

INSPECTION REPORT

BIRCHES HEAD HIGH SCHOOL

Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124390

Headteacher: Karen Healey

Lead inspector: Robin Coulthard

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th January 2005

Inspection number: 270902

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 11 – 16
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 917

School address: Birches Head Road
Hanley
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
Postcode: ST2 8DD

Telephone number: 01782 233595
Fax number: 01782 236647

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Stephen Barlow

Date of previous inspection: 25th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Birches Head is a split-site school in challenging circumstances. A major building programme is underway to concentrate the school on the current lower school site. Currently, the upper site provides a poor learning environment. The school is close to average in size with similar numbers of boys and girls. Pupils' economic circumstances are well below average and the proportion of students known to be entitled to free school meals is above the national average. Thirty-two pupils joined and 40 left the school other than at the usual time in the last full year, which is about average. Pupils are mostly from White-British backgrounds. However, the proportion of pupils whose home language is not English is above average. The other main racial group is Asian or Asian-British Pakistani. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average. The percentage with statements of special educational need is well above average. Pupils' needs are mostly related to dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school has received the following awards: Artsmark (2002); Investor in People (2002); Schools Achievement (2002); Sportsmark (2004), and is involved in the following initiatives: Education Action Zone; Excellence in Cities; The Children's Fund. The school is a significant partner in a range of development initiatives: Leadership Incentive Grant cluster, 14-19 cluster; Excellence in Cities. Community provision is made through College in the Community activities.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11746	Robin Coulthard	Lead inspector	
9053	Viv Phillips	Lay inspector	
34542	Ruth Westbrook	Team inspector	English English as an additional language
6138	Keith Page	Team inspector	Mathematics
4922	Mike Driver	Team inspector	Science Vocational education
20767	Jerry Royle	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music
33135	Kim Ropek	Team inspector	Art and design
32590	Roger Fenwick	Team inspector	Design and technology
10817	George Rayner	Team inspector	Geography History
33242	Stephen Wall	Team inspector	French
30800	Betty Colley	Team inspector	Physical education Special educational needs
35060	Keith Robinson	Team inspector	Religious education
32208	Derek Aitken	Team inspector	Citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Limited

Langshaw
Pastens Road
Limpsfield chart
Oxted
Surrey
RH8 0RE

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	18
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES	20
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	21
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	40

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Birches Head is failing to provide an adequate standard of education. Poor teaching leads to poor learning and achievement. Despite recent planning for improvement, unsatisfactory leadership and management have not yet secured sufficient development. Provision for pupils' welfare is inadequate and is exacerbated by poor, split-site accommodation. Governance since the last inspection has been poor. The school does not meet all its statutory requirements and provides poor value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Provision is unsatisfactory in science, geography, design and technology and religious education, and poor in mathematics, physical education and citizenship
- Pupils' competence across the curriculum is poor in English and mathematics and below average in information and communication technology (ICT)
- Pupils with special educational needs do not achieve well enough and those with English as a second language receive too little structured assistance
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and the provision for their personal development are poor; deficiencies are made worse by the split-site nature of the school
- The new headteacher exercises strong leadership; she has accurately analysed the school's weaknesses and drawn up appropriate and wide-ranging plans to improve the education provided

The school has declined since its last inspection. Standards have not risen enough and teaching has deteriorated. Few of the issues identified in the last report have been resolved. The budget has been poorly managed and the school is overstaffed.

In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is poor. Pupils' standards when they enter the school are below average. National test results, in 2003, were average in English, below average in science and well below average in mathematics. Results were below those of similar schools. Current standards in Year 9 are well below average overall. GCSE results were well below average in 2004, but similar to those of similar schools. Current standards of work in Year 11 are below average. Standards are below average in English and science and well below average in mathematics.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are poor. Too many pupils have negative attitudes to learning; behaviour and punctuality are poor. Following rigorous efforts by the school, attendance has improved but remains below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is poor. Overall, teaching is poor and has deteriorated since the last inspection. Where teaching is very good, pupils respond enthusiastically and learn

very well. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is good in art and design and history, and satisfactory in English, French, music and religious education. It is poor in citizenship and unsatisfactory in other subjects. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is satisfactory in English, geography and music. It is good in art and design, French and history. Teachers have not systematically developed the good practice contained in the various national strategies. Pupils do not practise speaking, listening and writing sufficiently. Too many lessons are tedious, time is poorly used and learning is too slow to engross pupils. Pupils' poor learning skills are tolerated rather than challenged. Too many lessons are teacher-dominated and pupils are not encouraged to take responsibility for their learning.

The curriculum is unsatisfactory because of deficiencies in mathematics, design and technology, physical education and religious education. ICT is insufficiently developed across the curriculum. Extra-curricular opportunities are satisfactory. The overall quality of care is unsatisfactory, mainly because of the adverse impact of poor accommodation on matters of welfare, health and safety. Support and guidance are not focused consistently on improving personal and academic achievement and are unsatisfactory. Good efforts are underway to work positively with parents and the local community to help raise pupils' aspirations and achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Leadership of the new headteacher is good and very good plans for improving the school have recently been introduced. The work of the governing body has been poor since the last inspection because governors have been unclear, until recently, about their responsibilities. Not all statutory duties are fully met. Financial management has been poor. Building work is underway to enable the entire school to be concentrated on the lower site. The split-site character of the school is currently a significant barrier to providing an effective education. The current premises are a serious limiting factor in the school's efforts to establish a suitable learning ethos and ensure that the pupils' personal and social development is well provided for.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally satisfied with the education their children receive, but they feel that the school does not communicate effectively enough with them. Pupils feel trusted and think the staff work hard. They do not think that they are treated fairly. Parents and pupils assert very strongly that the condition of the upper site is poor and that the toilets are appalling. Inspectors agree with the criticisms of the site and the toilet facilities, but consider that these will be much improved when the new building is in use.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Implement planned developments as soon as possible
- Improve the effectiveness of teaching through better use of assessment and rigorous implementation of the various national strategies
- Improve pupils' skills in literacy and their use of number across the curriculum
- Improve provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those for whom English is a second language
- Improve provision in those subjects where it is currently unsatisfactory or poor
- Improve the effectiveness of management and ensure that governors discharge their responsibilities fully

and, to meet statutory requirements

- Meet fully National Curriculum requirements for the teaching of mathematics, design and technology and physical education

- Implement requirements for teaching citizenship
- Improve the use of ICT across the curriculum
- Provide more time for religious education in Year 11
- Introduce a daily collective act of worship

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

In 2004, results were below average in the end of year tests in Year 9, and GCSE results were well below average. GCSE results were similar to those gained by pupils in schools who had gained similar results in Year 9. Current standards are below average in Years 9 and 11. Achievement is poor overall because teaching is unsatisfactory in too many lessons. Pupils' language and literacy skills are below average, their competency in mathematics is poor and ICT is too little used to help learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results, at the end of Year 9, have fallen since the last inspection
- GCSE results in art and design are above the national average
- Lower-attaining pupils do well in improving their communication skills in the Year 7 nurture groups
- Gifted and talented pupils do not achieve as well as they should

Commentary

1. Pupils join the school with below-average attainment. In 2003, the last year for which nationally validated results are available, results in national tests at the end of Year 9 were below average in comparison with all schools and with schools where pupils' had similar prior attainment. They were below average in English and science, and well below average in mathematics. Between 2000 and 2003, the school's trend in improvement was below the national trend. Science results rose consistently between 2000 and 2003, whereas results in English and mathematics fell between 2000 and 2002 and rose in 2003. Girls' and boys' attainment in English fell between 2000 and 2003. In 2004, pupils did better in English, particularly at the higher grades, than previously. Results in mathematics and science were similar to the school's previous performance. Pupils' overall achievement in relation to their abilities and starting points in the school is poor.
2. Current attainment in English and science is below average, and well below in mathematics. Attainment is below average overall. Standards are average in art and design, history and modern foreign languages, and below average in other subjects, except for geography, design and technology and citizenship where standards are well below expectation. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are poor because of deficiencies in their personal and social development. Across the curriculum, pupils' competence in mathematics is poor and their use of ICT is below average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.7 (31.4)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	32.6 (30.4)	35.4 (34.7)
science	31.4 (31.1)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 195 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. GCSE results, in 2004, were well below average for the proportions of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades, five or more A* to G grades, and for pupils' performance in their best eight subjects. The proportion gaining one or more A* to G grades was average. Results were above the national average in art and design, and the small cohort taking French gained average results. Results were below average in other subjects and well below in science. Although results fell slightly in 2004, the trend of improvement since 2000 has

been above the national trend. Boys' best results compared with their other subjects and national attainment were in English and history. Girls did particularly well in art and design. Boys' and girls' weakest subjects were mathematics, science and geography. Boys' results were also weak in physical education. Value-added, that is, the progress made by pupils from their attainment on entry to the end of Year 11, was below that expected nationally. Value-added between Years 9 and 11 was average. Overall, pupils underachieve during their time in the school.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A* -C grades	32 (33)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	81 (77)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	28.7 (29.9)	34.9 (34.7)

There were 180 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Current standards are below average in Years 10 and 11. They are above average in art and design, average in history and French and below average in the remainder, except for mathematics, design and technology, physical education and citizenship, where standards are well below average. Overall, pupils' achievement is poor. It is good in art and design and satisfactory in English, geography, French and music. Achievement is unsatisfactory in the remaining subjects, except for mathematics and citizenship, where it is poor.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve unsatisfactorily overall, but make satisfactory progress in sets and withdrawal groups where they receive support. The newly-introduced nurture class in Year 7 is effective, both socially and educationally, in raising standards and achievement. Some pupils achieve satisfactorily when standards in Year 9 are compared with their entry into the school, and occasionally pupils are taken off the register to join their peers as their reading and spelling scores improve.
6. The school does not record the progress which pupils with English as an additional language make in learning English. Their achievement is in line with other pupils in the school, which is poor. Analysis of these pupils' examination results has not been carried out.
7. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified. Their attainment and achievement are very good in art and design, where extension work is a regular feature of lessons. Gifted and talented pupils underachieve in science, geography, ICT and physical education because their needs are inadequately planned for. Overall, gifted and talented pupils achieve no better than other groups of pupils, so achievement is poor with little development in the majority of subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning and standards of behaviour are poor, which limits what they achieve. Attendance is unsatisfactory and punctuality poor, partly because of the sprawling, split site. Personal qualities and levels of maturity are poor because the school's efforts to foster spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are far too fragmented. The unpleasant environment in which pupils are expected to learn is a contributory factor to this. Improvement has been poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has failed to foster a work ethic or a culture where it is 'cool to learn' so pupils do not care enough about trying hard and take little pride in much of what they do
- Some pupils do their work conscientiously and behave well most of the time and, as with most pupils, they respond very well and do their best in response to sparkling teaching

