

INSPECTION REPORT

STRADBROKE HIGH SCHOOL

Stradbroke, Eye

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124814

Headteacher: Mr D Shorten

Lead inspector: Mrs J Greenfield

Dates of inspection: 25th - 27th April 2005

Inspection number: 272074

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	344
School address:	Wilby Road Stradbroke Eye Suffolk
Postcode:	IP21 5JN
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Rawding
Date of previous inspection:	1 st March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Stradbroke High School, with 344 pupils on roll, is a very small comprehensive school catering for pupils aged 11-16. Numbers have increased since 2000. Other than in Year 9, there are more boys than girls in all year groups. The school serves a wide rural area. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, which are slightly more disadvantaged than advantaged. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Pupils' attainment on entry is close to the average. Nearly all pupils are from White, mainly British, backgrounds. A very small number are of Mixed heritages, mainly Asian. No pupil is in the early stage of learning English. Five pupils are in public care and one is from a Traveller family. The school has a designated unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. A much higher proportion of pupils than average have a statement, although the proportion of pupils with special educational needs overall is in line with the national average. The range of special needs includes moderate, severe and specific learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and communication difficulties and autism. In 2003-04, the proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than the normal transfer times was broadly average. The school received a School Curriculum Award in 2000, a School Achievement Award in 2002 and has recently been awarded specialist school status in business and enterprise (including the rural dimension). It is also a pilot school in the Extended Schools scheme.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7070	Mrs J Greenfield	Lead inspector	Citizenship Personal, social and health education
15181	Mrs M Hackney	Lay inspector	
12003	Dr A Marfleet	Team inspector	English
30553	Mr R Fuller	Team inspector	Mathematics
30433	Dr C Corp	Team inspector	Science
7558	Mr O Nicholson	Team inspector	Art and design
10894	Mr P Reynolds	Team inspector	Design and technology
20247	Mr R Parry	Team inspector	Geography
18032	Mrs I Randall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology History
4617	Mrs R Fox	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
31660	Mrs M Young	Team inspector	Music
4647	Mrs J Evans	Team inspector	Physical education
10448	Mr M Elson	Team inspector	Religious education
2746	Mr R Lund	Team inspector	Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Stradbroke High School's overall effectiveness is good. Standards are average overall and higher than this in a few subjects. Pupils achieve well through the good teaching and the school's supportive ethos. The headteacher's high aspirations for the school have ensured that it has continued to develop and improve, not only in enhancing the opportunities available to pupils but also in establishing a very high profile in the community. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- pupils achieved very well in the national tests and GCSE examinations in 2004;
- standards in English, geography, design and technology and art and design are above average;
- the headteacher and senior staff promote inclusion very well and are very good role models for pupils and other staff;
- the climate for learning is good and fosters good attitudes and very good relationships;
- good teaching enables most pupils to achieve well but the higher-attaining pupils are not always given work that challenges them sufficiently and teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' written work are too low;
- pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the work and life of the school and receive good support from pupils, teachers and support staff;
- there is some good practice in the school, but the systems for assessing and tracking of pupils' progress and their achievements and reporting these to parents are not robust enough; and
- senior and middle managers are not rigorous enough in ensuring that whole-school policies are implemented consistently or in evaluating their impact on raising standards.

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in March 1999. Standards have risen in Years 7 - 9 and have been maintained in Years 10 and 11, although there have been improvements in individual subjects. The quality of teaching in modern foreign languages is now good. Good progress has been made in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT), but it is not used enough to support teaching and learning in all subjects. The school's development plan includes clear targets for raising standards. Middle managers are more effective in leading their subjects but they have not done enough to ensure that higher-attaining pupils are always challenged. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good. Current standards are in line with national expectations by Year 9 and pupils achieve well. They exceed expectations in English, design and technology and art and design. In 2004, the test results were in line with the national averages in mathematics and science but were slightly below average in English. The school's performance was well above average when compared with the results in similar schools, with pupils doing better in mathematics and science than in English. The GCSE examination results in 2004 were in line with the national average but well above average when compared with similar schools. By Year 11, standards are in line with national expectations and most pupils continue to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well but the higher-attaining pupils are not achieving as well as other groups. Standards exceed national expectations in English, French, geography, and design and

