of Year 11 in 2004

GCSE/GNVQ	School results	National results
5 or more A*-C grades (%)	20 (20)	52 (52)
5 or more A*-G grades (%)	90 (85)	89 (88)
1 or more A*-G grades (%)	98 (95)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil	27.6 (26.9)	41.4 (40.6)
Capped average point score per pupil	25.1 (25.2)	34.9 (34.7)

GCSE & Equivalent Qualifications	School results	National results
5 or more A*-C grades (%)	20	52
5 or more A*-G grades (%)	90	89
1 or more A*-G grades (%)	98	96
Average point score per pupil	245.5	340.3
Capped average point score per pupil	221.1	282.8

There were 121 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory overall. However, their low capability in language and literacy means that many do not converse fluently and do not have a good understanding of appropriate subject vocabulary. Many Year 7 pupils have reading and writing skills well below the national levels for their age, experiencing difficulty in writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences. About a third of the pupils on roll are identified with special educational needs. The problems relating to pupil mobility and attendance have already been mentioned. Staff recruitment and retention have posed significant difficulties, and these have led to shortcomings in the quality of teaching. Taken together, these factors lower standards across the curriculum. The best achievement occurs in art, geography, history and ICT across Years 7 to 11. It is also good in religious education and drama in Years 7 to 9, and in health and social care, business education, ICT and in the ASDAN course in Years 10 and 11.
- There is little difference in the overall achievement of boys and girls, although the girls' speaking skills are less well developed than the boys'. This is a sign of pupils' more positive attitudes and response to the better provision. Against the national trend, boys are now beginning to perform better than girls. Both genders contain a minority whose attitudes are unsatisfactory, and this lowers achievement. Pupils who are supported through the physical disability unit achieve very well. Those pupils identified with special educational needs are well supported so that they achieve well against the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). This is also the case with those pupils who are also supported through the behaviour unit, and several make successful returns to mainstream classes. The pupils from a minority ethnic heritage achieve as well as other pupils. Pupils using English as an additional language achieve well beside their peers where they benefit from the well-focused teaching and personal attention of additional staff in the classroom. Pupils who have recently joined the school from refugee or asylum-seeking families are well supported and they quickly begin to grasp the language. The achievement of the small number of pupils from the travelling community is satisfactory. A minority of pupils are identified as being academically gifted and talented, and successful work is being undertaken to support them, but it is not consistent enough. The level of inclusion of all groups of pupils in their learning activities is good, and is well enhanced by the work of the learning support staff and learning mentors, which enriches pupils' opportunities and they sometimes achieve very well when given this support.

6. Despite the improving achievement, standards by the end of Year 9 and 11 are below the national average overall. They are well below average in English and mathematics, below average in science but average in ICT. The weakness in pupils' competence in literacy and mathematics reflects the fact that this work is not effectively managed across the curriculum, and the school reports that it has been unsuccessful in appointing staff with the expertise to carry out this work. Insufficient use of ICT in subjects across the curriculum also limits the pupils' progress in the application of technology to their work. However, there is an improving trend brought about by the improved quality of teaching, and access to better resources. In religious education, pupils attain standards which are below those set in the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 9, and well below the expected level by the end of Year 11. In citizenship, standards are broadly average for the pupils' ages at the end of Years 9 and 11. The school recognises that to raise achievement and standards further, more consistency is required in meeting the needs of the wide range of pupils' capabilities, especially in literacy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school has good expectations of pupils' conduct and work. Pupils' attitudes are good and their behaviour is satisfactory. Attendance is poor and punctuality is unsatisfactory. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of pupils have maintained their good attitudes.
- Attendance is poor and punctuality is unsatisfactory.
- The school has very good procedures for promoting and supporting good attendance.

Commentary

7. Since the last inspection in 2003, the good attitudes and behaviour of the significant majority of pupils have been maintained. This is a considerable achievement in the face of the challenging circumstances that face the school. Most pupils are good ambassadors for the school and speak positively of the support of staff and the progress that they recognise has been made in recent years, after the school was judged to need special measures in March 2000. Relationships throughout the school are generally good and often very good. Most pupils show respect for their environment and the school is free from graffiti and vandalism, although there is too much litter. In those lessons where teachers have high expectations and which are challenging and maintain a purposeful pace, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are usually good and often very good. A minority of pupils, on occasions, behave in a silly and immature manner, sometimes challenging teachers' authority. Movement around the school is orderly and staff, including the headteacher, stand at strategic points to 'observe', reminding pupils of their expectations by simple, but readily understood, silent hand signals. Pupils do not feel that bullying or harassment is a serious problem but are confident that when it is identified or brought to the attention of staff, they are quick to respond in a positive manner. However, the formal recording and monitoring of such incidents are unsatisfactory.
8. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall, and improving. Pupils have a good understanding of the sanctions and rewards used to promote good behaviour. Most pupils are responding well, and understand the difference between right and wrong. In the last report, inspectors commented that the school was making good progress in reducing the levels of exclusion. This work has continued and the Beehive Learning Support is effective, especially to support the internal exclusion of pupils who may be at risk of formal exclusion. However, a significant minority of pupils still have to be excluded because of their unsatisfactory behaviour, which undermines the otherwise orderly nature of the school community. A larger percentage of boys than girls have been excluded. Summary details of exclusions are shown in the table below.

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	658	218	10
White Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	21	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	6	2	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	30	11	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	6	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	4	0	0
Chinese	7	0	0
Any other ethnic group	5	13	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	2	0	0
Information not obtained	1	0	0
TOTALS	757	246	10

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

9. Attendance is poor and much lower than the national average but is showing a consistent trend of improvement. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are very good and attendance has risen approximately 2.5 per cent since the last inspection. Special funding allowances have been very well used for this purpose. The school thoroughly analyses attendance in many ways such as by cohort, tutor group, capability and ethnicity. This enables work to improve attendance to be targeted at individuals and groups. Almost one half of the pupils had good or better attendance last year, with 60 pupils achieving an excellent 100 per cent attendance record. However, 200 pupils had very poor attendance last year and this, combined with high levels of pupil mobility, impacts negatively on progress. The staff directly responsible for improving attendance provide excellent support to the school. They have established a very good rapport with pupils, and successfully reduced truancy. They are also having success in encouraging some parents to be more supportive of their child's regular attendance at school, although too much absence is condoned by parents and carers. Punctuality is unsatisfactory, with up to 30 pupils arriving late for the start of the morning session. A small minority of pupils fail to move between lessons with a sufficient sense of urgency but this is generally well managed by the presence of staff in corridors around the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)			
Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	10.8	School data:	0.7
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.

10. Overall, provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Opportunities for pupils to be quiet and reflect occur during assembly times, where they are often encouraged to consider the difficulties that others experience. Pupils respond very positively to this. This is an area that has potential for further development, in individual subject departments and elsewhere. The school is good at helping pupils feel valued and raising their self-esteem, as seen in school performances where physically disabled pupils are equally involved. This raises their awareness of the different needs and difficulties experienced by others.
11. Moral development is good. There are many opportunities in the school for pupils to learn right from wrong, endorsed by the high expectations of the staff. The code of conduct, assembly themes, and their learning in the personal, social and health education programme make a strong input to this. Most pupils respond well to their learning and the majority are responsible in the school. Work in religious education and in English, art, geography and history also makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of moral and ethical issues. Pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility and this is reflected in the way in which they respond to the various opportunities to serve the school community, for example as prefects, and to represent the school as a member of a team.
12. Opportunities for social development are also good. Pupils learn to develop positive relationships through the clubs and activities that are part of school life. Pupils can learn to take responsibility as senior pupils, as peer mentors and on the help desk. Work in citizenship supplements this provision, as do extra-curricular sports teams. The school recognises the need to further develop strategies for pupils to collaborate in class but a significant proportion of pupils have low levels of confidence. Pupils respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Opportunities for developing pupils' understanding of their immediate cultural awareness and understanding are satisfactory. Raising pupils' multi-cultural awareness occurs in the study of world religions in religious education. Work in art includes the study of African and Asian cultures and, in modern languages and geography, pupils encounter work on other cultures across the world. However, in preparing pupils for life in a multicultural society, the provision has weaknesses in that pupils do not have sufficient understanding of the foundations of different lifestyles which exist.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The curriculum is good overall, although it has weaknesses. The quality of care is good. Links with parents are satisfactory, and with the community are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and show an improving trend since the last inspection. Assessment procedures are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is significant improvement in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils with learning difficulties are well taught.

- Assessment is good and is being effectively used to raise pupils' achievement.

Commentary

13. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, it was at least satisfactory in well over nine out of ten lessons, and at least good in over a half. In just under a fifth it was very good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 114 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (2.5%)	18 (16%)	42 (37%)	48 (42%)	3 (2.5%)	0	0

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

14. A key issue from the last report was to 'improve the implementation of the school policy on teaching and learning, and the monitoring thereof, in order that the high incidence of unsatisfactory lessons is reduced through more insistent leadership and management'. This has been realised; in only a small minority of lessons was the teaching observed unsatisfactory. Although the overall judgement for this inspection is that teaching and learning are satisfactory, it takes into account the quality of teaching and learning over time, and this has not been as effective as that seen during the inspection and shown in the above table. Nevertheless, there is an improving trend clearly visible in pupils' work, and in their improving achievement. In subjects where teaching and learning have not been as effective, this reflects the difficulties encountered in the recruitment of specialist staff, as for example, in English, mathematics and science. Good monitoring and evaluation of teaching have also initiated improvements in practice which are beginning to drive up pupils' achievement and attainment. Teaching strategies have also been very well supported through training and professional development. There is now little difference between the quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 (Key Stage 3) and in Years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4). However, because of the disruption of their learning over time, pupils in Years 10 and 11 have lower standards than those in Years 7 to 9, although the improvement in teaching is now beginning to raise their achievement. The most consistent teaching was seen in the performing arts and in humanities subjects.
15. Raising the quality of teaching and learning has been achieved by raising expectations of both staff and pupils. This was a further key issue at the last inspection and significant progress has been made. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are now good, and most teachers manage their classes well, which has improved the overall climate for learning. They use effective relationships and the rewards and sanctions systems well. In a significant proportion of classes observed, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good because of this approach, and this is helping the overall ethos of the school to improve. Staff expectations for work standards are also good and this is driving up pupils' achievement. Many pupils are beginning to realise what they can achieve, and are rightly proud of their achievements. Where the climate for learning is particularly good, pupils are encouraged to work independently and to take responsibility for their work. However, many pupils do not have the confidence or self-esteem to manage their work and the school clearly recognises that there is much still to do to improve these personal qualities. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning makes a satisfactory contribution in preparing pupils for the next stage of their education.
16. A barrier to pupils' learning is their language and literacy skills. A key issue from the last inspection was to 'emphasise the importance of literacy and numeracy throughout the school curriculum'. In the best lessons, teachers and support staff work hard by using appropriate strategies to address literacy and numeracy weaknesses but practice is not yet consistent. This reflects the problems of recruiting experienced literacy and numeracy co-ordinators to support subject staff. However, teachers are using word banks, writing frames and good explanations of vocabulary to raise the standards of pupils' speaking and writing skills.