- As pupils receive mixed messages about what kinds of behaviour are acceptable in and out of lessons, standards of behaviour are too low, with too much acceptance of intolerance. Pupils are expected to spend the day in dreadful accommodation, which is dirty, dismal and degrading and does little to make them feel valued or inspire them to want to work
- Pupils lack the range of personal and social skills they need to make the most of what the school offers but too little has been done to nurture their personal qualities
- Successful efforts have been made to improve attendance, but poor punctuality, not helped by the difficulties of travelling across a tricky, steep, split site, hinders achievement

Commentary

8. Pupils are clear that they “want lessons to stop being boring” and that “teachers should try to make learning fun” in order “to change people’s attitudes towards work”. The culture has been one where ‘good lessons’ are those where pupils get on with fairly mundane tasks without question or too much fuss. As a result, pupils are rarely inspired to listen, concentrate and think for themselves, because too much work is dull and not fine-tuned to meet their different needs. Active encouragement to go the extra mile with work that demands real effort is scarce. Teachers sometimes spend too much time on classroom control because activities are not lively enough to capture and hold pupils’ interest and, thereby, reduce the chances of boredom, frustration and misbehaviour. Many pupils take too little pride in their work and rarely show enthusiasm for learning or for school.
9. Pupils who come across better teaching enjoy the livelier mix of activities, for instance in some history, art, drama and dance lessons. They thrive on the praise they earn. Almost all pupils rise to the challenges set in the best lessons where teaching takes them step by step, through work they find fascinating, to a point beyond where they thought they could go. In a Year 10 English lesson, boys were stimulated by quick-fire questions to read between the lines of the text of ‘Journey’s End’ imaginatively. They built up such a vivid impression of character that they broke out in spontaneous applause for the quality of thought expressed by the person in role.
10. Poor accommodation remains a barrier to better standards of behaviour, but is not the only factor. Pupils are not clear enough about right, wrong and the conduct expected in school because adults do not set a good, clear, consistent example. At times, individual staff shout at pupils, rather than taking time to discuss with them calmly what has gone wrong, or ensuring that they listen to both sides of the story after an argument or a fight. The head teacher asserts, appropriately, that wherever staff are, pupils’ behaviour requires consistent, positive, firm and fair management.
11. The vast majority of pupils are passionate about their dislike of bullying and racial abuse. However, there are groups that are intolerant of others, and students agree that this should be stopped. The new head teacher has set out determinedly to fix firm boundaries with no tolerance of bullying or racial abuse. Recently, pupils have formed anti-bullying councils, which they value, rightly, as one of the keys to greater harmony.
12. The exclusion rate is high, reflecting the school’s low standards of behaviour and ineffective strategies for managing misconduct. At present, the proportion of girls who are excluded is higher than found nationally, which contributes to the fact that they do less well than usual. Otherwise, in general, exclusion rates reflect the proportion of pupils from different ethnic groups on roll, although some pupils are less likely than others to learn their lesson from one fixed-term exclusion. The school has not excluded any pupils permanently because local schools use ‘managed moves’ to give everyone a chance of a reasonable education.

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	803	317	0
White – any other White background	3	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	9	5	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	54	13	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	4	0
Black or Black British – African	7	0	0

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
Black or Black British – any other Black background	8	7	0
Chinese	7	0	0
Any other ethnic group	13	2	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

13. The working conditions and learning environment provided for pupils are grim, contributing to a poor ethos. The state of the school, with its dismal rooms, unhygienic toilets and many drab displays, depresses pupils and visitors alike. Pupils loathe the graffiti and the dirt. "The look of the school is horrible. If the school was nicer, people would think more of it". As a result, pupils' self-esteem and enthusiasm for learning remain low. A more stimulating environment created in the art department and the learning resource centre (LRC) encourages better work. In general, the school has done too little to make all pupils feel worthwhile and to reduce intolerance. Pupils display immature speaking, listening and social skills, showing lack of respect for others' achievements and prejudice towards anyone who is different in any way. The introduction of fortnightly enrichment sessions is helpful for widening pupils' experiences but not enough to ensure that everyone develops good learning habits alongside key personal qualities. Pupils' moral codes, awareness of spiritual, cultural and global issues, and sense of personal responsibility are weak. A few tutors work hard to foster such skills and qualities but other staff waste opportunities to do so in registration time and assemblies.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.0	School data	1.0
National data	6.9	National data	1.1

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

14. The school has worked hard to push attendance to a level close to the national average, which is thought to give pupils a reasonable chance of doing well at school. However, figures mask the fact that punctuality is poor and some parents still allow children to stay at home without good reason. Parents and pupils are often indifferent about school so contact with parents has had little effect on curbing some absences and lateness. Punctuality is managed inconsistently, partly due to the site, with too much condoned lateness and an unsettled start to many lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is poor. Teaching and learning are poor in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum is unsatisfactory because statutory requirements are not met in several subjects. Care guidance and support are unsatisfactory. Links with parents are unsatisfactory, but links with other schools and the community are improving.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are poor overall because an unacceptable percentage of lessons is unsatisfactory. Teaching has not been systematically developed since the last inspection. Assessment is unsatisfactory and current procedures do not help pupils to understand adequately what they must do to improve.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nearly one-quarter of teaching and learning is less than satisfactory
- Good teaching in art and design and in history leads to good achievement by pupils
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory throughout the school in mathematics, science, design and technology, ICT, physical education and citizenship, and in geography in Years 7 to 9 and in religious education in Years 10 and 11
- Pupils respond very well to the best teaching because it successfully meets to their learning needs
- Poor use is made of national strategies to structure teaching and develop learning
- Assessment is unsatisfactory overall, with statutory requirements for assessing citizenship and personal, social and health education not met

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 106 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (3%)	12 (11%)	25 (24%)	42 (39%)	22 (21%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)

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.

15. Teaching in Years 7 to 9, where 80 per cent was at least satisfactory, was better than that in Years 10 and 11, where the figure was 75 per cent. While this leads to a judgement of 'poor' for teaching and learning in each key stage and overall, only two lessons fell below the category 'unsatisfactory'. The development of teaching has not kept pace with national developments and expectations since the last inspection, when 87 per cent of lessons were judged satisfactory and better. The physical conditions in the school, particularly the poor premises and the frequent movement between lessons on the split site, have a detrimental effect on pupils' learning.
16. The pupils are not naturally good learners. They are, however, compliant. They lack intellectual confidence and natural curiosity and have very limited general knowledge. As a result, they show little initiative in lessons. These characteristics are exacerbated by their poor speaking skills. Pupils are reluctant to work independently and lack the social skills to work collaboratively and productively in pairs or other groupings. Most teachers have not sufficiently taken these factors into account in their planning. Suitable methods have not been devised to enable pupils to work independently, which was a recommendation of the last report.
17. Pupils responded very well to the forceful and interesting teaching that they encountered in about fifteen per cent of lessons, where the teachers understood and provided effectively for their capacities as learners. In these lessons, the teachers had a good command of their subject and communicated their enthusiasm to the class. Lessons had clear objectives which were revisited at the end, to check that they had been met and to guide the planning

of subsequent lessons. In addition, teachers made clear their expectations of the work rate, standards required and of the behaviour expected. In a very effective religious education lesson in Year 9, time was carefully allocated to secure a brisk pace of learning. Resources, including a video, were suitable and of good quality. The teacher gave carefully targeted guidance to individual pupils as they worked. The pupils had a clear idea of the standards expected because they knew and understood the levels of work they were aiming for. As a result, their understanding of aspects of the Bible and the Qur'an was significantly extended.

18. In an outstanding English lesson in Year 10, the quality of planning was excellent. An engrossing starter activity, based on the play 'Journey's End', established a very busy working atmosphere from the start, despite some late arrivals from the other site. Excellent resources were to hand, including books, handouts and study guides. Instead of acquiescing in the pupils' below-average speaking skills, the teacher challenged them and elicited thoughtful analyses, views and questions. As a result, the pupils surpassed their expectations of themselves in their learning. As part of the very effective range of teaching methods, they engaged in meaningful role play to further their understanding of characters. Time was used very productively and some pupils were reluctant to stop work at the end.
19. The school has, since September 2004, been implementing a systematic programme of analysis and development of teaching and learning. The impact on classroom performance, both of this and of the good practice contained in the various national strategies, has been inconsistent and inadequate so far. The majority of the lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory, but too many were not. Most lessons had clear objectives and were carefully planned. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally adequate. Pupils' relationships were generally satisfactory with the teacher and each other. Where teaching and learning were unsatisfactory, three main reasons were discernible. Firstly, staff do not yet have shared and consistent expectations of the level of response and effort they should expect from pupils. Secondly, teachers are often pre-occupied with their input into a lesson and too little aware of the quality of pupils' learning and achievement. Thirdly, much teaching fails to acknowledge and challenge pupils' deficiencies as learners.
20. Some classes were too reliant on the teacher, who dominated the lesson with no expectation that pupils would learn independently. Too little discussion and questioning took place to allow pupils to develop their views and to extend their listening and to evaluate what they heard. Response to questioning was often limited to the few volunteers in a class and did not stimulate those who wished to remain passive. Teacher talk was excessive in music, with too little time allowed for pupils to practise their skills. Sometimes, pupils, usually boys, arrived without their books. Some classes were badly behaved, sometimes because the lesson was tedious. Time was often badly managed, with no deadlines set to generate a brisk and engrossing pace of work. Too few lessons contained any element of fun and humour.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes is unsatisfactory. Teachers are supplied with individual education plans (IEPs), but planning is not effective in meeting these pupils' needs. Teaching assistants (TA's) or key workers are often effective, when they are deployed in taking small groups or in setted lessons, because they know the teacher and the needs of pupils well. TA's are sometimes attached to subject areas and this works satisfactorily, but provision is inconsistent and overall not effective enough. TA's' record keeping is not specific enough to guide subsequent planning effectively.
22. Currently, the impact of assessment on pupils' learning and progress is inadequate. In response to the outcome of self-evaluation, the senior leadership team has recently appointed a new assessment coordinator and introduced a central database (START). The data from regular subject based assessments is used to track, analyse and target

individual's progress. As a result, increasing numbers of pupils know for the first time what their targets and target levels are, and in Years 7 and 8 all pupils have individual learning plans.