technology but are well below the level expected in religious education. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Their attitudes and behaviour are good, and their attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good. Teaching is good and ensures that most pupils learn well. The higher attainers are not always stretched. Pupils respond well to the good teaching and work hard, although some of their written work in books is not well presented. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory but practice across the school is too variable. The curriculum is satisfactory but it does not fully meet statutory requirements in ICT in Year 11 and in citizenship. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The range of extra-curricular and other enrichment activities is satisfactory and opportunities for sport have improved. Standards of care are good and pupils receive satisfactory advice and support. Support for their personal development is more effective than the monitoring of their academic progress, as the school's systems are not sufficiently robust. There are good arrangements for involving pupils in the work of the school. Links with parents and with other schools are good, and those with the community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a very clear vision and high aspirations for the school, evident through the school's successful bid to acquire specialist school status for business and enterprise. His leadership, together with that of his senior team, is good. Middle managers, some of whom are very effective, lead their departments well in the main. Management is satisfactory. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and consistency of whole-school policies and strategies and their implementation are not robust or systematic enough. Governance is good and governors provide good support and challenge to senior staff. However, the governing body does not ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents speak positively about the school and consider that their children are achieving well but would like more information about their child's progress. A significant minority do not believe that the school listens to their views. Most pupils like school and say they are expected to work hard and do their best. Although some parents and pupils express concerns about behaviour, inspectors judge that pupils behave well. They also judge that the reports to parents are not clear enough.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- monitor pupils' progress and achievements more effectively, set sharper targets for them and provide parents with clearer information in reports;
- consistently provide higher-attaining pupils with more challenging work;
- implement robust systems to monitor the consistency with which whole-school policies and practices are implemented and to evaluate their impact on raising standards;
- have higher expectations of the quality of presentation in pupils' written work;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- strengthen the planning and assessment of citizenship;
- ensure that pupils in Year 11 receive their entitlement to ICT and that their attainment is reported to parents;
- provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards are in line with national expectations by Year 9 and Year 11 and are above expectations in a few subjects. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The achievement of higher-attaining pupils is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieved very well in the national tests and public examinations in 2004.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as they receive good support.
- Standards by Year 11 are above average in English, French, geography and design and technology.
- Although their achievement is satisfactory, the higher-attaining pupils do not always receive work that challenges them enough.
- Standards in religious education by the end of Year 11 are too low.

Commentary

1. The school's overall results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were in line with the national average. The results were average in mathematics and science but below average in English, showing a decline in performance from 2003. Since the last inspection, the improvement in the test results has been faster than the national trend. When compared with similar schools (those with pupils with a similar level of performance in the national tests at the end of Year 6), the results were well above average in mathematics and science, and above average in English. When account is taken of these pupils' own results in the Year 6 tests, which were close to the average, pupils achieved very well, indicating that they did far better than expected. In English and science, a lower proportion than the national average gained the higher Level 6 or above. In relation to their respective national figures, boys' results were better than those of the girls in mathematics and science, but boys' and girls' performance was broadly similar in English. The school met its targets for the end of Year 9 in 2004 but these were not very challenging. Targets for 2005 are more realistic. The assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Year 9 showed considerable variations in standards in the foundation subjects, and inspection evidence shows that these assessments were not always accurate. They were too generous in ICT and music, and too harsh in history and French.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.3 (33.5)	33.5 (33.4)
mathematics	35.4 (34.8)	35.7 (35.4)
science	32.6 (34.2)	33.2 (33.6)

There were 65 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In the GCSE examinations in 2004, the results were below the national average when all pupils' results are taken into account but were average for those attaining five or more grades A*-C and when the pupils' best eight subjects are considered. Very few pupils gained the highest grade of A*. When compared with similar schools, the results were above average overall, and well above average at five or more grades A*-C and for the pupils' best eight subjects. These pupils did far better than expected when account is taken of their earlier performance in the national tests at the end of Year 9. The trend in the school's performance, however, since the last inspection has been below the rate of improvement found nationally. The most successful subjects in 2004 were English literature, French, graphics and textiles, with results that were well above the national averages, and

English language and geography, with results that were above average. The results were below average in mathematics, art and design, resistant materials, religious education and expressive arts, and well below average in history and food technology. Over the years, there have been considerable variations between the performance of boys and girls, both at grades A*-C and at the highest grades of A* and A. In 2004, there was a considerable drop in the boys' performance compared with 2003, but overall boys have done better than girls over the past three years. The school met its targets at five or more grades A*-C but did not meet them for the average points score. The targets for 2005 are higher and more challenging.