Numeracy is less well supported, although good examples occur in geography and design and technology. The teaching of ICT has been well improved but not all teachers are making sufficient use of cross-curricular opportunities to use ICT to support learning.

17. When teaching and learning are good or better, pupils respond well to their opportunities and the support that they are given. In the best lessons, objectives are clearly stated, so that pupils understand what they are expected to achieve. Teachers use their good, and often very good, subject expertise well. Very good use is made of question and answer sessions. Pupils are made to think about the questions and to give extended answers, not just one word. Pupils are challenged to think. This helps to address weaknesses in speaking and listening. Lesson planning is good, and teachers use a good range of strategies to hold the interest of their classes where many pupils have low levels of concentration. Good use of tasks which require pupils to collaborate – in group work, pair work, role play and independent research – enhances social skills and encourages pupils to share their ideas. Pupils enjoy these lessons and overall they consider that they are well taught. There is only satisfactory use of homework; it is not consistently used to extend pupils' learning and not all pupils respond well to the challenge of completing tasks outside of school. Where teaching is weaker, being only satisfactory and occasionally unsatisfactory, it is because pupils are not challenged well by the work, and their behaviour presents challenges which are not always well managed. Some disaffected pupils behave in an unacceptable manner, disrupting their own and the learning of others. Staff generally use the recognised procedures well, and there is very good support from the behaviour support unit.
18. Teaching and learning for the large number of pupils with special educational needs, which has increased in size since the last inspection, are good. As soon as pupils arrive in the school, the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and her team screen and assess pupils' learning needs. As a result, targeted intervention is implemented in an effective way. Individual education plans are well used in planning as pupils work towards their behavioural and academic targets in mainstream lessons. Additionally, teaching and learning in the Beehive behaviour support unit, which caters for pupils at serious risk of exclusion, are also good, and pupils achieve well. The support given by classroom assistants and learning mentors is good overall, and they generally work well in partnership with class teachers. Some of this support is highly effective, but this is not consistent. A minority of support assistants need more guidance. Some spend all of their time with specific pupils and do not use their skills more widely and encourage the pupils who they are supporting to develop their independence. The support assistants are well deployed, with the majority being attached to faculties so that they are aware of the work being done. Pupils who attend the school as members of the physical disability unit are mainly taught along with their peers in mainstream lessons. They enjoy the fact that they are included and they are well taught. These pupils are withdrawn to the unit for only a very small number of lessons, and in these they are equally well taught. Pupils using English as an additional language achieve well beside their peers, where they benefit from the well-focused teaching and personal attention of additional staff in the classroom. They learn well because they receive sensitive coaching and prompting to guide and support them in classes alongside others. Teaching is generally good because staff know when to encourage pupils, and recognise when they are confident enough to work on their own. Planning to improve teaching where this group is not supported by supplementary staff is underdeveloped, but good leadership has identified this as a priority for improvement.
19. Assessment is good, and is developing well. National data and test results are well analysed to support whole-school target setting, and pupils' previous results on entry are well used to identify their capabilities. There are effective systems developing for assessment across subjects which allow the school to monitor pupils' achievement over time very effectively. However, practice is more firmly established in some departments, such as mathematics, ICT, art, geography, history, and business education. Where it is not so effective, there has been too little involvement of pupils and the outcomes identified in lesson planning are not sufficiently related to the assessments. The major weaknesses occur in physical education and in citizenship. Teachers make good use of prior attainment data to predict levels and grades for individual pupils. Targets are set and marking is regularly carried out, resulting in

many pupils knowing what to do to improve. The assessment and monitoring of the progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and physical disability are very good. Pupils are screened on entry and regularly re-tested to measure progress. Pupils' files are comprehensive and there are clear links between statements of special educational needs, the individual education plans and the annual reviews. Where pupils have not made progress or sufficient progress, action is taken by the co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) and her team. The assessment procedures are helping to raise pupils' achievement and standards overall.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is good. The opportunity for enrichment, including out-of-school activities, is good. The quality of accommodation and resources to meet the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities to study vocational courses in Years 10 and 11.
- There is insufficient co-ordination of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum.
- There is very good support for learning outside the school day.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Staffing is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

20. The overall breadth and balance of the curriculum are good, especially in relation to the range of vocational courses provided in Years 10 and 11. Equality of access to the curriculum is generally good, and courses meet National Curriculum requirements, except for physical education in Years 7 to 9, where not all of the programmes of study are taught, and in citizenship. The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are met. The school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide an act of collective worship daily. The management and provision for teaching literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum are unsatisfactory, and this undermines pupils' achievement.
21. In Years 10 and 11, the introduction of vocationally based courses alongside established courses is creating a continuum from 14 years of age upwards, through the very effective links with the world of business, and through links with other schools and the Further Education College. In Years 10 and 11 there are vocational courses leading to qualifications in construction, child development, carpentry, hospitality and catering, as well as school-based courses in business studies, health and social care, and information technology. Traditional GCSE courses are offered and pupils are also given the choice of studying science and a significant number choose other courses. Pupils are effectively prepared for the world of employment through work-related learning and careers guidance. Curriculum planning has responded well to the needs of pupils and there is clear vision concerning developments to provide far more opportunities to enable the pupils to meet the needs of local employment. These changes have begun to reduce the level of pupil disaffection, leading to their better attendance and attitudes.
22. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. The school meets its obligation to teach sex and relationships, drugs and alcohol education, and issues related to health are well covered. The PSHE programme also includes environmental and careers education. Citizenship is taught but the coverage does not yet meet statutory requirements. There are very good external links to improve the course. Outside professionals such as the police, fire service, youth and community trust, theatre groups and commercial organisations make good contributions. One very successful initiative by Walk Tall worked effectively with pupils on self-esteem and conflict management. The school encourages pupils to take a

responsible part in society by giving responsibility to older pupils for the personal care of younger boys and girls, and by organising charitable giving.

23. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good and it enables all, including those with physical disabilities, to participate in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils using English as an additional language achieve well beside their peers, where they benefit from the well-focused teaching and personal attention of additional staff in the classroom.
24. All pupils benefit from a good range of enrichment activities. There is very good support for learning outside the school day through homework clubs in a number of subjects at lunchtime and after school and opportunities for revision. There are a number of opportunities to take courses at residential study centres and trips to places both here and abroad. There is a variety of sports and drama activities and inter-house competitions that are regularly attended well.
25. The quality of accommodation is good and supports the learning of specialist subjects well. Rooms are generally pleasant, spacious and well equipped and most are suited in subject areas. Classrooms and more public spaces like corridors and lobby areas are enlivened by good quality displays in a range of subjects.
26. The match of staffing to the demands of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The school finds difficulty in attracting applications for vacant posts from teachers with the qualifications and experience needed to succeed in this type of school. The school is fully staffed but some posts are filled by unqualified and non-specialist teachers. This is particularly affecting learning in physical education, where the headteacher has appointed a trainee head of department. A designated member of the senior leadership team is supporting this appointment, which is proving to be an effective strategy. There are no co-ordinators for literacy, numeracy or ICT across the curriculum, which is having an adverse effect on provision and for raising pupils' achievement. The school has a good number of support staff who have appropriate training and experience. Teaching assistants support learning well, in particular that of physically disabled pupils, enabling them to follow the full curriculum. Learning support assistants support pupils with special educational needs well in lessons across subjects, many being attached to departments.
27. The quality and quantity of resources are satisfactory to support learning in most areas. However, the facilities for developing work using computers vary across subject areas. Resources are not used consistently by all departments, creating an unsatisfactory situation, especially in music and art and in the use of data logging in science. Computers are used well in health and social care, business studies and design and technology, although equipment and software are in need of updating in technology. The library is pleasant and spacious but stock and ICT facilities are dated and the area is insufficiently exploited to support learning.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for well on an individual level by pastoral staff. Support and guidance based on monitoring are good. The involvement of pupils in seeking and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care of pupils is good.
- Teachers and support staff are consistent in their expectations.
- The induction of pupils is very good.
- Good use of outside agencies.
- Management and co-ordination of health and safety matters have weaknesses.

Commentary

28. The many differing needs of the pupils are well known and well met. On an individual level, pupils are very well cared for by pastoral and support staff. There is effective organisation which includes clear partnerships between members of the senior leadership team and heads of years. This works well. The continuity of care is good because year team staff move with the pupils as they progress up the school. The induction of pupils into Year 7 is very good, as is the induction of the significant number of pupils who join the school throughout the year. These pupils are effectively assessed and then placed in appropriate teaching and subject groups. They speak very positively about how well they are supported when they arrive. Most pupils feel that they have a good relationship with a member of staff to whom they may turn if they have a problem. The pastoral staff work very hard to offset the many behaviour problems which exist, which they do with increasing success. Good links exist with the Beehive learning support unit which helps pupils to modify their behaviour and helps to keep pupils who are at risk of exclusion in school. There is good individual care for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils attend their annual reviews and take part in planning for their targets and support. Individual education plans (IEPs) and pupil development plans are regularly reviewed and pupils' progress is consistently under review. The care given to pupils with a physical disability is very good. Overall, links with outside agencies are good.
29. Educational support is good. The transfer from Year 9 to Year 11 is well managed so that pupils can access appropriate courses. Careers advice is good. Currently the post of head of careers is vacant but the work is being well managed by an assistant headteacher who is reviewing the structure and nature of the careers provision to inform a cohesive development plan to enhance the service. Careers education is integrated into the personal, social and health education (PSHE) course throughout the school. The development of vocational courses has been very beneficial and shows good approaches to overall care. It has helped to improve pupils' attendance. There are appropriate options evenings and the opportunity to discuss the courses and eventual careers available but pupils' low aspirations can be very frustrating as teachers strive to raise achievement. There is good contact between pastoral teams and subject leaders so that the monitoring of personal and academic development is cohesive. This leads to the good overall monitoring of pupils' development. Assessment practices are improving and thus pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve.
30. The support for the pupils' personal development is sound. The PSHE programme is comprehensive, effectively taught and monitored. The requirements for citizenship are not met and thus pupils do not have the opportunity to develop their full awareness in this area. Pupils' views are sought through questionnaires and School and Year Councils, and pupils feel that they are listened to. The procedures to promote good behaviour are generally consistent. There is good use of rewards and sanctions, which pupils understand and generally support. These include prizes, badges and certificates. The procedures to promote good attendance are very good. Child protection procedures meet requirements and are well used. The school has an appropriate policy for the use of intervention to control or restrain pupils who are in danger of harming themselves or others. The provision for first aid is satisfactory.
31. Health and safety are promoted well on a day-to-day basis, for example, in science. However, aspects of the management and co-ordination of health and safety have weaknesses. External support for completing risk assessments was engaged in 2002 but the recommendations have not all been completed. Appropriate assessments are completed in respect of pupils with physical disabilities and for events such as visits. Regular safety audits are completed and identified defects addressed but the testing of small electrical appliances has been allowed to slip and is overdue. There are clear issues with regard to the hard play areas, which are dangerous.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. The school works well in partnership with other schools and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parental support is unsatisfactory.
- Good contact with both primary schools and colleges.
- Community links are good.