23. Some of the attainment data collected from the key assessments devised by subject areas is an inaccurate representation of National Curriculum level criteria. Inspectors found inaccuracies in science, English and design and technology. The most accurate assessments were found in art and design, modern foreign languages, religious education and history, and in ICT in Years 10 and 11.
24. Teacher assessments in Year 9 were a significant overestimate compared with national test results in English and science.
25. The marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory overall, but good in art and design, history and modern foreign languages. These subjects provide good quality marking that informs pupils of their success and what they need to do to improve against National Curriculum and GCSE criteria. However, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were too high in geography and design and technology compared with standards found during the inspection.
26. Although the school now has detailed analysis of the progress made by different ability, teaching and ethnic groups, very few subject areas yet use it to adjust their curriculum provision to raise attainment. Furthermore, the use of ongoing assessment, including the school's system for student self-assessment, to inform the planning of lessons has been identified as a weakness by the school and confirmed by the inspection.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is unsatisfactory overall. The school provides a satisfactory range of subjects, including vocational choices, to prepare pupils for their next stage of education and development, but statutory requirements are not met for several subjects. Literacy and the use of number are not developed systematically across the curriculum. Too few subjects provide work-related opportunities, although there is a satisfactory vocational education programme. Guidance for personal development is poor. Equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils is satisfactory. Resources and the match of teachers to the curriculum are unsatisfactory and the accommodation is poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most subjects provide a satisfactory curriculum and those for history and art, and design are good
- Statutory requirements are not fully met in mathematics, design and technology and physical education
- The specialist ICT courses meet statutory requirements, but computers are not widely used across the curriculum
- Speaking, listening, reading and writing and the use of number are poorly provided for
- The curriculum is supplemented by a satisfactory range of extracurricular opportunities, but few enrichment activities are provided for gifted and talented pupils
- The current school premises do not provide an environment that is conducive to good learning

Commentary

27. Although the curriculum is satisfactory in most subjects, the school's overall provision of curricular opportunities is unsatisfactory because the school does not meet all statutory requirements. The art and design department provides a good range of courses and the history curriculum is effectively planned to help pupils to achieve well. In Years 10 and 11, a satisfactory range of option choices is provided. The school has successfully met a key issue from the last inspection by ensuring that the modern languages curriculum complies

with National Curriculum requirements. Several subjects do not provide the full statutory entitlement to pupils. Important elements of the National Curriculum requirement are not adequately covered in mathematics, design and technology and physical education. The requirement to provide appropriate citizenship education for all pupils is not met by the school's current arrangements. In Year 11, insufficient time is allocated to religious education to enable the GCSE course to be fully taught. Specialist ICT courses meet the statutory requirement, but pupils do not use computers to enhance their achievement in the other subjects.

28. The school has failed to respond adequately to the national strategies introduced to develop literacy and the use of number across the curriculum. Provision in both of these areas is poor and ineffectually co-ordinated.
29. The curriculum makes a poor contribution to the personal, social and health education of pupils. Although plans cover the range of required areas, including sex education, relationships and drugs awareness, none of these is covered adequately. The main opportunities for pupils to learn about these occur on five separate personal development days. This arrangement provides no adequate continuity, or opportunity to catch up for pupils who miss one of the days. Although some relevant activities take place during registration periods and assemblies, no organised plan ensures that these occur in a systematic and coherent manner. The school has improved its provision in Years 10 and 11 by including a personal development course as an option choice, but only a minority of pupils takes this.
30. Too few subjects provide opportunities for work-related learning. However, the vocational programme provides sound careers advice and satisfactory work experience for pupils in Years 10 and 11. This is complemented by a good range of vocational options, including some taken at a local college. All pupils in Year 10 take at least one of these.
31. Since the last inspection, evaluation and development of the curriculum have been poor. However, this has significantly improved this school year. A clear determination to improve provision is evident among those now responsible for leading the curriculum. The school plans to move, from the current two-week timetable, to a one-week pattern that will help to support the provision of a better balanced curriculum and more effective deployment of staff. It is anticipated that such a change will facilitate partnerships with other schools and colleges so as to increase the range of available courses and enable pupils' needs to be met more suitably.
32. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory. Many departments provide some subject-related activities. For example, the English department's activities to encourage reading, a science club, and trips to France organised by the modern languages department. Design and technology activities are enhanced by links with local companies. The history department is highly committed to field trips to enhance motivation, relationships and investigative skills. Current activities include visits to castles, museums and a biannual journey to the First World War battlefields in France and Belgium. The school provides a homework club to help pupils who might find it difficult to work at home, and most subjects provide additional revision sessions to support achievement in external examinations. Activities outside of the school day often secure lower participation than is hoped for. As a means of encouraging pupils to participate, the normal timetable is suspended, on one afternoon a fortnight, for Years 7 to 9. During this time, pupils choose from a range of activities including gardening, choir, sports and creating a website. This is an imaginative approach to enrichment, but it was not possible to judge the quality of activities because it did not occur during the inspection week. In its planning for improving the curriculum, the school is aiming to make it easier for pupils to take part in extra-curricular enrichment opportunities by bringing forward the end of the school day.

33. Pupils all have reasonable access to the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to improve their personal development and social, literacy and numeracy skills through intensive courses in Year 7 and especially in the 'nurture group'. The history department provides a less demanding, but worthwhile, certificate of achievement course for pupils whose first language is not English and who would find it difficult to meet the literary demands of a full GCSE course. The breadth of the physical education curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is too restricted to fully meet the needs of all pupils.
34. Some pupils with special educational needs have unsatisfactory access to the curriculum because they are regularly withdrawn from the same lessons, so continuity in the timetabled subject is erratic. Links between subject departments and special needs support vary in their effectiveness. Alternative courses to the school curriculum are available in Years 10 and 11 at a local college and Hope Centre. These provide work-related courses and work experience, which prepare pupils well for career development and work beyond school. The human development course meets a variety of pupils' special needs well. It builds up pupils' self-esteem and develops their problem-solving and social skills, responsibility and confidence, as well as preparing them for work. ICT access is very limited generally, but visually impaired pupils have good access to computers, which aids their achievement. The Early Bird breakfast club provides good social opportunities for some pupils.
35. Very few extra-curricular opportunities are targeted towards gifted and talented pupils. Exceptionally, in design and technology, Years 7 and 9 are involved in building robots to extend learning in the course to challenge the highest-attaining pupils. The school is planning to take advantage of 'Aim Higher' courses, provided by the local education authority, to extend opportunities for gifted pupils.
36. The provision of teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The school is significantly overstaffed and the curriculum has been planned to use existing expertise rather than to provide for the carefully-evaluated needs of pupils across the curriculum. The balance in expertise within the staff is inappropriate so that some teach outside their main subject. This has an adverse effect in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and particularly so in religious education - staffing is good in history and music. The range and expertise of support staff are satisfactory.
37. The quality of the accommodation is poor. The school is on a split site with a five minute walk between buildings. Pupils often have to change sites in between lessons. The movement between lessons allows truancy from lessons, smoking and antisocial behaviour. Although the school has provided travelling time between sites, a hard core of pupils are often late, delaying the start of lessons and impairing other pupils' learning. The upper site is soulless and unpleasant, causing pupils to feel under-valued and contributing to the poor ethos in the school. The English teaching rooms are located on three different floors, restricting support and cooperation amongst staff. The outside provision for physical education is unsatisfactory. The field, at the time of the inspection, was unusable and the hard play area is unsuitable. Since the last inspection, too little has been done to improve accommodation so as to provide a tolerable working environment for pupils and staff. The poor quality of displays does little to enhance the learning environment, with the exception of the learning resource centre and, conspicuously, the art and design department.
38. Learning resources are unsatisfactory. High staffing costs have limited the budget for these resources. Lack of an ICT infrastructure has resulted in a 'patch and mend', short-term approach. This affects not only school administration but also pupils' learning in ICT and its use across the curriculum. Resource planning has been poor due to a lack of detailed costings and an unfocused development plan. This is now being vigorously tackled by the new headteacher. Art and design has a good range of resources but resources are generally inadequate. The LRC is well-managed and useful, although some equipment is out-of-date. Good provision for visually impaired pupils includes books in Braille, and audio cassette books with access to players.

Care, guidance and support

The overall quality of care offered is unsatisfactory, mainly because of the adverse impact of poor accommodation on matters of welfare, health and safety. Support and guidance are not focused consistently on improving personal and academic achievement rapidly and are unsatisfactory. The school has begun to take pupils' views seriously but pupils are not yet involved enough in shaping the school's development. Improvement in the quality of care, since the last inspection, has been poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Supervision is not good enough to deal firmly with all instances of bullying, racism, rudeness, bad behaviour and loitering between lessons
- Pupils and their circumstances are well known to pastoral staff who deal effectively with problems such as illness and absence
- Recent improvements in assessment have not yet resulted in consistent use of procedures to help guide pupils towards better achievement
- Although the school has made strides recently in involving pupils in its life and decision-making, many still feel they have little real influence, partly because time with tutors is often wasted
- Arrangements to teach pupils about personal, social and health matters, including sex and drugs education, are poor and limit guidance given for making wise choices in adult life
- Induction is good so pupils settle quite quickly after joining the school

Commentary

39. The school has not ensured that all required policies and procedures for health and safety are in place, comprehensive, well understood and implemented in full. Staff do not always follow routines with due care to ensure that all pupils are safe and free from harm. Inspectors witnessed instances of name-calling, verbal abuse and racism, few of which resulted in a challenge or any decisive action. A positive staff presence at school entrances and on routes between buildings is lacking, not least because the site is so complex and pathways too narrow to patrol easily for orderly movement. As a result, pupils know they can, and too many do, dawdle on their way to school or lessons, smoke blatantly and get away with intimidating behaviour. When incidents were dealt with promptly and well, adults made it crystal clear to pupils why their comments were offensive or harmful. Too often, however, nothing is said, leaving offenders and witnesses with the impression that such abuse is condoned.
40. A good understanding of the challenges faced by pupils and their families, and effective teamwork, result in well-targeted help for those who need extra encouragement to come to school or to cope with everyday life. Pupils who are carers or who are looked after, receive sensitive support. The school takes great care to ensure arrangements for child protection are fully in place. It makes good efforts to welcome new pupils and settle them into school successfully.
41. Pupils feel encouraged when "if you don't understand something in a lesson (teachers) are happy to sit with you in their own time to go through things with you". However, support is inconsistent. The school recognises that it still has work to do to ensure that assessments of academic and personal achievement are accurate and used as effectively as possible to help pupils make better progress. It has not done enough to support and motivate girls, reduce their high level of exclusion and encourage enthusiasm for learning so they do better in school. The help that pupils receive with their work, based on teachers' knowledge of how well they are doing, is not specific enough to ensure that they know exactly what to do for better understanding and higher grades. As in reports sent home to parents, pupils are often told to 'try harder' or that they are 'too chatty', rather than being set specific

targets such as “try to answer more than one question orally” to help with taking a more active part in class.