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

GCSE/GNVQ	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	51 (54)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	86 (86)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil	37.2 (41.0)	41.4 (40.6)
Capped average point score per pupil	33.4 (36.1)	34.9 (34.7)

GCSE & Equivalent Qualifications	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	51	52
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	86	89
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99	96
Average point score per pupil	307.6	340.3
Capped average point score per pupil	275.7	282.8

There were 73 pupils in the year group, 35 boys and 38 girls. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Standards of pupils' current work are in line with national expectations by Year 9. They are above the level expected nationally in English, showing an improvement over the national test results in 2004, and in line with expectations in mathematics and science. They exceed the expected level in design and technology and art and design, and are in line with expectations in the remaining subjects. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in science, ICT, history and religious education and good in the other subjects. It is not possible to make a judgement about standards and achievement in personal, social and health education and citizenship as no lessons in these areas were taught during the inspection. Only one lesson was seen in drama.

4. By Year 11, standards are above the level expected in English and mathematics and pupils achieve well in both subjects. They are at the level expected in science and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are above national expectations in French, geography and design and technology, and are in line with expectations in most of the remaining subjects, other than religious education where they are well below average. Previous staffing difficulties in 2004 are continuing to affect pupils' attainment in religious education. Pupils' achievement is good in French, geography, design and technology, and art and design, and satisfactory in the remaining subjects where there is sufficient evidence to make a firm judgement. There is no GCSE course in music at present. One lesson was seen in expressive arts and in business, and no lessons were seen in personal, social and health education or citizenship, so it is not possible to make overall judgements about standards or pupils' achievement in any of these subjects.

5. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science, and matches that of other groups of pupils. Teachers have a good awareness of and plan well to meet their needs. Sensitive grouping strategies in lessons and in the specialist support centre ensure that pupils receive focused support where it is most needed. Pupils identified as gifted and talented and the higher-attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily but not quite as well as other groups of pupils as they do not always receive

work that challenges them enough in all subjects. They are challenged very well in art and design and aspects of design and technology, but not well enough in mathematics, science, geography, French and history.

6. In the national tests and public examinations, there have been considerable variations between the performance of boys and girls from year to year, with boys on the whole doing better than the girls in relation to their respective national figures. This picture is not reflected in pupils' current work and there are no significant differences overall, although some minor differences are evident in a few subjects. For example, boys do slightly better than girls in music in Years 7 - 9 but girls do better than boys in history and French in Years 7 - 9, and also in science and art and design in all years.

7. Pupils' literacy skills are sufficient to enable them to make satisfactory progress in all subjects. Work across the school is co-ordinated well, and departments receive effective support to help them focus on developing pupils' literary skills. Their mathematical skills are satisfactory to support their learning across the curriculum. However, whole-school planning to ensure a co-ordinated approach is only in the early stages of development. The use of ICT to support learning is satisfactory and pupils have adequate skills to apply them as required. At times, teachers have difficulty in booking the ICT rooms for their classes, which limits the pupils' opportunity to use ICT to support their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Relationships are very good. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is broadly average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respond well to the school's strong supportive ethos and very positive relationships.
- Behaviour is good during lessons and pupils exercise self-control whilst moving around the school.
- The school has consistent procedures to promote pupils' conduct and deals effectively with behavioural problems and bullying.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes well to their personal development.
- Pupils with special educational needs feel valued and supported in class and around the school.

Commentary

8. Most pupils have good attitudes towards school and are keen to be involved in activities and learning opportunities. They respond well to the school's strong inclusive ethos and high expectations of self-discipline and achievement. Relationships throughout the school are very good and this contributes well to developing pupils' awareness of the responsibilities of living in a community. Most pupils have the confidence to ask for help if they have trouble with academic work or experience personal problems.