Commentary

32. Only a very few parents attended the pre-inspection meeting, although a significant minority responded to the questionnaire. Concerns were expressed about the standards of behaviour but parents and carers recognised an improving school and generally felt that the teaching and learning are now better. They feel that the school is well led and managed, and that the school helps their children to mature. Inspectors totally concur with these views.
33. There is a good range of information available to parents and carers and there are regular systems of communication in relation to their children's progress and school events. The prospectus is informative, and the governors' annual report to parents meets requirements. Interpreters are available, and there is translation of letters and school documents when needed. Parents were very positive about pastoral care. Whilst a significant proportion of parents support the school, support is unsatisfactory. Not all parents are supportive enough, particularly in matters relating to pupils' attendance, punctuality and exclusions. There is no Parent Teachers Association, although the parents who responded at the meeting felt the need to establish one. Not all parents attend review meetings for their children's individual education plans, despite the good attempts made by the school to involve them. The links with parents whose children attend the physical disability unit are good. Reports to parents are satisfactory overall, although citizenship is not reported on, which is a breach of statutory requirements.
34. Links with other school and colleges are good. This is seen through the effective induction of pupils in Year 7 and in the vocational courses in Years 10 and 11. These links are also manifested through the local pyramid of schools working in an Excellence Cluster. Community links are good. Many groups use the school premises. Business links are good and support the range of work-experience courses very well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher is giving very good leadership. Governance is satisfactory but statutory requirements are not met for physical education, citizenship, a daily act of collective worship and health and safety risk assessments.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership of the headteacher.
- The effective strategies for monitoring and evaluation.
- The outstanding provision for professional development.
- Strategic planning and financial procedures are good.
- The school gives good value for money.

Commentary

35. The very effective leadership of the headteacher has brought about significant developments in the overall quality of education and school effectiveness since the last inspection. The school was brought out of special measures two years ago and the very clear vision and determined approach of the headteacher have ensured the continuing progress of school improvement. Through the high expectations and improved quality of teaching and learning, as well as pupils' behaviour and attitudes, pupils' achievement is improving, although this has yet to impact on their overall standards. The curriculum has been well enhanced to provide additional opportunities and to offset pupils' disaffection. Procedures in monitoring and evaluation have successfully targeted areas for development in a strategic manner. Overall, school improvement has been good, although senior staff and governors recognise that there is still much to be done. The potential exists to carry through planning to achieve the goals being set.
36. Leadership amongst other key staff is good overall, with examples of very good practice. The senior leadership team are effective in their support for the headteacher. As a group, they are currently undertaking the "Working together for Success" programme, which ensures that tasks are identified and completed. The line management is sound and there is rigour in this process to ensure that action is taken. Amongst other key staff, leadership and management are good overall, although there are some inconsistencies in practice. This is brought about by the fact that a significant number of subject and pastoral staff have only been in post for a relatively short time. These key staff are developing some good team approaches, as seen, for example, in mathematics, where because of illness the head of department is absent. However, the effective work carried out prior to this absence with a team of mainly newly qualified staff, many with only primary school training, and the work of the second in the department, have enabled the department to carry on successfully. Pastoral staff are good role models, and pupils respond well to their expectations. The co-ordinator leads and manages the provision for special educational needs very well. The provision has improved since her appointment, and she has made a very good start with mapping provision of special educational needs. This is a very good management technique to monitor the amount and quality of provision in the school. Equally, the management of the unit for physically disabled pupils, and that of the Beehive Unit for behaviour issues, is good.
37. Governance is satisfactory. The governors' role has been enhanced since the last inspection and they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are well involved in shaping the school's direction, and there is a most effective partnership with the headteacher. The governors' ability to challenge the senior staff is satisfactory but has the potential to rapidly improve as they gain in experience. They do not fulfil all of their statutory duties in ensuring that the curriculum for physical education and citizenship meets requirements, that pupils have a daily act of collective worship and risk assessments are properly managed.
38. The school's commitment to staff development is outstanding. Systems and procedures are highly effective and very well managed. A comprehensive programme of activities is used very effectively to meet individual and whole-school priorities and to involve staff in improvement projects. The outcomes of a recent whole-school event, aimed at introducing a blueprint for good classroom practice, received national recognition. The funding for staff development is very good. This allows an effective balance to be struck between immediate needs and the continuing professional development of staff. Performance management procedures are well established and very efficiently organised. They fully meet statutory requirements. The outcomes of performance management are used very effectively alongside whole-school reviews to meet individual staff development needs and to identify school priorities.
39. Induction processes are very effectively managed. A very thorough and well-planned training programme is provided, which allows new staff to quickly adapt to school systems and procedures. This has proved invaluable in addressing the recent high turnover of teachers. While newly qualified and overseas trained teachers feel very well supported by the highly

effective mentoring programmes that the school organises, there is some disparity between the approaches taken by individual departments. For instance, although there is exemplary practice in mathematics, the monitoring of the work of new teachers in physical education lacks thoroughness. The school was not eligible to contribute to initial teacher training programmes while placed in special measures. However, now that this no longer applies, discussions are taking place with local training providers to resume the previous involvement.

40. The principles of best value are applied well within clear educational priorities to raise pupils' achievement. Good use is made of funds gained from national initiatives such as Excellence in Cities (EiC) and for School Improvement, for example, grants for Schools Facing Challenging Circumstances (SFCC), and the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG). Such funds have been well used to support staffing to improve attendance. Leadership and management funding has supported training in monitoring and evaluation techniques, which are raising pupils' achievement and standards. The school compares its performance with that in other schools and challenges its progress well, but recognises that it needs to further develop how it consults with parents, the community and other stakeholders. There are very good financial procedures, and issues identified in the last audit report have been addressed. Contingency funding is appropriate and there are good financial links for the developments identified in the strategic school improvement plan. The school provides good value for money, reflecting the fact that it has improved and is continuing to improve. Pupils' achievement has improved and the trend in GCSE points score is above that found nationally. The quality of teaching and learning has improved, as has the overall ethos of the school, which is indicative of the raising of most pupils' attitudes and aspirations through the high expectations of the leadership and management.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,260,523	Balance from previous year	162,779
Total expenditure	3,293,322	Balance carried forward to next year	129,980
Expenditure per pupil	4,593		

UNIT FOR PUPILS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Provision for pupils with physical disabilities is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress.
- The very good way in which pupils are fully included in all aspects of lessons.
- The very good leadership and management.
- The very good knowledge of the pupils by all staff.

Commentary

41. The unit for pupils with physical disabilities is housed in the centre of the school and serves as a base for physiotherapy, for pupils to collect their resources and to manage personal and welfare issues. Seven pupils attend the unit and the school is planning for an increased intake with effect from September 2005. Pupils come from a wide area and are transported to and from school. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Many pupils have additional needs: for example, organisational skills, memory loss, learning and personal care needs. The base is well equipped with adapted toilets, up-and-down beds and roll-in showers.

There is also a kitchen, which has been adapted for pupils' use. The unit is open to pupils at breaktime and lunchtime. Most avail themselves of this but not all. Links with health professionals are very good. The school has ramps, automatic doors and a lift so that all pupils can move around the school without hindrance.

42. Pupils with physical difficulties achieve very well and make very good progress in their learning in the subjects and in their personal and social development. Most lessons are taken with pupils in mainstream classes. Pupils are withdrawn to the unit for only a small number of lessons. Many pupils follow their own physical education programme, for example horse riding or weightlifting. The SENCO has overall management responsibility for the unit, and the day-to-day management was delegated to the deputy SENCO, who left the school at Christmas. The deputy SENCO has been extremely effective. A unit support assistant ably fills the post in an acting capacity until the new deputy SENCO is recruited. The three learning support assistants have all completed training in supporting pupils with physical disabilities. A strength of their support is that they do not do things for the pupils but allow the pupils time to do things for themselves and develop their own independence.
43. Pupils in the unit are fully included in all aspects of lessons. Pupils talk confidently about their experiences, for example, participating in the school production of 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat'. The well-displayed photographs serve as a reminder of what the pupils can achieve. They also talk about their involvement in the gifted and talented programme, school visits and school council.
44. Leadership and management are very good. The SENCO is committed and motivated to secure the most effective education for pupils in the unit. She has made a significant contribution to the improvement in the effectiveness of the unit since she took up post two years ago. Day to day, the procedures operate very smoothly. She and the three teaching assistants have excellent relationships with the pupils. Unit staff produce pen portraits of all the pupils in the unit so that all teachers know and understand the levels of need. Pupils take advice and guidance easily and this is helping them become increasingly mature as learners and young people and in accepting and coping with their disabilities.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

Provision for work-related learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Vocational courses are offered to all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Work experience is good.
- The leadership and management are good.