42. Pupils welcome the recent opportunities to take part in the anti-bullying initiatives, ‘Youth Up Front’ and ‘Building Bridges’ projects, where their views are shared and can influence what happens in school or the wider community. Too many chances are lost to hear and value pupils’ ideas, for instance by poor use of tutor time and infrequent personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils do not listen well in lessons or hear one another’s ideas with respect because they have not been taught to do this to best effect. The lack of regular PSHE and citizenship lessons puts these pupils at a disadvantage because their immaturity, prejudices and low esteem cannot be overturned on the basis of occasional workshops or inconsistent tutoring and staff example. The help they have to make sensible choices about how to be happy and healthy adults, is not systematic enough.
43. The school provides satisfactory individual guidance for pupils who have special educational needs. Good links have been established with the local authority, and the local Connexions service is involved in placement for employment. In the specialist inclusion facility for the visually impaired, pupils are well looked after. As a result, they are well motivated and integrated.
44. Pupils with English as an additional language are appreciative of the support which they receive from teaching assistants. In addition to support with learning, the language TAs’ assistance has extended to helping whenever difficulties with other pupils arise as a result of their language difference or ethnicity.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are unsatisfactory. Community links are satisfactory and developing positively to help raise pupils’ aspirations and achievement. Links with other schools are satisfactory and help to ensure smooth transfer in and out of the school. Since the last inspection, partnerships have not improved enough but recent initiatives show signs of bringing about rapid change for the better.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is working hard to improve its partnership with parents having identified, correctly, that home-school links have not done enough to raise achievement
- Communication with parents is not good enough to ensure that they have a clear idea of what is expected of them and of their children, or to tell them clearly how well their children are doing
- Good efforts are under way to work positively with the local community to help raise pupils’ aspirations and achievement

Commentary

45. Parents completed fewer questionnaires than usual at the time of an inspection but indicated their disappointment with the school clearly in their written comments and at the meeting for parents. They are worried about poor behaviour, bullying and inadequate communication. Inspectors agree. A few parents feel that their complaints and suggestions have not always been taken seriously and are dealt with inefficiently. Procedures for dealing with complaints are not clear enough to ensure that parents feel their concerns have been heard. They do not know enough about school routines, the support available to parents or the work their children are doing, to give them more than token help. Many have no clear idea of how schools have changed since they were pupils and that schools now usually expect and welcome help from parents. Communication with parents is weak and has left them unclear, and at times dissatisfied, with what the school has done to support their children’s well-being and progress. Recently the school produced the first of a series of newsletters and started a ‘parents’ forum’. Both initiatives were planned to foster closer working relationships, now a priority for the school.

46. The school and the governing body have not taken enough care to ensure that parents are fully informed, as required, about how well their children are doing in all the subjects of the National Curriculum. Reports are not clear enough about the standards pupils reach and whether individual progress is good enough, given the child's abilities and starting point. Steps have already been taken to improve assessment and reporting procedures. Parents have had little guidance on what is taught subject by subject, expectations of homework, or what 'authorised absence' means. The school has recognised some of these deficiencies recently, for instance the importance of sharing information clearly about what is covered in the curriculum, year by year, so is working hard to produce helpful outlines for parents.
47. The new headteacher is passionate about working with and for the local community to raise local people's feelings of self worth, aspirations and skills. So the school has begun to build partnerships, particularly through the Hope Centre whose ethos reflects hers: "in the heart of the community with the community at heart". Pupils have already been involved there in enrichment activities such as sport and drama, the Taiko to Achievement project, 'Mr Memory' sessions for the gifted and talented, and work experience. Community links are being used helpfully to plan a pupil parliament. It is too soon to see the impact of these partnerships but strong foundations are already firmly in place.
48. The school has made good links with the Citizens Advice Bureau which have helped with the provision of interpreters for meetings with parents of pupils with English as an additional language.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the new headteacher is already proving effective. The quality of leadership by the senior staff and others with leadership responsibilities is unsatisfactory. Management is ineffective. The effectiveness of governors since the last inspection has been poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new headteacher is an energetic leader with a rigorous focus on improvement
- Other senior leaders lack the expertise to support the headteacher effectively
- Middle management, while improving, has yet to impact on standards
- Performance management and staff development are weak
- Governors' contribution to the running of the school has been poor but is improving
- Financial management is poor
- Leadership in art, history and modern foreign languages is good

Commentary

49. The headteacher, new in post in September, is a good leader. Within a very short time she accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has shown great determination in laying the foundations to tackle the many problems the school faces. Her vision for the development of the school is acute and appropriate. She is implementing a series of initiatives to strengthen teaching and learning. These include a drive to make staff more accountable for their performance, a more rigorous emphasis on monitoring and evaluation and a substantial programme to help them improve the quality of their teaching. New, sharper job descriptions have been drawn up, linked to specific targets and the wide-ranging school development plan. Most departments were subjected to stringent review in the autumn, enabling staff to gain greater awareness of their performance and the steps needed to improve it. External consultants have been working to this end with weaker departments. The headteacher enjoys the support of increasing numbers of colleagues and pupils and is starting to forge partnerships with parents and the wider community to raise expectations.

50. The headteacher maintains a conspicuous presence in the school, asserting the school's values and expectations. She already knows very many pupils by name, challenges them robustly over lateness, deficiencies in uniform and behaviour. She is quick to acknowledge merit. By her commitment and energy, she provides an excellent role model for colleagues.
51. The leadership team mainly comprises members of staff with long service in the school. Until very recently, these staff have exercised their responsibilities with little training or preparation for their demanding roles. Moreover, as accountability has been limited, line management has been ineffective, resulting in a waste of time and effort through duplication. Most leaders share the headteacher's commitment towards improvement, but have only just begun to develop the vision and strength to support her fully. A high proportion of staff have been in the school for the duration of their careers and have too little knowledge of working practices elsewhere.
52. Year leaders (student standards directors) are starting to improve their teamwork by meeting more regularly and purposefully. They were previously inadequately prepared and supported for their role and their effectiveness is still inconsistent. Despite their title, too much of their work is focused on purely routine pastoral concerns, rather than on pupils' achievement. Between them, they coordinate the school's citizenship provision, but there is little shared awareness of what the subject is.
53. Leadership in art and design and history has very good aspects which the headteacher is keen to use to raise standards in other subjects. Leadership is very good in art and good in history and modern foreign languages. It is unsatisfactory in ICT and religious education, and poor in mathematics, design and technology, physical education and citizenship. The head has already had a significant impact in improving management of some subjects. Currently, management is very good in art and design and good in history. It is unsatisfactory in mathematics, ICT, geography, and poor in physical education and citizenship. Co-ordination of the development of literacy and the use of number across the curriculum has been poor, and the school has made an inadequate response to national strategies introduced since the last inspection to promote these.
54. Management of special educational needs is unsatisfactory because the needs of individual pupils are not reflected in their targets and what is organised for them in subjects across the curriculum. The leadership and management of provision for pupils with English as an additional language are unsatisfactory. The numbers of pupils with English as an additional language has increased from three to twenty seven in two years. Twelve pupils were admitted in September 2004. Assessment of pupils' language needs and progress has been conducted by a teaching assistant who has had little training in this role. As a result, the information which is fed through to subject teachers about the needs, background and strategies for the individual pupil is of a poor quality. Significant improvements are now in hand. The school is beginning to tackle this issue through a recent appointment at assistant head level. Monitoring of the needs of gifted and talented pupils has been unsatisfactory, but this is improving.
55. Performance management is poor. Roles, responsibilities, and methods of evaluating staff performance have been imprecise. Professional development has not been sufficiently linked to the school development plan. Until the implementation of new initiatives from the headteacher, which have not yet had time to work fully through the system, teachers have not been required to evaluate critically their work and reflect on how well they discharge their duties. This has been exacerbated by limited funding and low expectations. As a result, many staff lack essential skills, such as effective lesson planning. The school induction programme for newly qualified teachers and new colleagues lacks an effective role-model and direction.
56. Financial management is poor but new leadership is effecting significant improvement. The 2004 / 2005 budget was set without sufficient consultation with subject departments and without reference to school development priorities. The Governors were not sufficiently

involved in the setting or agreeing of the budget and freely admit that their role was one of 'rubber stamping' rather than challenging or questioning. Between April and August 2004, budget monitoring meetings were held infrequently and were not attended by any governors. Benchmarking information from the local education authority was not used in setting the school's budget and the governing body was not aware of the availability of this information. Significantly, the budget allocation for staffing was unrealistically high, resulting in an allocation for resources that was very low in comparison with similar schools.

57. New leadership is now tackling the deficiencies in financial management and significant improvements are in place to enable the realistic and informative setting of the 2005 / 2006 budget. Governors now receive regular and detailed reports on spending, and are better informed and more actively involved in the financial management of the school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,623,815	Balance from previous year	121,456
Total expenditure	3,689,755	Balance carried forward to the next	55,516
Expenditure per pupil	3,867.67		

58. The governors have significantly failed in their duties since the last inspection. They have been unaware of their responsibilities. Therefore, they have not held the school to account rigorously. Weaknesses identified in the last report have not been tackled. Results have not been analysed with understanding, and the headteacher has not been held to account. Some elements of the National Curriculum are still not in place, with deficiencies of provision remaining in mathematics, ICT, religious education, design and technology, physical education and citizenship. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship. The governors, many of whom are recent appointees, are now more questioning and challenging and they are mindful of their responsibilities, with regular meetings and supportive committees. They are still not critical or robust enough in holding the school to account.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning

59. Provision for work related learning is unsatisfactory. All pupils have a week of work experience in Year 10 or 11. Pupils are responsible for organising their own placements, which are then checked by Staffordshire Partnership to ensure that they meet health and safety requirements. This means that the range of employment opportunities experienced by pupils is insufficient because it is limited to the local area. Pupils are adequately prepared for their work experience but there is little evidence that there is significant follow up. The feedback from both pupils and employees is that the impact of work experience is a positive one and that it represents an effective learning experience.
60. At the moment, the programme for careers education is not fully in place and lacks coherence. As a result, learning about work is insufficiently developed. The school has satisfactory links with Connexions who both interview pupils and offer drop-in sessions. As a result of the good support of the school, the number of pupils failing to enter employment or to go on to further training has fallen greatly and is below the average for Stoke-on-Trent. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 have to study an accredited vocational course and therefore have lessons which relate to the world of work. As part of these courses visits are made to local businesses, such as JCB and Alton Towers. These expand pupil's experience of the workplace. The standards attained in these courses are, however, variable.

61. Leadership and management have been unsatisfactory. No evaluation of the overall provision has been undertaken, nor are there any methodical means of assessing pupils' work or evaluating the impact of what is provided. In addition, work-related learning is not built into the curriculum of most other subjects. A new management structure is now in place and the new draft policy fulfils all the statutory requirements and represents an effective way forward.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is satisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good plans for developing the effectiveness of English teaching are being introduced by the new subject management
- Year 11 boys' attainment in English language in 2004 was higher than the national average
- Results in 2004 for Year 9 at Level 6 reached the national average
- The scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 does not contain enough detail to enable planning to raise attainment sufficiently
- Speaking and listening skills are not assessed or developed enough
- Pupils' oral skills are not developed enough in lessons

Commentary

Examination results

62. Results in Year 9 tests in 2003, the last year for which confirmed results are available, were below the national average but in line with the average of similar schools. Results were better in 2004, particularly for higher-attaining pupils at Level 6 and above. Boys exceeded the national average. Results in GCSE English language in 2004 were below average. Results in English literature were well below average.