9. Although some parents and pupils express concerns about behaviour, inspectors judge that pupils behave well and that the school is an orderly community. Pupils are sensible and self-controlled in the dining room and social areas, which is particularly significant, as the major building programme currently taking place has constricted the space available to them. In most lessons, pupils work hard, listen attentively to teachers and are keen to answer questions and contribute their ideas. They work well in groups and share resources co-operatively and carefully. Pupils respond politely towards adults and are welcoming to visitors, and show considerable care and support for pupils with physical disabilities and learning difficulties. Although a minority of pupils feel that there is bullying in the school, they are confident that any issues are dealt with promptly and effectively by staff.

10. The number of fixed-term exclusions is low. The school works hard to avoid exclusion as part of its inclusion policy. Pupils are only excluded for the most serious behaviour problems, which might put other pupils and staff at risk. The school also provides good support for pupils excluded from other schools.

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	340	5	1
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0

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

11. Attendance was below the national average during the last reporting year (2003-04). This was the result of the high absence rate of a small number of pupils. The school is working hard to improve attendance and during the current school year, the level of attendance has improved and is now in line with that of schools nationally. Registration is prompt and the majority of pupils are punctual and arrive at lessons on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.2	School data	0.4
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.

12. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' personal development is good. The school works hard to encourage pupils of all capabilities to become mature and responsible young people. Opportunities such as performing in productions, mini-business enterprise and work experience contribute well to pupils' progress and achievements. The provision for extra-curricular activities in sport has improved and pupils' personal development is enriched by the opportunity to take part in regular fixtures with other schools. Pupils are keen to take on special responsibilities such as Year 11 prefects, peer mentors to support younger pupils and as representatives on the school council. Pupils are pro-active in fundraising activities and they effectively support a range of local and national charities. Pupils with special educational needs and physical disabilities are well integrated and supported, and this enables them to take part in all activities and become confident members of the school community. They feel valued and well supported by other pupils as well as by their teachers and teaching assistants.

13. Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are proud of their school and show a strong sense of belonging. This helps the school to embrace diversity and helps pupils to learn respect for others. The climate and ethos of the school promote moral and social development very effectively. Pupils' cultural development is good. For those pupils who have little direct experience of cultural diversity, the school is active and successful in finding ways of extending pupils' horizons. Pupils' spiritual development is less strong and no better than satisfactory overall. The school accommodates difference and respects the integrity of individuals but has not found a way to give pupils the opportunity to experience worship together. The school has no regular, much less daily, arrangement for collective worship. The provision for self-knowledge and spiritual awareness, especially through assembly and tutorial time, is less strong than the provision for other aspects of pupils' personal development. The school

lacks a clear policy and planned approach to ensure that pupils receive their statutory entitlement and to improve further what it already does well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good and most pupils make good progress and achieve well. The curriculum is satisfactory, including the opportunities for enrichment and extra-curricular activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Accommodation and resources, including staffing, are good. The school provides good levels of care and the involvement of pupils in its work is good. They receive satisfactory advice and guidance. The school's partnership with parents and other schools is good and links with the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good throughout the school, enabling most pupils to learn and achieve well. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in art and design and design and technology is very good overall and much is excellent.
- Teachers manage pupils well in lessons and ensure a positive climate for learning.
- Not all teachers give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work and their expectations about the presentation of work are often too low.
- Very good assessment procedures in art and design and design and technology give pupils a very clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- The higher-attaining pupils are not always provided with work that challenges them enough.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide good levels of support for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

14. The table below indicates the quality of teaching across the school. There is very little difference between Years 7 - 9 and Years 10 and 11 overall but there is a lower proportion of good and very good teaching in Year 8 than elsewhere. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching is very small and it has reduced considerably since the last inspection. In a large majority of lessons, pupils make good progress in their learning, enabling them to achieve well.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 87 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (4%)	18 (21%)	39 (45%)	25 (29%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

15. The quality of teaching varies across subjects. For example, it is very good in art and design and design and technology, good in English, mathematics, French, geography, religious education, music and physical education, and satisfactory in the remaining subjects. In addition to art and design and design and technology, where there is also much excellent teaching, some very good teaching occurs in English, mathematics and physical education, and in these lessons pupils generally make very good progress and achieve very well. These more effective lessons include some interesting features. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson, the teacher provided pupils with stimulating problems set in interesting contexts, which enabled them to develop their logical sequencing skills very effectively. In an excellent design and technology lesson in Year 11, the teacher used a digital video camera to project live, large-scale images to demonstrate a range of

techniques used in geometrical construction, allowing pupils to see how they are done and to recognise the importance of accuracy. In another first-rate lesson in art and design in Year 10, the teacher made excellent use of specialist language, provided a good range of resources, including her own work, and gave high quality support to pupils to enable them to work effectively with clay for the first time. In all these lessons, pupils engaged fully with their learning, with considerable concentration and interest, and made very good progress.