Commentary

45. There is good provision for pupils to learn for work, about work and at work. The PSHE programme and its associated careers elements give pupils a clear insight into aspects of work and the qualifications required. Clear reference is made to the need for regular attendance and high standards of behaviour. Not all pupils measure up to these expectations.
46. There is a comprehensive range of courses which match the employment opportunities in the local area. Effective links between the school and the local further education college allow FE tutors to first work with pupils on the school site before introducing them to workshop activities. Pupils are also placed through the Excellence in Cities programme. Pupils are effectively matched to courses by interest and achievement in English, mathematics and science. Thus there are opportunities to undertake a BTEC First Diploma in Construction, Child Development GNVQ, CITB Foundation and NVQ Carpentry, BTEC Diploma in Hospitality and Catering. Pupils are introduced to the health and safety laws and responsible

organisations. On their first workshop visit they are expected to find and record the relevant notices. This group also takes Applied GCSE examinations in science and in engineering. Pupils respond very well to these courses, which add significantly to their knowledge and understanding for and about work. Additionally, school-based courses in business studies, health and social care GNVQ and information technology GNVQ add to their awareness of work-related practices.

47. Opportunities for learning at work are achieved through the work experience programme which is supported by local companies. It is further enhanced by all pupils being offered a residential course organised by a nationally recognised company as part of their studies, and Year 11 pupils have visited Manchester and the Midlands to broaden their knowledge of work and business.
48. Overall leadership and management are good. There is effective monitoring of the provision to check that pupils are placed in a healthy and a safe work environment. However, there are still inconsistencies in ensuring that all subjects recognise and teach the required elements through inclusion in their schemes of work. Development is especially required in Years 7 to 9, although it is sound in Years 10 and 11.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are good.
- Good achievement of higher attaining pupils follows challenging teaching.
- Girls' speaking and listening skills are weaker than boys'.
- The co-ordination of literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

49. Pupils' attainment on entry is well below the national average in all aspects of their English work. Results in National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below average overall and for the proportion reaching at or above the expected level. Nevertheless, in comparison with the results in similar schools, results demonstrate satisfactory achievement and very high achievement for those reaching the nationally expected level. Over three years, girls did better than boys, as is the case nationally, but girls were further behind the national profile for their gender than boys. Standards were similar to those in science but below those in mathematics. They fell in 2004 following a period of considerable staffing instability. GCSE English results in 2004 were well below average, both for the proportion reaching higher grades (A*-C) and overall. Boys did better than girls, in contrast with the national trend. In English literature the pattern was repeated, with girls further below the national profile for their gender than boys were for theirs. Problems of mobility and attendance undermine examination results and the overall achievement and attainment of too many pupils.
50. By the end of Year 9, standards are well below national expectations. Pupils discuss ideas hesitantly. Boys explain their ideas comprehensibly, while girls answer questions in very restricted sentences, because the teachers' prompting and expectations do not draw them out. Pupils read competently for information and fiction, although their reading aloud frequently lacks expression and understanding. Writing suffers from inconsistent spelling, and a lack of variation in sentence structure. Higher attaining pupils write competently in sentences and simple paragraphs, although they too find it difficult to develop more complex ideas at length. For example, they understand the work of Wilfred Owen and convey its historical background well, although they do not go on to write about the language of his poetry in detail. By the end of Year 11, standards are well below those expected nationally. Higher attaining pupils study poetry with maturity and understanding. They think originally and independently in response to authoritative questioning by the teacher and well-designed classroom exercises which increase the level of challenge step by step. Nevertheless, the problems which were highlighted for younger pupils often continue to occur, thus reducing attainment.
51. Computers are used well to lay out writing, but skill levels are inconsistent because pupils are not given regular access to equipment. Problems of spelling and of the clarity of written layout persist from earlier years for most pupils, including those with special educational needs, because teaching does not confront these weaknesses systematically. Across the school, pupils using English as an additional language achieve well, especially where supplementary staff in the classroom help them with additional explanations and questioning.

52. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, as is the quality of teaching and learning. Staffing recruitment has disrupted the continuity of pupils' learning. However, achievement is enhanced when teaching is structured suitably to build on what pupils know already. Higher attaining pupils achieve well throughout the age range, thriving on the way teachers increase the challenge of lessons while making their requirements clear. Boys' achievement is better than girls' where teachers have yet to find ways to boost girls' confidence to develop and express their own ideas in speech and in writing. Lessons are planned rigorously to employ a variety of activity and a helpful mixture of questioning and individual prompting as pupils work. It follows that pupils are usually engaged in their work, and achieve soundly. In some lessons, teachers concentrate on giving instructions, with a consequent reduction in the time allowed for pupils to learn to think for themselves when discussing ideas or answering questions. Written assignments are marked with very helpful comments to explain pupils' strengths to them, although they lack advice on what they need to do in order to improve. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the teachers' awareness of their needs and ability to encourage them while recognising when they have the confidence to work on their own.
53. Good leadership and management have established an astute set of priorities to combat low performance. The provision has been well maintained since the last inspection during a period of very unstable staffing. Test and examination results are analysed to pinpoint where learning is poor. In consequence, lesson planning and content have improved to help pupils overcome their weaknesses. These steps are at an early stage, but are already enhancing the quality of teaching and pupil achievement in lessons.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are well below those expected nationally. The school's efforts to improve the teaching of literacy across the curriculum have been hampered by an inability to recruit a co-ordinator. Teachers across the subjects are not dealing with their pupils' weaknesses in this area with sufficient consistency and vigour. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory because the school has not implemented consistent methods to help them improve literacy across the subjects. Overall, improvement in this key issue from the last inspection has been only satisfactory.
55. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very limited. Staffing instability has led to inconsistency in addressing this weakness, and pupils have not had sufficient regular opportunities and training to explore, refine and articulate their understanding in lessons. As a result, their comprehension of subject content is often depressed. This is because they are not taught methodically to express and confirm what they are learning, communicate it to others, and learn from each other collaboratively. In art, drama, history, and design and technology, teachers use discussion and questioning well to extend pupils' understanding. The result is that standards and achievement in those subjects improve, as does pupils' confidence as speakers. However, in science, mathematics and religious education, for example, opportunities are missed to build understanding through discussion, to report back on ideas and participate in extended question and answer sessions. In many subjects, such as physical education, lesson plans are nominally designed to help pupils understand technical language. In practice, they are implemented intermittently.
56. The approaches to training pupils to read for information or to promoting their enjoyment of fiction are also inconsistent. In history, techniques to help pupils extract information from texts are undeveloped, although religious education and health and social care help them to make positive use of what they read. The library is spacious and efficiently managed. Nevertheless, it suffers from a dated stock of fiction, and opportunities to use it to promote reading for pleasure are underdeveloped.
57. Pupils' writing suffers from unconventional spelling and a lack of extended sentence structure. They acquire a low level of competence to control paragraphs to convey information and ideas logically. History offers better opportunities to guide pupils to structure their written work, and to learn to take relevant notes, while art makes good use of written assignments to help pupils

reflect in their work. In science, pupils are often engaged unproductively in time-consuming exercises to copy out sentences and fill in gaps. This means that they do not then go on to improve scientific understanding and build up the ability to consolidate what they know by summarising it in sentences and paragraphs.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good pupil-teacher relationships lead to a positive learning environment in languages.
- Marking is regular and gives clear guidance to pupils on how to move to the next level.
- Teachers do not fully meet the needs of the wide range of pupils' ability in lessons.

Commentary

58. In 2004, GCSE results in French and Spanish were well below the national average. However, in French this represents an improvement on GCSE results in 2003. Based on 2004 teacher assessments, standards at the end of Year 9 in French were well below national expectations. However, standards seen during the inspection show a rise in attainment in all year groups. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils are beginning to use a variety of tenses in their work and lower attaining pupils are able to recall essential vocabulary from memory and use this to start to build phrases. In a Year 9 French lesson, for example, pupils spoke in French about the rooms in their homes with confidence, although their writing skills displayed weaknesses in handwriting and spelling. Higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 are producing increasingly complex written work and they can refer to past and future events with some support. Their work is well presented, showing the pride they take in their work. Lower attaining pupils are working at low levels at GCSE because of weaknesses in their grasp of basic language.
59. Achievement in both languages is satisfactory due to the good relationships established between teachers and their pupils. In most lessons, boys achieve as well as girls, particularly in speaking activities where they are keen to take part. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because of the good level of teacher and assistant support during the lesson. Higher attaining pupils are starting to extend their written and spoken work. However, in most lessons, the work is not tailored to individual needs and does not stretch pupils to their full linguistic potential.
60. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good teaching in French GCSE classes. In these GCSE lessons, the teacher conducts the sessions in French and, as a result, pupils are developing their fluency in French. In all lessons seen, teachers have high expectations of behaviour, and teaching rooms convey a real French or Spanish 'feel'. As a result, most pupils concentrate well and have positive attitudes to language learning. Whilst pupils have access to ICT in all year groups and are competent in word-processing skills, including accent shortcuts, this is an area for further development. Lessons in both languages are dominated by an over-reliance on textbooks, resulting in a lack of creative activities which involve pupils actively in their learning.
61. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The head of department has identified clear and appropriate targets for improvement and is making good progress with these. The department enriches pupils' experience of language through visits abroad, the use of two foreign language assistants and after-school GCSE classes to support speaking skills. In addition, for the first time this year, lower attaining pupils in Year 9 are following an Entry Level qualification in French which is proving successful in motivating learners. Pupils know their targets and what they need to do to improve through the consistently detailed marking. However, opportunities for the development of literacy and strategies for meeting the diverse

needs of pupils are not referenced in departmental planning. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The department has implemented effective assessment procedures, and is continuing to develop them. There has been a rise in GCSE standards but results remain below national expectations.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are good, providing clear guidelines for newly qualified non-specialist staff.
- ICT and investigative work are not used often enough to support pupils' learning.
- The co-ordination of mathematics across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

62. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below national standards. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE in 2004 were well below national averages. In comparison with the results in similar schools, the school's results were above average in Year 9 and average at GCSE. Some improvement has been established in the A*-G grades since 2003. Standards of work seen during the inspection match the results, and are well below average.
63. Staffing problems over a number of years have frustrated the raising of pupils' achievement. The department is now fully staffed and has started to structure classes, teaching and resources to improve standards. However, these improvements have not had time to impact on standards and achievement. Pupils' self-esteem is low and outcomes in tests remain lower than the standards achieved in supported work within class. While there are examples of good achievement, overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve in line with their peers. Limited evidence was seen of the use of ICT or of pupils using mathematics as an investigative tool.
64. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. When teaching is good it reflects considerable understanding of pupils' needs. Good teaching is well planned and the rapport between teachers and pupils is effective. The consistency of teachers' approach is beginning to establish clear expectations of behaviour and standards of work. Valuable teaching experience is being gained through departmental support and as a result pupils now speak positively of an improving classroom provision. Pupils are starting to assume a sense of pride; their books are generally well presented, including note taking of lesson objectives and current National Curriculum levels. The curriculum is fully covered. Progress, however, is slow; certain difficulties remain with aspects of algebra and many pupils have weaknesses with basic number work. However, the needs of the most capable pupils in Years 10 and 11 are increasingly being met. For example, the successful understanding and use of the sine rule in trigonometry support the pupils' aspirations at GCSE. This reflects the recent strategy of early entry GCSE for the more able; these results have visibly raised the self-esteem of pupils and present a positive basis for further improvement in Year 11. All lessons closely reflect the best practice of the national numeracy strategy, which is being applied throughout the year groups. For example, in a Year 8 class the lesson began by giving opportunities for pupils to effectively recall, identify and explain the properties of basic angles, which set a purposeful basis for a good lesson. Assessment procedures are increasingly well established, enabling monitoring and recording of progress. However, as yet pupils are less sure about what they need to do to improve.
65. Leadership and management are good. Leadership is effective and firmly based strategies are now in place to support improvement. Policies are kept under review, which ensures a

clear sense of direction. Underpinning all this is the well-led team of teachers, many of whom are newly qualified non-specialists who enthusiastically share a vision to effectively address the challenging needs of pupils. Collectively this represents an improving position to secure the desired change in standards and achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Pupils' competence in mathematics is below the national average. Because of recruitment issues, there is no overall management to support the development of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum. Pupils' numeracy skills are used in most subjects but with varying expectations of what pupils are able to do. In science with support, pupils' mathematical skills are used and developed appropriately so that most pupils are able to deal with number calculations, approximations and graphical representation. In ICT, mathematical reasoning is used to support the use of spreadsheets. Pupils use routine number skills in modern foreign languages. In geography the use of statistics is evidenced in representing data on noise pollution, age distribution and rainfall figures. Overall the evidence points to incidental instances within subject areas without any planned or co-ordinated programme of provision.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in GCSE double award science examinations have risen; boys do particularly well.
- There are too few opportunities in lessons for higher attaining pupils to achieve as well as they might.
- There is insufficient analysis of test and examination data to inform planning.
- Too little use is made of ICT.

Commentary

67. Standards in the Year 9 tests in 2003 were well below the national average. They were higher than the previous year's results. Girls' and boys' attainment was similar. In 2004, results were slightly lower than in 2003 but, compared with the results in similar schools, a greater proportion of pupils reached the expected level for their age. In 2003, most pupils in Year 11 took GCSE single award examinations and the rest were entered for double award. Standards in both courses were significantly below the national average. In 2004, since just half the year group studied science, whilst others undertook vocational courses, comparisons with national standards are unreliable. Most pupils took double award science. Results were close to the national average and much higher than in 2003. Boys' attainment was higher than that of girls. Results in single award science were also better than in 2003 because more pupils gained A*-G grades.
68. Work seen during the inspection mirrors the gradual improvement in standards in external examinations. Attainment on entry to the school is well below national expectations. Many pupils in Year 7 have poor recall of earlier work and lack understanding. Teaching helps to develop their skills and knowledge and by Year 9 most carry out simple investigations proficiently, although their observations are not matched well to scientific concepts. Attainment is below the national average. Achievement is satisfactory because pupils work hard, although higher attaining pupils make less progress than might be expected because teachers do not plan sufficiently for their needs. The work fails to stimulate their thinking enough and they rely too much on teachers for guidance.
69. Whilst pupils in Years 10 and 11 develop appropriate skills and knowledge, a significant number lack understanding. They do not use scientific ideas well to extend their learning. Attainment is below national expectations. However, pupils respond well and make steady

progress. Achievement is satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils do better in Years 10 and 11 because teachers are more familiar with course requirements and make greater demands. The weaker performance of girls in external examinations is not so obvious in lessons, but many have noticeable gaps in their learning and this limits their achievement.

70. Pupils' attitudes are good; they co-operate well and are keen to learn. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with physical disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. They achieve in line with other pupils because of effective support. A significant number of pupils find difficulty in distinguishing scientific terms and verbalising ideas. Although teachers are aware of these weaknesses, insufficient attention is given to developing literacy skills.
71. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. More stable staffing has contributed to improvements. Less experienced teachers now receive effective support and advice. Pupils' understanding is enhanced by teachers' clear explanations based upon good subject knowledge. However, because teachers adhere too closely to the schemes of work, and do not assess individual progress enough, some pupils fail to extend their understanding sufficiently. While teachers provide a variety of interesting activities in lessons, a lack of obvious structure sometimes confuses pupils. Planning is no better than satisfactory because the beginning and end of lessons fail to develop learning adequately. Marking is effective and pupils receive constructive comments to help them improve, although the targets set in Years 7-9 are not related sufficiently to National Curriculum levels. Facilities for ICT are unsatisfactory. Pupils cannot develop their skills in data logging adequately, and there are insufficient computers in the laboratories.
72. Leadership is satisfactory. The head of department provides clear direction based upon sound understanding of effective science education. Teaching requires additional refinement, but better professional dialogue between staff and specialist help from outside the school are providing the means for further improvement. Management is satisfactory. Day-to-day organisation is effective, but monitoring does not underpin development planning enough. Inadequate analysis of examination data prevents the relative achievement of different groups of pupils being evaluated properly. While the technicians make a good contribution, they have too little time to prepare lessons adequately. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Teaching has improved and standards are slowly rising throughout the school. However, the work provided for higher attaining pupils still contains too little challenge and ICT is not used enough.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for specific ICT is very good.
- Good teaching has brought about very good improvement in pupils' standards.
- Very good assessment helps teachers to match tasks well to the needs of individual pupils.
- Pupils make very good use of the daily ICT club.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory as it is not co-ordinated.

Commentary

73. Standards in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are at expected levels, with average examination results at the end of Year 11 in 2004 in the newly introduced intermediate GNVQ ICT. This is very good improvement since the last inspection, and there was a substantial proportion of A* grades last year, showing good achievement by the highest attainers.

74. Work seen during the inspection confirms this improvement. Pupils enter the school with well below expected standards, but achieve well by Year 9 because of the good improvement in their technical skills that forms a firm basis for all of their work. The highest attainers take into consideration the needs of the user and justify their design decisions in terms of the purpose of the activity. The majority still give greater weight to their own preferences than to the user's needs. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good, as they are supported well by teaching materials and learning assistants. Pupils identify their own and others' strengths and weaknesses, but express preferences without explaining reasons. Those pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress.
75. By Year 11, pupils work at expected levels. All work with good attention to the course requirements. They redraft their work carefully to improve its standard, commenting on the changes they have made, although only the highest attainers explain their reasons. Their achievement is good in that almost all are likely at least to gain pass grades, including some lower attainers, while there is good evidence that many are now at merit level. The highest attainers show evidence of distinction grades in much of their work because of their thoughtful and careful approach. Girls score more highly than boys because of their more systematic approach to the work. Pupils who speak English as a second language make progress at the same rate as others because of the support that they are given in class.
76. Pupils' achievement is brought about by the good quality of teaching and learning. A significant proportion of the teaching is very good or excellent. Teachers collaborate well on lesson planning so that the very good subject knowledge of the best can be shared. There are very positive relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers work very well with teaching assistants to help pupils with learning difficulties. Lessons have very good pace, are interesting and challenging with a purposeful working atmosphere. Teachers give good attention to the development of pupils' literacy, and use numeracy to develop understanding of relevant areas of ICT. They use contexts that ask pupils to think about moral and social issues, for example, in deciding the arguments for and against a local site for an airport. Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly, encouraging them to participate in the process by assessing both themselves and others. As a result, they know their areas for improvement and know how to improve. These assessments also give teachers very good knowledge of the needs of individuals, so that they match tasks and support materials to individual capability and give high quality informal support in class. Teachers also challenge the highest attainers to improve their depth of thinking by providing awareness of other avenues for development. Teachers mark in detail, providing encouragement and suggestions for improvement. All pupils know their target levels or grades, know what they mean and can say whether they are ahead of the target. Where teaching is less good, the pace is slow. Higher attainers spend too long on mundane tasks without challenge to stretch their performance. Written guidance is systematic but the purpose is not explained.
77. The curriculum for ICT as a separate subject is good, meeting the needs of individual pupils and covering the National Curriculum. Although a lack of equipment prevents practical sessions in measurement and analysis of physical change, the subject is covered both in theory and through simulation. The curriculum is well planned so that all pupils have the same opportunities. Teachers take opportunities to improve pupils' literacy through the daily ICT club, which is so popular that entrance has to be rationed so that those in most need have first chance to use it. Pupils have good opportunities to see the use of ICT in action on school visits. There are enough teachers to cover the curriculum, with a programme to support non-specialists in planning, teaching and assessing the work. The school is well served by a network manager and technician so that equipment is reliable. There are enough computer rooms and a good range of other equipment within them, but there is no specialist equipment for datalogging.
78. ICT as a separate subject is very well led and very well managed. The head of department is a very good role model in all of his practice, and works hard to improve the practice of other teachers less experienced in ICT. The effective changes that he has made have been firmly based on evaluation of the situation and monitoring of the performance and needs of pupils.

He makes very good use of external support to improve the department. As a result of these measures the practice and effectiveness of the department have shown very good improvement in addressing the key issue from the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. Leadership and management of ICT across the curriculum are both unsatisfactory. There has been some improvement in the use of ICT by other subjects, but this is still unsatisfactory as there is no person responsible for promoting or co-ordinating it. Where pupils use ICT to help their learning in other subjects, their competence meets the needs of the tasks. Vocational subjects in Years 10 and 11 make good use of ICT and it is well used in French to support accurate writing. Within most subjects it is not used sufficiently to ensure that pupils develop their capability and understanding of how to use the technology to support their learning. Where ICT is used there is a heavy concentration on word processing. Art has too little specialist software, but music has recently acquired a program for composition. In most subjects, however, teachers are learning how to use ICT effectively, and have written its use into their schemes of work. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory, as ICT has yet to be organised so that it can have an impact on pupils' learning.