Standards and achievement

63. Pupils enter the school with below-average standards. Standards in writing are below expectation. Pupils' skills in writing at length are underdeveloped. The speaking and listening skills of pupils in all years and of all abilities are poor. Pupils rarely speak at length in class in front of others, and lack the skills to engage in discussion. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory because of the additional support which they receive from teaching assistants and their English teachers. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are not achieving as well as they might because teachers do not plan sufficiently well to involve them fully in lessons.

Teaching and learning

64. The best lessons are planned to challenge pupils, and are taught with pace, using carefully chosen resources. Teachers expect and plan for late arrival, caused by site problems and some pupils' tardiness, so that pupils enter a working atmosphere. Teachers sometimes use oral work very effectively to engage pupils in understanding characters and situations in literature. This was seen in work on *'Macbeth'*, in a Year 9 paired role-play between Macbeth and Banquo's murderer, and when Year 10 read extracts of the play *'Journey's End'* in pairs and then discussed the text. In the few very good or excellent lessons, teachers set high expectations and pupils responded very positively to the challenges they received and their learning was very effective. This was the case in

a group of Year 10 boys who were studying the characters in '*Journey's End*'. They were responsive to perceptive questioning and produced writing of high quality on inferences drawn on the nature of Stanhope's character. At all levels and in all years, many pupils are reluctant to contribute orally. Whole-class question-and-answer sessions are used but are generally they are not well-managed, because answers tend to be taken from volunteers and many pupils are not actively involved. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, it was because lack of teaching and subject expertise affected the planning and pace of lessons. Many pupils lack enthusiasm for learning and do not find it easy to work independently in lessons. They rely heavily on teacher support, and are often reluctant or unwilling to move forward without it.

65. Assessment is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Most books are marked regularly. Pupils are told the National Curriculum level at which they are working and are given targets for development which are related to the next level. However, this is not happening consistently enough. Assessment is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Peer-assessment and self-assessment are having a good effect on learning. Reading and writing are regularly assessed and assessment folders are well kept, but there is little evidence of assessment of speaking and listening skills in Years 7 to 9. ICT is too little used in lessons because of a shortage of resources and difficulties of access. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons where the assistant's role has been carefully planned.

Leadership and management

66. Leadership is aware of the department's strengths and areas for development and has a firm understanding of how the team needs to develop. At present, good practice exists in the department but it is not sufficiently widespread. The development plan is focused on raising attainment at both key stages. Schemes of work have been updated and further review is planned to include more detail to give greater support to members of the department. Examination data is carefully analysed and this is beginning to have a beneficial impact on the department's planning. Regular monitoring and evaluation have been introduced since September. Teachers are beginning to plan development opportunities together, for example on new literature texts, to share good practice and raise overall teaching standards. Results have improved since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

67. Standards of literacy in all years are poor. The school's comprehensive literacy policy has appropriate aims and recommendations for good practice and includes a marking for literacy policy, but the implementation of the policy is not yet monitored by the school's management and practice is inconsistent. Overall, the development of literacy throughout the school is poor. A satisfactory start was made to introduce the National Literacy Strategy with a whole-staff training day in 2001, but the follow-up has been inadequate. Good provision for developing writing and speaking skills are apparent in history and art. In history, the department has focused productively on extended writing and developing analytical skills. In art and design, the correct use of key words is a planned priority. In other departments, literacy is not a sufficient concern in lesson planning. Little emphasis is placed on speaking and listening skills and few opportunities occur for extended writing. A worthwhile recent innovation is the provision of carefully structured additional assistance for Year 7 pupils with poor literacy skills. This beneficial support is extended into Year 8. The literacy coordinator runs a weekly 'Read It Club' to foster the enjoyment of reading.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

French is taught to all pupils in Years 7 to 9. No second foreign language is offered. GCSE French is an optional subject in Years 10 and 11 and is taken by a small number of pupils. A small group of four pupils is studying GCSE Spanish in Year 11 but this was not inspected.

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and communicate their enthusiasm for the language well to pupils
- French is used effectively by the teacher to encourage accurate learning in most lessons
- Lack of pace and an over-reliance on writing in many lessons means pupils' interest is not sustained enough
- Assessment of pupils' work and progress is rigorous and helpful to pupils

Commentary

Examination results

68. In 2004, GCSE results were average. A much smaller percentage of the year group studied a foreign language than was nationally the case. Results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were average.

Standards and achievement

69. By the end of Year 9, pupils have well-developed listening skills and a satisfactory range of vocabulary. They are starting to use a variety of tenses with some accuracy but their spoken French is limited mainly to simple sentences. Pupils' writing skills are stronger and reflect the emphasis given to this aspect in many lessons. Achievement overall in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. However, some higher-attaining pupils are achieving well and making good progress. By the end of Year 11 standards are average among the small number of pupils following the GCSE course. They embark on the course with average levels of attainment and their achievement is satisfactory. Reading and listening skills are well developed and pupils use a variety of tenses with accuracy and understanding. However, pupils have a very limited range of vocabulary, particularly, in Year 10, and this limits their ability to speak French with fluency or confidence.

Teaching and learning

70. Both teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In Years 7 to 9, they are satisfactory, but good in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use French well in most lessons to promote good listening skills and present stimulating role models. Lessons are well planned but too often lack pace to keep the pupils motivated and interested for the full hour, with a consequently limiting effect on their learning. Pupils' oral skills in Years 7 to 9 are under-developed because they receive few opportunities to express themselves independently and creatively in French. In too many lessons, an over-emphasis on written exercises was observed at the expense of oral work. Teaching and learning are starting to benefit from the use of ICT. An electronic whiteboard was seen being used effectively to capture the pupils' interest and imagination. Pupils' written work is marked regularly and teachers' comments are useful in informing pupils of what they need to do to improve. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' work is related well to National Curriculum levels of attainment and, in Years 10 and 11, pupils are prepared well for the GCSE and know what they need to do to achieve the best grade of which they are capable.

Leadership and management

71. The good leadership is focused on raising levels of achievement. Team work is promoted well and worthwhile plans for further development are being formed. Leadership presents a good role model for the colleagues. Management is satisfactory. Departmental documents, such as the handbook, policies and schemes of work, are thorough and useful working documents. Data is used well to analyse results and to track pupils' progress. Resources are managed efficiently. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not yet sufficiently rigorous to identify areas of weakness or to allow the sharing of good practice. Since the last inspection, GCSE results have been maintained, but the number of pupils studying French in Years 10 and 11 has decreased significantly. Teachers now use French more consistently in most lessons. Assessment of pupils' work and progress has improved significantly and is now a strong feature. The effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning remain issues for further development.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is poor.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Poor
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main weaknesses

- The good practice outlined in the National Strategy has not had enough impact on the quality of provision
- Pupils do not have the opportunity to study the full breadth of the National Curriculum because they rarely have opportunities to carry out investigative tasks
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are not high enough
- The indifferent attitudes of some pupils considerably hinders the rate of progress of the majority and lowers their level of achievement
- Pupils receive too little constructive feedback to help them improve their work
- The use of mathematics to enhance attainment and achievement in other subjects has not been coordinated

Commentary

Examination results

72. In national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003, the last year for which confirmed results are available, results were well below the national average, compared with all schools and with similar schools. Results were similar in 2004. Results have improved over the last three years and the attainment of the most able pupils is now in line with that of similar schools. GCSE results in 2004 were below average, and have remained so since the last inspection. Overall, boys' attainment was higher than girls' in both GCSE and Year 9 tests. No significant difference is evident in the performance of different ethnic groups.

Standards and achievement

73. Standards are well below national averages and the majority of pupils underachieve in all year groups. The standards these pupils reach in numeracy are low and they show a lack of confidence when working with fractions, decimals and percentages. The achievement of the

ablest pupils and those with special educational needs is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. By Year 9, pupils identified by the school as being mathematically gifted reach or exceed national averages in their command of algebraic ideas and skills. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to other pupils.

Teaching and learning

74. In Years 7 to 9, the department does not routinely set investigative tasks and is therefore not fulfilling National Curriculum requirements. Investigative tasks are set only if pupils complete other work early. Teachers' understanding of statutory requirements and lesson planning are unsatisfactory. Learning is almost totally text-based and ICT and other practical resources are used too little to enhance learning. Pupils do not improve their literacy enough through mathematics. The frequent inappropriate expectations and narrow range of teaching and learning methods and limited resources result in a dull diet. As a result, some pupils exhibit unsatisfactory attitudes which hinder their learning. A few pupils show open dislike for the subject and learn little. The quality of marking varies considerably and is unsatisfactory. Assessment is concerned too much with improving presentation and productivity rather than the quality of work. Pupils receive too little constructive feedback on their work to help them raise their achievement and meet their target levels. In Years 10 and 11, the completion of GCSE coursework does not include any on-going evaluation made by teachers. Pupils have too few opportunities to work independently. In Years 7 to 9, the use of non-specialist and support staff, to teach the lowest-ability groups and individual pupils, has been effective. The beginning of the present school year saw a significant change in staff. Three-quarters of the staff has changed in the last four years. The lack of continuity in staffing has had a detrimental affect on pupils' attitudes and progress in Years 10 and 11.

Leadership and management

75. Despite some recent improvements, the current impact of leadership is poor. The development plan now reflects the senior leadership team's vision for the school. Teaching and learning have been monitored and evaluated. New planning procedures, such as those in place for preparing tests and half termly learning objectives, reflect the new vision for the school. Insufficient improvement is yet apparent, however, in learning and achievement. The department does not fully reflect the good practice contained in the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. Test data is used to track pupils' progress and set targets, but targets set for the lower- and average-attaining pupils are too low. The use made of assessment to prepare lessons that will meet pupils' learning needs varies considerably and is unsatisfactory overall. Improvement since the last inspection has been poor although planning and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have recently improved. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 has declined. ICT is not used enough to enhance pupils' learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

76. Pupils' competency in mathematics is poor and its improvement is not being supported in other subjects. The coordination and development of mathematics, to enhance the provision of other subjects, is unsatisfactory. There is no whole-school numeracy policy and during the inspection only three subjects, art and design, human development and geography, were found to use mathematics to enhance achievement. Elsewhere, including subjects such as design and technology where opportunities to use mathematics are plentiful, the development and use of mathematics were unsatisfactory.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since last inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Current standards are an improvement on standards indicated by recent examination performance
- The range of teaching and learning styles has been increased but this has not yet led to satisfactory standards of teaching and learning
- Assessment practices are improving, but do not yet led to consistently challenging work
- Monitoring of teaching and learning has recently been introduced to promote higher standards
- There is a strong core of good, or very good teaching in the department

Commentary

Examination results

77. Results in the end of Year 9 tests were below average in 2003, the last year for which confirmed results are available, and were below those of similar schools. Results in 2004 were similar. The performance of girls and boys was similar. GCSE results were significantly below average and below those of similar schools. Girls did less well than boys. Pupils' results in science were significantly lower than those in most of their other subjects.

Standards and achievement

78. Standards in Year 9 are below average, for example in terms of pupils' understanding of pressure, moments and the force of gravity. Achievement by all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented is unsatisfactory. Standards in Year 11 are below average, which is an improvement on standards indicated by recent examination performance. This was demonstrated in terms, for example, of pupils' understanding of the greenhouse effect, refraction of light and use of the wave equation relating velocity of a wave to the frequency and wavelength.

Teaching and learning

79. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall and range from very good to poor. As a result, achievement is unsatisfactory. In the good and very good teaching, teachers make learning objectives clear and pupils' interest is stimulated by interesting starter activities. The lessons are conducted at a good pace, often with the use of clear, demanding time-scales. Teachers have high expectations and a suitable range of activities, well-matched to the needs of the pupils, is used to sustain pupils' learning. Lessons end well with effective consolidation of key learning points. In a very good lesson, which promoted very good learning in a Year 9 class, the starter activity stimulated pupils' curiosity by making them think what they knew about metals. Good questioning made them reflect upon the issue of reactivity of metals. Very good demonstrations showed the differences in the reactivity of the alkali metals. Efficiently organised practical work allowed pupils to investigate different reactions of metals with acids, and learning was reinforced effectively through a card-sorting activity. A relevant homework was set that extended pupils' understanding of this topic. Very good use is made of model-making in some lessons to clarify abstract concepts such as kinetic theory, and some lessons place a good emphasis upon thinking skills.
80. In unsatisfactory lessons, teachers fail to stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm and engage them actively in their learning. In consequence, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory. Teaching methods are ineffective and the lessons lack pace, often because of a lack of clear time-scales. Teacher explanation is not always clear, sometimes because suitable models or diagrams are not used to exemplify important ideas. At the end of lessons, key learning points are not reviewed and reinforced well. As a result, pupils' show insufficient interest in learning and make insufficient progress, resulting in unsatisfactory achievement. Insufficient use is made of computers because of a lack of resources. The

amount of extended writing has recently been increased, to check pupils' understanding in greater depth, but there is too little use of questioning to extend and check understanding. Science makes too little contribution to developing pupils' literacy. Assessment procedures have been modified recently to ensure greater accuracy. Work is marked regularly and some pupils are made aware of the specific steps they need to take to improve, but this does not happen consistently enough. Parents are informed if pupils are underachieving or achieving particularly well. Pupils know their target grades, but there are no individual progress targets for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Assessment is not yet used to ensure high levels of challenge in all lessons.

Leadership and management

81. Leadership and management are now satisfactory because some worthwhile developments have recently been introduced. Monitoring of teaching and learning now takes place, with constructive feedback to teachers. Teachers are now observing one another's lessons to promote better standards of teaching and the sharing of good practice. New schemes of work are being developed, but are not yet completed for all courses with the level of detail required to give good guidance to staff. A scrutiny of written work indicates some recent improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. A new course, in applied science, has been introduced in Year 10. Where this is well taught, pupils are responding well. It is planned to introduce the separate sciences next year for higher-attaining pupils. Results in the end of Year 9 tests have improved since the last inspection but GCSE results have remained well below average. Insufficient technician support is provided for a department of this size.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory. Provision for ICT across the curriculum is poor.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are currently doing well on the applied GCSE course
- The planning and teaching of lessons lack excitement and fail to capture pupils' interest
- Pupils have too little understanding of the relevance of computers to real life situations
- Unsatisfactory behaviour is not always effectively dealt with, which restricts learning

Commentary

Examination results

82. The results of teacher assessments, at the end of Year 9 in 2004, were below those reported nationally. In the full course GCSE examination in 2004, results were below the national average. In the short course GCSE examination, almost all candidates passed. In the 2004 applied GCSE examination, all candidates passed, but too few were entered for meaningful national comparisons to be made.

Standards and achievement

83. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with limited knowledge but their achievement from this low starting point is satisfactory. Pupils have sound knowledge of presenting information Pupils' poor literacy skills are a barrier to the fuller understanding of many of the complexities of ICT. Their skills in word processing and planning documents are satisfactory. Their skills in using computers for mathematical calculations are unsatisfactory. Pupils' overall knowledge of how and where ICT might be usefully applied is limited. Current standards of pupils studying the applied GCSE course are below average. Pupils have some understanding of the use of ICT in society and have explored its advantages and disadvantages. They have some understanding of data handling. In Years 10 and 11, pupils know about retrieving information but only a few can demonstrate the procedure.

Teaching and learning

84. Teaching and learning of ICT as a separate subject are satisfactory. Teachers have good specialist skills. Pupils' self-assessment is contributing to their progress by encouraging them to accept responsibility for their work. Teachers work hard to keep pupils on task, but pupils are not enthusiastic about the subject and do not see the point of many of the topics they are studying. Marking is inconsistent and pupils are unsure exactly how to improve. Starter activities are not always linked to the main focus of the lesson and are frequently interrupted by the late arrival of pupils, which reduces the learning. The majority of lessons seen during the inspection lacked excitement. Many of the lessons rely too much on worksheets which fail to capture pupils' interest or promote independent learning. Pupils are generally compliant, but the dull menu of lessons and low expectations lead to an indifferent attitude from pupils and some unsatisfactory behaviour. The inadequate focus on inspiring pupils to learn successfully prevents teachers from dealing effectively with unsatisfactory behaviour at times, and this restricts pupils' learning.

Leadership and management

85. Leadership has a vision for the future developments of the subject. The organisation and management of current courses are satisfactory. However, teaching and learning have not been monitored, which has resulted in inconsistent provision and development. Restricted access to the Internet limits pupils' development of independent research. The National Strategy for ICT has been introduced but is not as yet sufficiently embedded into the schemes of work or practice.

Information communication technology across the curriculum

86. No examples of particularly effective use of ICT across the curriculum were observed. Pupils' competence in ICT across the curriculum is poor. Although use is included in the schemes of work in some subjects, the development of pupils' skills is insufficient to meet statutory requirements and to support pupils learning adequately. This results from a lack of investment in the past to develop the use of ICT. Opportunities are particularly poor on the upper site. This is now recognised by the school, and until the new accommodation is ready, interim arrangements have been made to ensure that all rooms are fitted with at least one network point. However, most subjects lack the appropriate equipment and software for using ICT regularly. This means that opportunities for independent research are very limited. In some subjects, use is hindered by the lack of access to the computer suites.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Well below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory

Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since last inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning styles are not varied enough to promote enthusiastic learning
- Despite recent improvements, leadership has not secured sufficient improvement since the last inspection
- Unsatisfactory staffing and accommodation are barriers to increasing pupils' achievement

Commentary

Examination results

87. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were average in 2004. The evidence from the work of current pupils indicates that these assessments overestimated standards. The 2004 GCSE results were below average with a below-average proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades.

Standards and achievement

88. Pupils enter the school with below average standards in geography. By Year 9, these decline to well below average. Pupils generally show a satisfactory understanding of the processes that they learn about. They can, for example, explain what coastal erosion is and show a basic understanding of the way in which the action of the sea affects the shape and nature of coastlines. Many write lucidly but in too little detail. Standards improve to below average in Years 10 and 11. Few pupils work at the highest levels. Most pupils know how the nature and extent of shopping and leisure facilities differ in settlements of different size, but few can explain fully why this is so.

Teaching and learning

89. In the best lessons, learning objectives are made clear so that pupils know what they have to achieve. In these lessons, teachers help pupils to maintain their concentration and the pace of work by stipulating time limits and intervening when necessary. In many lessons, teaching is adequate but shows limited variety and imagination. This fails to retain pupils' interest. In these lessons, although most pupils' attitudes are satisfactory, their concentration and pace of work are not sustained. Response is usually compliant, but seldom enthusiastic enough to generate improved standards. Often, teachers do not ensure that all pupils are paying attention, or working as hard as they should be. In unsatisfactory lessons, tasks are often too difficult, and pupils respond by becoming uncooperative. As a result, teaching becomes more concerned with containing behaviour than promoting achievement. In Years 7 to 9, much of the teaching is by non-specialist staff, which often reduces the thoroughness of learning. Although teachers often know about the individual needs of their pupils, including those with special needs and the higher-attaining, planning often fails to identify activities and resources that will meet these needs effectively. Learning is better in Years 10 and 11 because pupils have chosen to study geography and their attitudes are more positive.

Leadership and management

90. The school has recently conducted a rigorous departmental evaluation. An effective commitment to providing support and guidance to the department includes the use of outside consultants. This has led to recent improvements in the management of the subject and this is now satisfactory. The department's handbook has been revised, the scheme of

work has been updated and a movement towards the systematic monitoring of teaching has been undertaken, although the impact of these developments have not yet fully impacted on teaching and learning. Leadership supports the school's current aims for development but has done little to develop and improve teaching since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes have deteriorated and, in Years 7 to 9, so have teaching and learning. GCSE results are lower. Assessment procedures do not provide accurate and consistent guidance to help pupils improve their work. Opportunities to use computers and undertake fieldwork investigation remain unsatisfactory. The high proportion of non-specialist teaching makes it difficult to lead and develop geography effectively, and the scattered nature of the accommodation is not conducive to the sharing of good practice or the development of a positive identity for the subject.

History

Provision in history is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Progress since last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes contribute well to their achievement
- Well planned, interesting lessons and teachers' clear expectations secure a positive response from pupils and lead to good achievement
- Energetic, imaginative leadership has ensured good improvement in the subject
- History makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy and understanding of citizenship
- Pupils do not use computers enough to develop their learning

Commentary

Examination results

91. In 2004, the results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were average. GCSE results were below average, but with an above-average proportion of pupils gaining at least a grade G. Most pupils gained their target grades. A larger proportion of pupils take history than in most schools, including some who do not have great aptitude for the subject, but who still succeed in it.

Standards and achievement

92. Pupils enter the school with below-average standards in history. By Year 9, they have achieved well and reach average standards. Pupils have average levels of knowledge about the development of the factory system during the Industrial Revolution and most understand its impact on the lives of workers. Standards in writing improve well. They are significantly higher in Year 9 than earlier years, and many pupils produce well-written, detailed, essays. Pupils in the current Year 11 are abler than those who took the examination in 2004. They are continuing to achieve well and maintaining standards at the improved level that they reached in Year 9. Most pupils identify and explain changes when comparing living conditions in 1900 with the present day. They competently refer to sources to draw conclusions about, for example, the level of poverty in the 1930's. Teachers use individual education plans to provide appropriately for pupils with special educational needs, and these pupils achieve well.