HUMANITIES

Geography, history and religious education were the main focus for the inspection. **Sociology** was sampled. This subject is offered as an option in Years 10 and 11. Standards are well below those expected in Year 11, reflecting the low capabilities of pupils on entry to the course. Pupils in Year 11 explore the way in which voting behaviour is often a result of socialisation. In Year 10 they rehearse the arguments for and against comprehensive schools. They do this with interest, gradually developing their subject vocabulary. There was no option group in 2004, but in the previous year, results at GCSE were above the national average. Teaching and learning are sound, and the subject is well led and managed.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- The pupils are highly motivated to do well.
- There is limited use of computers in classrooms.

Commentary

80. Teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 in 2004 showed that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level was below the national average. No candidates were entered for the GCSE examinations in 2004. In the 2003 examinations the percentage of pupils achieving A* to C grades was well below the national average for all schools and below average for those achieving A* to G grades.
81. On entry to Year 7, pupils' attainment is well below expectations but by the end of Year 9 their level is marginally below national expectations, which represents good achievement. Similarly by the end of Year 11, standards are below the national average, although pupils continue to make significant progress, continuing their good achievement. Problems with staffing over the past two years have had an adverse effect on the standard of pupils' work. High staff turnover, reliance on non-specialists and the use of temporary and supply teachers have hampered the continuity of pupils' learning. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs, and also for pupils with English as an additional language. As a result they make good progress and achieve as well as other pupils because of the support they receive during

lessons, at breaktimes and in after-school clubs. Some pupils entering school at the beginning of the year with no English have demonstrated the capability to read and understand geographical material by the middle of the second term.

82. The quality of teaching and learning is now good overall. Lessons are well planned and very well resourced, with work matched to the prior attainment of most pupils, but provision for the minority of gifted and talented pupils is inconsistent. The good subject knowledge of the teachers is used effectively to challenge the pupils and encourage them to express their own ideas. On-going assessment is used well to reinforce prior learning, to indicate to the pupils the level they are at and what is required to achieve a higher grade. Good use is made of video clips and newspaper reports dealing with topics of study to show the relevance of the geography lessons to the wider world. Starter exercises are effectively used to get pupils thinking and to set the tone for productive work during lessons. Homework is regularly set and thoroughly marked with suggestions for improvement. Although the pupils' work contains ample evidence of the use of computers, they are not used in classrooms to enhance their learning. The enthusiasm of the staff, very good management skills and the generally good behaviour of the pupils create a good atmosphere for learning and enjoyment of lessons. The improved ethos of the school is reflected in the strong motivation of the pupils to achieve high standards.
83. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The subject is under the overall leadership of the head of the humanities faculty. There is a clear vision for improving standards of attainment and ensuring that pupils are recruited for GCSE. This approach has been successful as there are now GCSE groups in both Years 10 and 11. Detailed planning of the curriculum includes individual lesson plans for each week throughout the year, which ensures continuity and progression. There is now a cohesive, enthusiastic team committed to raising standards, sharing resources and supporting one another. Residential fieldwork to Swanage has been introduced for Year 10 as well as an urban study day in Gravesend. Year 8 pupils experience some fieldwork during a combined humanities day trip to Rochester, although the department recognises the need to increase opportunities for this valuable element of the subject. The high quality of displays, including up-to-date newspaper reports on topics being studied, enhances the learning environment.
84. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good. Staffing difficulties have been resolved through the appointment of both experienced and newly qualified enthusiastic subject specialists. Detailed curriculum planning includes new schemes of work and lesson plans for each year group, reflecting the interests of the pupils.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- ICT does not support the effective use of numerical data in learning.
- Assessment procedures are good.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

85. Standards are well below those expected of pupils by the end of Years 9 and 11. Pupils enter the school with below expected standards of literacy; there is also a high level of absenteeism by pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Both of these adversely affect standards. GCSE results for 2004 were well below average. However, standards of those pupils entered who attended regularly were above those expected of all pupils nationally. Standards at the higher grades were well below average. History is a popular option and standards in GCSE over the past three years have been maintained with increasing numbers.
86. Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and in their GCSE course in Years 10 and 11. They achieve well because of the support given for basic literacy and because of the high quality of the teaching. However, many changes have been only recently introduced and so have not yet had a long-term impact on standards. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, by teachers and learning assistants, and achieve well. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well in lessons because of specialised support.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have high expectations of the behaviour and achievement of all pupils. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are good and pupils behave well. Lessons begin sharply with pupils encountering the special words associated with the topic. Teachers revisit and reinforce these words during the lesson so that pupils can deepen their understanding. The brisk pace of teaching keeps pupils involved and the support given to writing techniques helps them gain confidence in presenting what they learn. Pupils in Year 9 listen, with interest, to tape recordings of accounts of life in the trenches on the Western Front in 1916 before compiling "diaries" based on their research. Effective use of assessment data ensures that teachers know their pupils well and meet the learning needs of most pupils. However, insufficient account is given by teachers of the low reading abilities of a significant number of pupils. There is a lack of variety in reading matter, especially for poorer readers. ICT is used effectively in Year 7 where pupils compile and present a 'newspaper report' of the events in the Battle of Hastings. However, there are insufficient opportunities to enhance pupils' confidence in using statistical and other numerical data through ICT.
88. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Teachers share a common aim to raise standards and to develop, in pupils, the ways in which they learn independently. The emphasis on improving literacy, especially writing, is slowly making the pupils more confident. The effective use of the assessment system has increased pupils' interest and involvement in their learning. The improvement over the last two years is good.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department has good schemes of work and lesson plans.
- The staff work hard but there is insufficient subject expertise to take the department forward.
- Learning in Years 10 and 11 has insufficient content drawn from world religions.

Commentary

89. Pupils enter the school with well below average levels of attainment. In particular, their language and literacy skills are a barrier to their learning. At the end of Year 9, overall standards of attainment are below the standards indicated in the locally agreed syllabus, although some of the work is in line with the required standards. The achievement of pupils is good as the teaching in Years 7 to 9 is stronger than in other years. Pupils are familiar with various aspects of Hinduism and Christianity, such as a knowledge of their holy books and

religious buildings. Pupils have an understanding of the history and social customs of Islam. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are stronger in relation to the 'facts and figures' of religions than in relation to being able to reflect on how religions may help them make sense of significant experiences in their own lives. Their knowledge and understanding of the connections between belief and behaviour are satisfactory. Many pupils have a good amount of written work in their books, although the weakness in literacy skills is very apparent. Pupils are competent in the use of information technology. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress.

90. Overall, the achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. As there are no GCSE examination groups, there are no previous results to comment upon. Standards are well below the standards indicated in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of various rites of passage in Islam and Christianity, and knowledge and understanding of some religious views on the subject of death and survival. Their knowledge and understanding are stronger in relation to various moral and social issues such as poverty and wealth than in relation to being able to talk with confidence about the major beliefs and other central issues of world religions. The amount of written work in their books is limited. Pupils can competently use information technology in their work. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils, who have special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.
91. Overall, the teaching is satisfactory. Some of the teaching is very good. The teaching is stronger in Years 7, 8 and 9 than it is in Years 10 and 11. Lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9 are well planned and include a range of effective methods to put across the learning. The teaching makes good demands on pupils and so they learn well in the time available. Good efforts are made to develop pupils' literacy. Where the teaching is good and very good, the content drawn from world religions is strong. This is significantly less so where the teaching is only satisfactory. At times the teaching does not always make pupils aware of how their learning might have relevance to their own lives and experiences. In Years 10 and 11 the teaching is less effective, as there is too much dependence on the use of textbooks or photocopied sheets. Lessons often have insufficient content drawn from world religions and moral and social issues predominate. Occasionally, class management is not effective enough to maintain the pace and learning opportunities. Homework is set and an active and effective assessment policy is in place.
92. Subject leadership is satisfactory, and management is good. The department has good documentation, including a development plan. The staffing is unsatisfactory as the level of expertise is insufficient both to take the department forward and to strengthen the pupils' learning. Progress since the last inspection has been good as much hard work has been done to develop various aspects of the department such as assessment.

TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn to handle a good range of materials, but there are weaknesses in their design skills.
- Standards are improving.
- It has been difficult to recruit and retain teachers.

Commentary

93. Standards on entry are well below the national average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 9, as standards rise to being below average in comparison with those in schools nationally. Pupils work competently and safely with a good range of materials on

design briefs. They have a satisfactory understanding of the application of information and communication technology, for example, CAD/CAM. They learn about smart materials in food and textiles. They apply their understanding of human anatomy to the design of furniture, for example, for a pizza restaurant. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have effective adult support and achieve well. Pupils who have only recently joined the class are well supported by peers and staff. The evaluations written by some pupils are limited by the lack of clear criteria identified in the specification.

94. By the end of Year 11, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, and standards are below the national average. The pupils can modify recipes to make them healthier. The highest achievers have competent graphical and craft skills. However, designs for examination coursework do not always show development because there is insufficient ongoing analysis of the problems. For example, models are not always used to check whether processes will work, and food testing is insufficiently rigorous. Weak literacy and numeracy skills limit achievement throughout all year groups. Examination results show a steady improvement over the last four years in the number of pupils achieving a GCSE pass in the subject.
95. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is an improving trend but the continuity of teaching and learning has been adversely affected by difficulties of staff retention and recruitment. In the best lessons, experienced teachers understand pupils' individual needs well, and the achievement of all pupils is good. Their organisation ensures that classroom assistants support pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language so that they achieve well. Some teachers develop pupils' social and personal skills through the strategies they use for behaviour management, for example, considering how to evaluate the work of others sensitively. Although some teachers lack experience, they have appropriate specialist knowledge and pupils learn well from their demonstrations. In many lessons, pupils ask good questions because they find the lessons interesting. Ends of lessons and appropriate homework effectively extend classroom learning. Teaching was not judged overall to be good because of several factors. Teachers use too few strategies to support pupils' weak literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, there is less evidence of learning for lower achieving pupils. Planning is detailed, but is more concerned with tasks than the knowledge, skills and understanding it is intended that pupils should learn. Good technician support promotes the learning well in resistant materials. Food and textiles receive little support.
96. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and track their achievement frequently. Appropriate targets are set for improvement and shared with pupils. Prior attainment data is used to predict grades and levels. However, learning outcomes, as outlined in the planning, are not measurable and do not inform assessments. Some assessments are, therefore, over-generous.
97. Leadership and management are sound. There are good whole-school systems for monitoring the work of the department. The head of department maintains regular oversight of the teaching and learning and there is a good sense of teamwork. Although the subject meets statutory requirements, the scheme of work does not ensure progression in the development of design skills. New accommodation is planned to replace the current rooms that are dated, drab and unattractive to both girls and boys. Nevertheless, a good range of work is displayed and promotes a favourable image of the department within the school. Although the use of ICT has improved, there is scope for further development. Since the last inspection, there has been satisfactory improvement, despite significant staffing problems.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