Teaching and learning

93. Most lessons are effectively planned to ensure that all pupils use time well for learning. The focus on a mix of lively activities that capture and hold pupils' attention and give them every chance of success makes all the difference to how well they learn. Good attention is given to planning to meet the specific needs of pupils over the whole range of ability and need. In a few lessons, this is handled less effectively when, for example, directed questions are not used to ensure that all pupils take part in discussions. Teachers plan interesting and varied activities to ensure that lessons move on briskly and they make their expectations clear to pupils. Pupils respond well and relationships and behaviour are usually conducive to good learning. The strong support given to pupils to develop their writing skills has a significant

impact upon the improvement that pupils make in these, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Occasionally, teachers do too much for pupils by providing information that they should be finding out for themselves, so reducing challenge and opportunities to practise research skills.

Leadership and management

94. Leadership is characterised by a very clear vision for the development of the subject. Leadership is energetic and imaginative in pursuing improvement. This is shown, for example, in the effective development of assessment as an integral part of learning. Assessment strongly guides pupils on how to improve and contributes to their skills by involving them in evaluating their own and other pupils' work. There is a strong commitment, in planning, to the development of literacy and an awareness of citizenship. The contribution to developing numeracy is a relative weakness. Documentation is well organised, and monitoring and evaluation of teaching, which were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, are now systematic. Pupils' attitudes and achievement are better now than at the time of the last inspection. It is not possible to implement fully the department's improved plans for the use of ICT because of inadequate access to computers.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since last inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Insufficient specialist teachers are available to provide all pupils with an effective learning experience in religious education
- Too little time is provided for studying the short course GCSE in Year 11
- The number of pupils achieving grades A* to C in the short course GCSE religious education, is below national average
- The assessment of pupils' work is improving

Commentary

Examination results

95. The number of pupils achieving grades A* to C is below the national average and has declined from 2003. However, the number of pupils achieving grades A* to G is average. A few pupils achieve A* and A grades.

Standards and achievement

96. Pupils achieve better in Years 7 to 9 than they do in Years 10 and 11 partly because too little time is given to religious education in Year 11. Pupils enter the school with a varied experience of religious education but, by the end of the year, they have a sound understanding of the meaning of faith and the value of worship. By the end of Year 9, pupils have gained a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of Buddhism, Judaism and Islam as well as of the Christian faith. Pupils understand the origins of the Qur'an and its significance to Muslims and they make perceptive comparisons with the significance of the Bible to Christians. All pupils are entered for the short course GCSE examination in either

Year 10 or 11, but pupils who take the examination in Year 11 have inadequate time to prepare for the examination. Because these pupils have not studied religious education in Year 10, they begin the course with negative attitudes. They do not see the relevance of religious education for them. As a result, standards are low in Year 11.

Teaching and learning

97. Examples of very good teaching were seen in Years 7 to 9. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. In the better lessons, teachers used a good range of resources to stimulate interest. Teaching, generally, was over-directed, with little investigative or independent research work. Too often pupils were required to be passive learners. Group work was not usually effective as pupils' discussion skills are poorly developed. The less successful lessons were characterised by inappropriate teaching strategies, which did not challenge or engage the pupils enough. These lessons were taught mainly by non-specialist teachers who lack the subject knowledge and subject-specific skills to ensure productive learning experiences. Assessment methods have improved this year and the department is now starting to use attainment levels contained in the locally agreed syllabus. Assessment is not yet implemented consistently across the department, nor is it used to guide planning sufficiently. Marking is thorough and informative, with positive comments to encourage pupils. However, marking does not tell pupils why a piece of work is good or what they need to do to improve it. Little evidence of ICT was seen, but many pupils use word processing to produce their assessment assignments. Overall teaching does too little to counteract the negative attitudes that older pupils display towards religious education.

Leadership and management

98. Religious education is satisfactorily managed on a day-to-day basis. Leadership is unsatisfactory because too little progress has been made in bringing about the required improvements identified in the previous inspection. The school now recognises that religious education has gone through a period of stagnation and has identified what needs to be done to improve. The subject leader, who is the only subject specialist, has no opportunity to discuss the work or to share responsibility. A lack of department meetings means that opportunities to share good practice or to provide support for the non-specialist teachers occur only informally. This is a significant barrier to achievement. The new schemes of work provide a good starting point for improving teaching and learning, but they identify too few opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and for the use of ICT.
99. Accommodation is poor and does not provide a sufficiently stimulating environment for the subject to appear valued. Some worthwhile visits to local churches, a mosque and a synagogue have been used to expand pupils' understanding of the significance of places of worship. The department has developed good links with a local primary school. For several years, a programme developed by older Muslim pupils called "My Asian neighbour", has been presented to pupils in the junior school.
100. Since the last inspection, everyone now follows a course of religious education in Years 10 or 11. The amount of time allocated in Year 11 does not meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. A greater use of artefacts, Bibles, and videos is made, but the issue of non-specialist teachers teaching religious education has still not been resolved.

TECHNOLOGY

Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study control systems, food, graphics, resistant materials, and textiles. In Years 10 and 11 pupils study applied GCSE engineering and manufacturing, GCSE control systems or home economics.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is unsatisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership	Poor	

Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The schemes of work, resources and levels of expertise available do not provide appropriate means of enabling pupils to reach the standards expected at the end of Years 9 and 11
- Information from assessment is not used well enough to guide lesson planning
- Limited ICT resources restrict important aspects of design work
- Exemplar materials and homework are not used effectively to set high standards and motivate pupils
- Some good use is made of visits and competitions to encourage pupils

Commentary

Examination results

101. Results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, in 2004, were in line with those reported nationally. However, assessments have not been securely based on the requirements of the National Curriculum and therefore they are unreliable. GCSE results, in 2004, were significantly below the national average. A much smaller proportion of pupils enter examinations in this subject area than nationally. Girls, who mainly study home economics, do better than boys.

Standards and achievement

102. Pupils' experiences in technology when they come to the school are below average. Achievement is poor because planning, teaching and assessment do not meet the National Curriculum requirements for the subject. In Years 7 to 9, some elements of the course are taught through the art curriculum and this is significantly hindering pupils' understanding of designing and making products. In Years 7 to 9, the practical work has recently improved and the highest-attaining pupils are now approaching average standards. In Years 10 and 11, the standards of practical work in the applied engineering course are above average because practical skills are taught well. The standard of design work is well below average in all other areas of the subject because of inadequate attention to developing creativity and use of the designing processes. Current Year 11 pupils demonstrate poor standards in design work. Insufficient access to computers is a barrier to satisfactory achievement.

Teaching and learning

103. Although teaching is unsatisfactory overall, some satisfactory teaching was seen, where lessons were well prepared, had clear objectives and pupils used suitable resources. Lessons, as a rule, require too little of pupils and excessively teacher dominated. As a result, pupils are passive and reluctant to take the initiative. Teachers make too little use of exemplar material to stimulate pupils' interest and encourage them to design and make products. Teachers have good knowledge of the theory aspects of the subject but fail to develop pupils' skills in designing. Some pupils' poor attendance affects the continuity and effectiveness of their learning. The food technology programmes in Years 7 to 9 include a lot of dull theory work. Homework is not set regularly enough to extend the learning. In Years 10 and 11, some effective use is made of visits and competitions to generate interest in the subject and support learning. However, teachers do not routinely provide enough guidance or examples of good practice to assist and motivate pupils. Some tasks have little relevance to the lives of young people. Evaluative thinking is not being developed sufficiently. Assessment and marking are not linked accurately to the National Curriculum to provide suitably structured guidance for pupils.

Leadership and management

104. A combined art and design, and design and technology faculty means that the development of design and technology is not pursued single-mindedly. However, a willingness to improve provision is evident. Resources and documentation are well organised. The management is coping well with staffing difficulties. However, schemes of work do not provide a suitably graduated schedule for developing the range of skills and understanding expected at the end of Years 9 and 11. Pupils are missing vital designing experiences and computer-aided manufacturing because of a lack of access to computers. Results of assessment are insufficiently used to guide planning. Accommodation and resources for food, graphics, textiles and control technology are unsatisfactory. Health and safety monitoring has not been documented regularly. All of the issues identified in the last report are still present.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is very good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very strong leadership and management ensures a clear vision for the subject
- Good teaching leads to good achievement
- Art is a popular subject because it provides a good range of interesting projects
- ICT is used effectively to develop pupils' creativity in Years 10 and 11
- Where groups are taught by more than one teacher, planning to ensure continuity of learning is inadequate

Commentary

Examination results

105. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, in 2004, showed that standards were average. GCSE results, in 2004, were above average. Girls' attainment was better than boys'.

Standards and achievement

106. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with attainment that is below expected standards. They achieve well during Years 7 to 9, so that by the end of Year 9 standards are average. Pupils make good progress in learning new skills. They use a good variety of media in both two- and three- dimensions. They draw confidently and make good use of tone and pattern, using a good range of materials. Their creativity is stimulated well through studying art from different cultures, including Egyptian and African. Standards of work are average in Year 10 and above average in Year 11. Observational drawing skills are strong, and pupils experiment with a good range of mixed media. Pupils in Year 11 develop their initial design ideas into visually exciting final pieces, such as papier maché vessels inspired by the artist Hundertwasser. Work in textiles and applied arts shows pupils have achieved a good understanding of a variety of techniques in these areas.

Teaching and learning

107. Art is taught well and lessons are well planned with clear targets that ensure pupils make good progress. Teachers show secure subject knowledge and offer a variety of specialisms. They clearly explain and demonstrate the skills and techniques that they want pupils to learn. Their expectations are high and foster high aspirations in pupils. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they have achieved through helpful oral and written feedback that enables them to understand how to improve. They are aware of the criteria against which their work is being assessed. Pupils assess their own work and the work of others, which helps them to become self-critical and observant. Positive attitudes in lessons result from enthusiastic teaching, and the use of a variety of teaching methods. Relationships between pupils and teachers are positive and pupils are supportive of each other. Art is a popular subject because it connects with pupils' own experiences and interests through a range of interesting projects. Sketchbooks are used across all years, and homework is an extension of work completed in class. Classrooms are well organised, with stimulating use of displays and resources. Art is successful in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Talented pupils also do well. Numeracy and literacy skills are developed well in lessons, and are applied to the understanding of the subject and practical work. Vocational courses have well-established links with local creative industries and the community. These provide pupils with good opportunities to understand the relationship between school and the world of work. In Years 7 to 9, ICT is not incorporated into lessons enough, but computers are used to good effect in Years 10 and 11. Some groups in Years 7 to 9 have different teachers during the two-week timetable cycle and these teachers do not plan together well enough to ensure that pupils' work builds on previous experience.

Leadership and management

108. There is a clear vision for the department and its future. The department is actively involved in the school's bid for visual arts college status. Departmental documentation is thorough and extensive. Coordination of policies, schemes of work and performance management are clear and well documented. Assessment is a strength, and is used as a means of raising achievement and creating challenge. Large displays of artwork around the school demonstrate the strength and importance of the subject. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Examination results are still high and art remains a popular subject.