98. The main focus for the inspection was art and design, and drama. Performing arts and media studies were sampled. The teaching and learning seen in **performing arts** were satisfactory, as is pupils' achievement. The modules being studied at present are not giving the pupils the more practical approach to learning they had hoped for, but future modules offer a better opportunity. The limited amount of good quality equipment for sound mixing also prevented a

more 'hands on' approach in one of the lessons. The course does not offer the discipline of dance which further narrows the range of learning opportunities. **Media studies** is in the early stages of development, having been introduced this academic year. It is proving to be a good additional experience for the pupils. Teaching and learning are sound, and benefit from effective curriculum planning and resources. However, pupils' previous limited experience in using media technology and terminology is holding back their progress. There is effective subject leadership.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and enables pupils to achieve very well.
- Assessment is used very effectively.
- Insufficient opportunities are given to use ICT, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils' very good attitudes contribute positively to their learning.
- Specialist vocabulary is being developed well through speaking and listening activities.
- Good leadership and management.

Commentary

99. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is very good. Most pupils arrive at the school with skills that are well below average. They improve in technical ability and knowledge and understanding over the next three years. By the end of Year 9, pupils are working at a level below expectation, although some higher attaining pupils are in line with the national expectation, and this represents very good achievement. Higher attaining pupils draw well using line; they use design motifs and paint well, clearly responding to the work of artists such as Warhol and Lichtenstein and speak, using specialist vocabulary, with increasing confidence. Written work is not developing as well. The use of computers is limited to Internet research using facilities the pupils have at home or those in the school library.
100. By the end of Year 11, pupils are working broadly in line with national averages, and they achieve well. Higher attaining pupils draw and paint very well; they produce high quality designs painted and embroidered on silk and striking appliquéd designs inspired by artists such as Gaudi, Klimt, Hundertwasser and O'Keeffe. The quality and quantity of annotation documenting their work are not as good as their other work. Because there are no computers in the art department and there is no subject specialist software available, pupils are unable to develop and extend their ideas by means of this medium. Some pupils use word processing to improve presentation. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A* - C at GCSE in 2004 was well below the national average, although the pupils concerned achieved about the same as in the other subjects they took.
101. Standards of work have risen as a result of the good leadership and management of the new subject leader and the very good teaching by all the art teachers. Pupils' very good attitudes have a positive effect on their learning, enabling them to respond very well to the high quality of teaching they receive. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They use their visual resources very well to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, understand the lesson aims. Through effective approaches, pupils' specialist vocabulary is being developed well through speaking and listening, but their written work is still below average standards. The lack of computer technology makes sharing visual images unnecessarily difficult with large classes. Assessment is used very well to inform lesson planning. Marking is thorough and ensures pupils know how to improve their work. There are good opportunities to learn and use specialist vocabulary, through skilful questioning, discussion and collaborative work.

102. The department is making a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. The challenge is raising pupils' self-esteem, and developing their social skills at clubs and on trips to galleries. It is also promoting tolerance and understanding of cultures both here and abroad, particularly of the local traveller community. Display is very well used in the art department and across the school to inform and inspire pupils and it makes a striking contribution to the whole-school environment. Improvement has been good since the last inspection, as seen through the pupils' achievement, in the use of assessment and marking, and the much enhanced working environment.

Drama

Provision in drama is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities support the development of pupils' self-esteem and their negotiation and collaboration skills very well.
- Pupils develop their speaking skills well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

103. The current Year 11 pupils are the first examination group after a two-year gap because of staff recruitment problems. Development over the last four terms has been rapid, and pupils' achievement is good. They have acquired a good level of drama skills in a range of strategies, such as hot seating and empathy for the roles that they play. The impact on developing pupils' oral skills is significant. The teachers refine this constantly in lessons, with pupils using language both technically and creatively to support their drama work and its analysis. The basically non-verbal basis for much drama work, however, enables special needs pupils and those with English as an additional language to make good progress; no variation in standards was perceived between boys and girls or minority ethnic groupings. The open-ended tasks enable the most capable to shine, and this was often achieved by pupils who do not excel in other subjects. The opportunities the subject provides are a very powerful tool in the development of pupils' self-esteem and their skills of negotiation and collaboration.
104. Standards are at the national average as a consequence of this progress, and ICT is very well used with examination groups to minimise the adverse impact of poor writing skills on coursework. Some very good work was seen, as from a low ability boy who excelled as Willie Mossop in an extract from 'Hobson's Choice.' Productions are giving regular extension opportunities for those involved, including wheelchair bound pupils in 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat'. Devised situations are often rather false and unimaginative.
105. Teaching and learning are good across all year groups. Lessons are characterised by good relationships, creating a good working atmosphere. Clearly structured lessons give good targets for pupils, and success is monitored in all lessons at their close. Pupils are encouraged, but expectations are high. Behaviour management is good. Skill, knowledge and experience are developed progressively through practical experience.
106. Leadership and management are good; the head of department supports other teachers well, and provides a good role model. The drama curriculum extends English provision with a focus on non-verbal communication and negotiation and collaboration skills in groups. A good assessment system with linked levels has been devised and supports the pupils' development. ICT is well used in Years 10 and 11 to resource course work. Progress since the appointment of the current head of department four terms ago has been good.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Development over the last four terms has been good.
- Teaching and learning are both good.
- Leadership and management are good.
- A good foundation has been laid for assessment.
- There are insufficient resources.

Commentary

107. Attainment on entry is well below average, and musical skills and prior experience are minimal. Standards are below average in all aspects of music by the end of Years 9 and 11, although pupils' achievement is good. The progress and development being made are hard won. Pupils enjoy the lessons, and respond very well to teacher input. However, they have few musical skills either as performers or listeners, and they are over-aware of this. Their basic sense of pulse is good. There is consequently a huge skills and experience gap which the department is working hard to fill. This is particularly significant with the examination group in Year 10, the first examination group for music. The pupils are having to learn ICT-based compositional techniques from scratch, and since they also have low musical skills, are finding it very challenging. Listening skills at the level necessary for musical study are also very new. In this context, achievement is good, and since a high proportion of pupils in many classes have special educational needs, their achievement is also good. There is good equality of access for differing groups of pupils.

108. Teaching and learning are both good at all levels, and work is based on very good relationships and clear lesson structures. The positive input from teachers, which is part of all lessons, helps to build self-esteem, and pupils are very supportive of others when they try a new skill. A foundation of good practice and exciting music-making is being built up, and staff are starting to make the most of what pupils can offer musically. In the best lessons, pupils respond very positively to their teacher's enthusiasm and passion for music.

109. Leadership and management are good, under the overall direction of the performing arts faculty. The management is very supportive, and has demonstrated a clear vision for development, and growth over the last four terms has been good. The music staff are enthusiasts with complementary skills. The accommodation is good, but remote from other arts areas. Resources have significantly improved, especially in ICT, but the provision of tuned and untuned percussion instruments is poor. The curriculum is broad and balanced, but does not yet reflect the skills of staff or the needs of the pupils. ICT is at an early stage of development, but is already integral at all stages. A good foundation has been laid for assessment, but the system does not reflect National Curriculum criteria or levels in terms accessible to the pupils. Instrumental teaching provision is being developed within the department; the first-ever production last term was a great success and pupils found it very rewarding. Progress since the appointment of the current head of the music department has been good, especially since there had been no music at all for some time beforehand.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good vision and commitment to move the subject forward and to raising standards.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory.

- Pupils' improving attitudes to learning and behaviour are good and are having a positive affect on their learning.
- National Curriculum requirements are not met in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

110. Standards are below average by the end of Years 9 and 11 and pupils are underachieving. This is because the department has been through a period of disruption in its leadership and staffing. The department is now more stable and this is already beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' achievement, although there are further improvements needed in teaching. The school's self-evaluation explains that at the start of the school year the department was without leadership and pupils' attitudes to physical education were very poor. A consultant senior manager was appointed to raise the profile of and commitment to the subject. This has been achieved very successfully. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The consultant senior manager has enabled the department to identify what needs to be improved and the newly appointed trainee head of department has the necessary vision, drive and enthusiasm to carry these plans forward. This is a very good management strategy on the part of the headteacher. However, subject self-evaluation is not well established and there is an absence of pupil progress data to guide teaching and learning in the subject. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 fails to meet statutory requirements and boys and girls do not have equal access to the curriculum. Girls are taught dance but boys are not. As many weaknesses identified at the last inspection remain and standards by Year 11 are lower than they were at that time, progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.
111. Pupils enter the school with below average standards. In 2004, the standards reached by Year 9 pupils according to teacher assessments were below the national average. The results of pupils who chose to take a GCSE in 2004 were also below average. These standards reflect the fact that the quality of teaching and learning has been unsatisfactory for some time. For example, by Year 11, boys' basic football skills are weak, they have poor control when trapping and sending the ball and the ability to play tactically is not well understood by pupils. They will crowd the ball rather than create spaces, in the same way as much younger players would do. The picture is similar in other games like basketball and badminton, where basic skills and tactical play are below average. There was an exception to this in Year 7 where standards in badminton were in line with those expected for the age group. At present only girls are taught dance and standards here are also below average. The girls enjoy creating short dances and could achieve much more but their understanding of how to do this is much lower than it should be. Pupils have a sound but basic knowledge about the effects of exercise on the body. Very few pupils have any deeper understanding, particularly older pupils where this would be expected. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are good in nearly all lessons and this is having a positive effect on their learning.
112. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is some very good teaching with high expectations. There was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in some lessons which related to the teachers' insecure subject knowledge and consequently pupils are still underachieving in these lessons. This reflects the fact that recruitment is difficult and unqualified staff are being used. Some staff are very new. In the very good teaching, teachers assess the capability and needs of the pupils very quickly and provide appropriate learning activities to address the gaps and enable the pupils to move forward. In all lessons, teachers encourage pupils to reflect on what they have learned in the lesson. However, in many lessons pupils do not evaluate their learning well as they are not given enough opportunity throughout the lesson to evaluate their own and others' work as required by the National Curriculum. Consequently, their achievement in this element is also below that expected. More formal assessment strategies have recently been put in place but they are not yet part of department practice and most pupils do not have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. Although the teaching observed in a GCSE theory lesson was good, a scrutiny of pupils' written work showed that a narrow range of teaching strategies was used and there was too much reliance on note taking and worksheets. Work is not well matched to the range of capability and the pupils' knowledge is superficial. Pupils who are identified with special

educational needs and those who have English as an additional language who have help from a learning support assistant are making good progress because this support is effective. Other pupils with special needs make no better progress than their peers because most teachers do not adapt work sufficiently for higher and lower attaining pupils.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The main focus for the inspection was business studies, health and social care and Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department has worked hard to create courses that suit pupils' needs.
- The teaching is very good.
- Business studies makes a strong contribution to work-related learning.
- Very good use is made of assessment.