Music

The overall quality of provision in music is satisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The emphasis on developing recorder and keyboard skills contributes positively to pupils' performance skills
- Too long is generally spent on individual tasks, which reduces pupils' enjoyment of the practical activities they undertake
- Under the present leadership, the subject is gaining in popularity

Commentary

Examination results

109. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 showed that standards were below average. All the GCSE candidates passed in 2004, but numbers were too few to allow a meaningful comparison with national figures.

Standards and achievement

110. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with standards that are below average. Although standards remain below average by Year 9, achievement during this time is satisfactory. Pupils' performing skills are developed well. All pupils have regular lessons on the recorder. They perform in groups while maintaining a steady beat. They have a satisfactory working knowledge of formal notation and use the appropriate technical vocabulary to describe their performances. This technical understanding is consolidated well through keyboard lessons. Pupils' compositions indicate a satisfactory understanding of structure, but are elementary because pupils find it difficult to extend their ideas and they have limited knowledge of chords. They listen regularly to different styles of music but they experience difficulty in recalling what they have heard. The satisfactory achievement continues through to Year 11. Pupils have produced two contrasting compositions that show structure, but most are brief and lack development. Opportunities to use ICT to support their composition skills are too few, and this severely limits their creative work. Poor listening skills and technical knowledge mean that pupils do not accurately identify styles of music or use the appropriate technical language to describe its characteristics.

Teaching and learning

111. Teachers use their good practical skills well. Supportive keyboard accompaniments in Year 9 encouraged tuneful and rhythmical singing. In a Year 11 group, the teacher played sections of pupils' compositions and this helped them appreciate the use of a melody with varied rhythms. Teachers work hard, using a variety of management techniques to establish discipline, to ensure lessons proceed with a minimum of interruptions. Lesson planning highlights the learning outcomes but, in general, classes remain for far too long on one activity, which reduces the appeal of the task. Teachers explain tasks clearly but talk for far too long. Consequently, pupils spend too little time practising and consolidating their skills.

Leadership and management

112. The leadership and the management of the subject are satisfactory. Good plans exist to raise standards. Under the present leadership, the subject is gaining popularity and this is reflected in the number of pupils now following the GCSE option. Good, revised procedures for assessing pupils' work are in their infancy and not yet impacting on standards. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and recorded, but achievement is not linked to National Curriculum levels so that pupils are unaware of the levels they are reaching or how to improve. The main music room is appropriately resourced and is spacious. The additional music room, which has to be shared with other subjects, is inadequately equipped and this limits pupils' achievement.

Drama

113. One Year 11 drama lesson was sampled. Good teaching was directed at preparing pupils for GCSE performances. The teacher had prepared detailed documentation for the three groups, based on a review of their mock examination performance. The pupils' response to the teaching was satisfactory. Pupils worked in a focused way whilst the teacher was with the group but concentration was less focused when the teacher was working with another group. Skills of reviewing and improving their performance in a group were underdeveloped. Pupils' achievement was satisfactory.

Media studies

114. One Year 11 lesson was observed in which pupils considered how scheduling of television programmes attracts audiences and affects sponsors. Teaching and learning were satisfactory. The teacher's planning was generally satisfactory, but did not challenge higher-

attaining pupils enough. Achievement in this lesson was satisfactory, although some pupils in the group did not make sufficient contribution to the learning because their attitudes were unsatisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is poor.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Poor
Management	Poor
Progress since last inspection	Poor

Main weaknesses

- The quality of learning is affected by some pupils' unsatisfactory attitudes, and large numbers of pupils fail to participate in lessons
- Assessment and marking are not constructive or specific enough to benefit achievement
- Accommodation and the split-site facilities are unsatisfactory and limit teaching time and what can be taught; this impedes learning and achievement
- The curriculum is unsatisfactory because it does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and lacks variety

Commentary

Examination results

115. GCSE results in 2004 were below average, but better than the previous year. More boys than girls were entered on the course. Pupils achieved less well in physical education than in most of their other subjects.

Standards and achievement

116. Achievement by Year 9 is unsatisfactory in relation to pupils' standards on entry to the school, which are below average. In Year 11, standards for those following the core curriculum course and the GCSE course are well below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. Year 11 GCSE pupils cannot identify methods of training suitable for their focus sport. Attitudes are unsatisfactory overall, but pupils in Year 11 listen and achieve better than in Year 10. Talented team players have opportunities to join clubs and some pupils perform at local and regional levels, but the range of activities in lessons is too narrow.

Teaching and learning

117. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Teachers have adequate subject knowledge, but lessons are dull and too often fail to engage pupils. Teachers' expectations are low and pupils are not challenged enough. Pupils' skills are not developed well. For example, in Year 9, pupils consistently misdirected shots because the effect of body position and follow through were not identified and emphasised by the teacher. ICT is used too little. Personal development is not fostered well. Teachers do not insist that pupils are attentive. Some pupils chew and some wear jewellery, contrary to the safety concerns expressed in the department's handbook. The pupils lack commitment. Many turn up without kit for practical sessions and without writing equipment for theory lessons, which detracts from their learning. Teachers usually demonstrate well and this helps all pupils but especially those pupils with special needs or those at an early stage of learning English. Assessment is not used effectively enough to help pupils to check their progress and measure performance against targets. No references to nationally expected levels were made in lessons and what pupils need to do to improve was not made clear. Marking does not, consistently, tell pupils how well they are doing. The large number of non-participants, who generally sit on the sidelines chatting and distracting others, reduces overall achievement.

Leadership and management

118. Poor leadership and management have led to an unsatisfactory curriculum. Too little choice is available for pupils in Years 10 and 11, on the core curriculum course, because too much time is devoted to football. The department does not offer the range of activities envisaged in the National Curriculum. There is little sense of purpose driving the department forward, and documentation is merely a gathering together of school information without proper relationship to physical education. No wall displays enliven the practical areas. Facilities, including toilet areas, are dirty and unpleasant. Accommodation is on two sites, causing lateness to lessons. The GCSE course has no specific teaching room to help link practical

and theory work. Two teachers are involved in the Schools Sports Coordination Programme with primary schools, but this worthwhile initiative reduces extra-curricular opportunities for Birches Head pupils and causes staffing difficulties. Improvement since the previous report has been poor. Although the school has received the Sportsmark award and dance has been introduced into the curriculum, standards have dropped, the curriculum is unsatisfactory and too little has been done to resolve issues identified in the previous reports.

Dance

119. The first dance GCSE group will sit the examination in 2005. Standards seen in Year 11 are average and pupils are achieving well. Pupils respond well in GCSE dance lessons and teamwork is emphasised effectively with pupils working together well. Talented pupils analyse well and understand the importance of expression; they interpret dance vocabulary well and use this to convey feelings such as of pride and intimidation. In Year 7, dance is part of the National Curriculum physical education course. Teaching is satisfactory in Year 7 and good on the GCSE course. The course is well supported by a specialist teacher. Pupils' interest and generally good attitudes enhance their learning. The school has no dance studio and facilities for dance are unsatisfactory because of the dirty condition of the surface used.

Vocational courses

120. It was not possible to inspect a vocational course in detail, but several lessons were sampled in Year 11. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in a **key skills** lesson. Standards were low but students improved their literacy and presentational skills by the careful use of guidance for writing. The course includes good opportunities for using computers. In a **leisure and tourism** lesson, students showed a satisfactory knowledge of key words associated with tourist destinations. They worked with interest. Teaching, learning and achievement were satisfactory. In a **child development** lesson, learning and achievement were unsatisfactory because some students were not involved enough in a task related to safety issues in the home.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Elements of personal social and health education and citizenship are combined for Years 7 to 11. Two Year 10 classes are following a new GCSE short course in citizenship.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **poor**.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Poor	Poor
Teaching and learning	Poor	Poor

Leadership	Poor
Management	Poor
Progress since last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' moral and social qualities are poorly developed
- Planning for citizenship is weak
- Pupils' achievements in citizenship are not assessed, recorded or reported
- Teachers' expectations are too low and consequently pupils underachieve

Commentary

Examination results

121. Statutory teacher assessments for Year 9 pupils in 2004 were not undertaken.

Standards and achievement

122. Pupils' achievement is poor. Pupils have well-below-average skills of enquiry and knowledge about becoming informed citizens. Time for the subject is limited to five days a year. Absence on one of those days results in pupils missing essential units of work. Pupils' understanding is not developed, nor reinforced by the minimal written work they do.

Opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of citizenship are missed. Tutor times are mainly concerned with routine matters and the 'thought for the day' is unstimulating. Year 11 pupils' knowledge is limited to a unit to prepare them for their future beyond school. Standards in the Year 10 classes are low partly because of the poor foundations laid in earlier years and also due to pupils' lack of responsiveness. Pupils are aware that the number of female MP's has risen since 1979 but they have little understanding of an MP's roles and responsibilities and could not recall any answers the local MP gave on his visit the previous week. The curriculum does not provide well for pupils' moral and social development and there is limited scope for exploring health and work-related topics. A minority of pupils have an acquaintance with debate and negotiation through the school council, which is growing in influence. For example, pupils were consulted on the appointment of the new headteacher and in a review of some school policies. A few groups of pupils have shown initiative in setting up an anti-bullying council and a cohesion group to combat racism.

Teaching and learning

123. A clear plan and resources were provided for teachers to give lessons on the first citizenship day, but no suitable scheme of work is available. Teachers' expertise in the subject has not been evaluated, and not all staff have the experience and skills to teach the subject effectively. Pupils gain little from assemblies which have limited citizenship content, and older pupils are not inclined to celebrate the achievements of their peers. Teaching in the Year 10 classes is poor because lessons are badly planned; teachers talk too much and do not encourage pupils to think. Questioning is superficial and unfocused. As a result, apart from one or two self-motivated individuals, pupils are not involved in learning and make minimal progress. Assessment is poor, pupils' work is rarely marked and they are given very little help on how to improve.

Leadership and management

124. Leadership lacks true awareness of what citizenship is and the depth of work pupils are expected to do to meet requirements. Most heads of departments are awaiting guidance to help them identify what useful contributions their subject can make to developing pupils' citizenship qualities. No-one has overall responsibility for the subject and this prevents realistic planning from taking place. As a result, the school is not fulfilling its statutory obligations to establish and teach a worthwhile course in citizenship to all pupils. This undermines efforts to eliminate intolerance, raise aspirations and help all pupils to become mature and responsible young adults.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	6
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	6
Value for money provided by the school	6
Overall standards achieved	6
Pupils' achievement	6
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	6
Attendance	5
Attitudes	6
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	6
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	6
The quality of education provided by the school	6
The quality of teaching	6
How well pupils learn	6
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	6
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	5
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	5
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	5
The governance of the school	6
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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