Commentary

113. At the end of Year 11 in 2004, the results in the GCSE business course were broadly in line with national averages. These results are an improvement on those for 2003, when they were below national averages. In the business studies applied course in 2004, results were very low in relation to national averages. This is a new course for the school so there were no results for 2003. In the business and communication systems course in 2004, the results were well below national averages. In 2003, standards were similarly well below national averages. In all courses, however, most pupils achieved their expected grades and some did better than this. Attendance rates exerted a negative influence on progress and attainment.
114. The standards seen during the inspection on the three courses are broadly in line with the levels expected nationally. However, pupils' achievement is adversely affected by their literacy skills, although they cope well with the numeracy demands and the use of ICT. Work in pupils' folders and exercise books is often of a good quality. Pupils write well about issues like marketing, different types of business, 'e' commerce, and business growth. They present their work clearly and coherently. Pupils are less confident and less clear in their capability to express their knowledge and understanding verbally. Pupils have good information technology skills, both in processing what they already know and in finding new information. There is no overall pattern in the difference in standards between boys and girls. Boys do better on the GCSE business studies course. Girls do better on the business studies applied course. Pupils who are identified with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress through the support of the teachers. The achievement of pupils is good overall as the teachers make appropriate demands of them in the lessons.
115. Overall, the teaching is very good. All lessons are well planned and they include an interesting range of activities to put across the learning. These include charts and graphs and the use of computers. Teachers have good subject expertise, are confident and make the work being done very clear. Lessons are brisk and, in the main, good demands are made of the pupils so that they learn a lot in the time available. The department has many contacts with businesses outside of school. This is a very positive aid to the pupils' learning. The department also arranges various business trips, including residential ones. These too help pupils understand the world of business. Pupils respond positively to the teaching and they are well behaved and attentive. Homework is set and done. The procedures for assessment are very good and support pupils' achievement well as they know what they have to do to improve.

116. The leadership and management are very good, particularly in developing courses and developing contacts with businesses. The department is also actively contributing to work-related learning. Progress since the last inspection has been particularly good in relation to this. The staffing and accommodation are very good, and resources are good.

Health and social care

The provision in health and social care is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- There is a good range of courses.
- The department is very well led by an innovative practitioner.

Commentary

117. Standards in GCSE examinations were well below the national average in 2004. Pupils in the current Year 11 have already completed their GCSE assignments and have been divided into two new groups to pursue additional qualifications. One group is studying Intermediate GNVQ in health and social care and the other the CACHE (Council for Awards on Children's Care and Education) Foundation Award in Caring for Children, both over one year. Standards seen in both these groups, together with the current Year 10 GCSE group, are below the national expectations.

118. Achievement is good because of the good classroom relationships and a positive working environment where pupils can and are keen to do well. Higher attaining pupils present well supported answers during discussion; in one Year 11 GNVQ group, for example, pupils were able to assess individual needs linked to Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress due to good teacher support but their progress would be improved by additional support, particularly in the CACHE lessons. Health and social care is a popular subject and is currently taken by girls.

119. Teaching is good and is supported by good subject knowledge which is shared effectively with pupils. High expectations of behaviour and learning are features of every lesson. Teachers encourage pupils' participation in lessons, thus ensuring that their confidence is built up and maintained. Where ICT is used, it greatly assists those pupils who have weaknesses with their writing skills; however, the good ICT resources in the department are not integrated into planning and are not maximised in some lessons. Work in lessons is not tailored to individual needs and does not stretch all pupils so that they develop their potential.

120. Leadership is very good and management is good in health and social care. The department is led by an innovative practitioner who has developed an effective team approach to the teaching of the range of courses. She has a clear vision for the future of the subject and, with her team, strives for improvement through developing a curriculum appropriate to the needs of the pupils. There is a good range of activities and visits to enrich the subject such as a first-aid course, visits to local care settings and out-of-school revision classes. End-of-unit assessment is thorough; however, the ongoing marking of pupils' work is less detailed and, as a result, pupils do not understand what exactly they need to do to reach their target grades. Schemes of work do not take account of the diverse ability range of pupils, and vocational opportunities and resources are not fully integrated into the health and social care units. Health and social care was not inspected at the time of the last inspection.

Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN)

Provision in ASDAN is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment of lessons.
- The variety of challenging activities.
- Very good teaching and support.
- The good quality of work produced and pupils' very good achievement.
- ICT provision requires updating.

Commentary

121. The purpose of this course is to promote the personal and social development of learners through the achievement of ASDAN awards, so as to enhance their self-esteem, their aspirations and their contribution to their community.
122. The results of assessment for 2004 indicate 100 per cent success at Bronze level in Year 10 and 100 per cent success at Silver level in Year 11. This maintains the success rate of the previous year. The standard of work seen during the inspection is above expectations based on the prior attainment of the pupils, all of whom have special educational needs, as well as several pupils whose English acquisition is at an early stage of development. Work on display is of a high standard, reflecting pupils' pride in their efforts and their good use of ICT. The interest of the pupils and the quality of their work in relation to prior attainment result in very good achievement.
123. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The work is well planned, with appropriate resources to stimulate the pupils' interest and enable them to complete the exercises set. On-going assessment is well used to reinforce prior learning and to help the pupils to apply what they have learnt to new situations. The level of support given is very good and this ensures that each student receives ample help during each lesson. Teamwork by the staff holds the interest of the pupils, who are encouraged to make contributions from their own experiences. Computers are well used in teaching and learning in the classroom but need to be updated for more effective application.
124. The quality of leadership and management is very good. The teaching assistant who co-ordinates this course has a very clear vision for the work, abounding enthusiasm and high commitment to the task. She provides a very good role model for both staff and pupils and works as a successful team leader with a class teacher and support staff. Team teaching is well organised and effective. Resources are good and well organised. A very strong feature of provision is the variety of activities on offer to the pupils. The pupils engaged in car maintenance, for example, appreciate the relevance of their learning to the world of work. Visits to places of educational interest such as Shorne County Park, Maidstone art exhibitions and museums serve to enhance the pupils' learning in many ways. They are encouraged to care for the environment and, for example, made good quality signs for the local church. Opportunities for work experience, ice-skating, horse riding, learning to swim and engagement in youth work provide very good incentives for the pupils' continuing education. No comparisons can be made to indicate improvements since the last inspection because there was no previous report on this area of the curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils contribute well to the range of oral discussions.
- The curriculum is comprehensive.
- Teaching is good.

Commentary

125. Staff are provided with written guidelines that provide progression in all specified areas of PSHE throughout the school. The quality of coverage varies as the subject is taught by a large number of teachers, all of whom have their major commitment elsewhere. The curriculum is nevertheless flexible, with trials of new materials whose effectiveness is discussed by participants, including pupils. External visits and visitors from the community provide breadth to the course, with valuable opportunities to consider the views of other adults from agencies such as the police and fire brigade, and to explore their own feelings, for example, in theatre workshops. Coverage of health related issues is good.

126. In lessons seen, teaching and learning were good. The materials were used well, with encouragement for pupils to discuss issues related to relationships, future education, career plans and personal choice. One very effective programme for personal choices was used well to emphasise the importance of forming and holding views without being unduly influenced by peer pressure. Pupils enjoyed these lessons and took their messages seriously. There is sound leadership and management which ensure that the programme is monitored.

CITIZENSHIP

Provision for citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Aspects of citizenship teaching contribute well to the school's ethos and to the social development of the pupils.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' attainment is not assessed or reported to parents.
- Statutory requirements are not met.

Commentary

127. Only one year group had citizenship lessons during the inspection, and one set of class tasks was available for scrutiny. Standards were at the expected level in both instances, with pupils in Year 8 having awareness of the qualifications for good citizenship, and those in the sample of work being aware of the importance of voting. The higher attainers know about the legal requirements for citizenship but can also suggest aspects of good citizenship, whereas the majority tend to concentrate on what makes a poor citizen. The lowest attainers need help with the abstract language of the topic. Pupils working on reasons for voting all have positive attitudes to the electoral system, with some superficial understanding. For example, the higher attainers understand the link between voting and change while the majority overestimate the power of elected bodies to carry out the will of the electors.

128. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent. Teaching quality varies from a heavy dependence on worksheets to imaginative and stimulating activities that teach the same message in a much more lively and effective way. Although some findings are recorded in

writing, there is no assessment of standards, and so no reporting to parents in line with statutory requirements.

129. Leadership and management are both unsatisfactory. The teaching and assessment of topics are not formally monitored. The audit of citizenship in other subjects is out of date, and there is no check that the citizenship message is made clear to pupils in other subjects. There is no development plan for the subject, which is regarded in the school as one aspect of PSHE. Thus, the statutory requirements are not convincingly met. Topics are listed but time limits the depth in which each aspect is taught. Although work related to citizenship education is covered in other subjects, it is taught from the perspectives of the host subjects rather than to develop citizenship. There are some opportunities to take part in whole school and wider initiatives, such as mock elections both in school and across the county, and the school council is an example of active citizenship within the school. The school encourages older pupils to take responsibility within houses, and develops a sense of social responsibility through organised charitable giving. The curriculum contains no opportunities for large-scale learning of research skills in a practical project, but pupils gain such an experience in one of their other subjects. The school has begun to cover the National Curriculum for citizenship, but has not addressed the issues of communication, monitoring and assessment that are needed to make sure that the provision is effective.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