16. Teachers plan their lessons well and, in most instances, use their good subject knowledge to provide pupils with work that interests and motivates them. At times, the planned work does not fully meet the needs of the range of attainment in the class. For example, the higher-attaining pupils are not always given more challenging work to extend their thinking further and instances of this were seen in a few lessons in mathematics, science, French, ICT, geography and history. Teachers usually share the lesson objectives with pupils at the beginning of the lesson so that they are clear about what they are expected to do. They use a variety of teaching approaches effectively to engage their pupils, including individual, pair and group work. Pupils work well on their own and with others as required. Not all teachers allow enough time at the end of the lesson to check what pupils have learned, to allow pupils to review and reflect on the progress they have made or to indicate what is to happen in the next lesson. Although some subjects, for example, mathematics and science, make good use of ICT to support teaching and learning, other subjects, such as French, art and design, music and physical education, do not have enough access to computers or plan for their use sufficiently well.

17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science, whether it occurs in mainstream classes, in withdrawal groups or in one-to-one sessions in the specialist support centre. Subject teachers know the needs of the pupils well, and plan their lessons in order to include them and enable them to make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and the teaching assistants provide good support to these pupils. Most teachers and teaching assistants use a wide range of approaches, including different kinds of questions, activities, materials and groupings, to help pupils learn successfully. They make good use of praise and encouragement. As a result, pupils make good progress, are engaged and motivated, and behave well. A minority of teachers are insufficiently aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and of the targets in their individual education plans. Most teachers do not use ICT systematically to help pupils with special educational needs gain access to learning activities, although it is very well used in the specialist support centre.

18. Teachers provide plenty of encouragement to their pupils to help them learn effectively and nearly all pupils respond positively to their approach by working hard and productively. Most teachers expect pupils to apply themselves to their work and have high expectations of their response and behaviour. Pupils respond positively to these expectations and behave well in almost all lessons. Relationships between pupils and their teachers and with each other are good, which means that most lessons take place in a cordial and positive atmosphere. Occasionally, teachers' expectations are too low and pupils do not make enough progress in their learning or produce work of a high enough quality because the requirements of the tasks are not made clear, as seen occasionally in mathematics. In science, for example, pupils' progress is restricted by the poor quality of their lesson notes, which are inadequate for revision purposes. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, pupils in Year 7 spent far too much time on low-level tasks such as cutting out figures and colouring them in.

19. There are particular weaknesses in teachers' expectations of the quality of presentation of pupils' work in their books. Much of the work seen in the formal scrutiny of pupils' books was untidy, poorly presented with inappropriate graffiti on the covers, and with many examples of unfinished work. This indicates that many pupils do not take sufficient pride in their work and that teachers' expectations are too low. Homework is used satisfactorily in the main to support learning, although there is too much variation in its extent and quality. There are weaknesses in the provision of homework in mathematics, as it does not form an integral part of learning.

20. The assessment of pupils' work, progress and their attainment is satisfactory but there are undue variations between subjects, which lead to inconsistencies of approach across the school. Assessment procedures are very good in art and design and design and technology but

unsatisfactory overall in ICT and religious education. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and often give supportive comments. At its best, the marking is thorough, helps pupils to know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve it or to get to the next level or grade. Examples of effective practice occur in English, history, art and design, design and technology and music. Marking lacks sufficient rigour in science and ICT, and several subjects do not give specific guidance on how pupils can improve their work or set them clear targets. In some subjects, pupils are beginning to assess their own work, as in history, but their comments are often too general and superficial. Pupils' understanding of how well they are doing is generally satisfactory but not all are clear about the level they are working at in a few subjects.

21. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Regular assessment and changing targets in a pupil's individual education plan show that most make good progress in reading and spelling. The specialist support centre does not currently assess the pupils' progress in numeracy. Teaching assistants are not sufficiently involved in assessing the needs of pupils with special educational needs and in monitoring and recording their progress. As a result, pupils are not aware of what they need to do to meet their individual education plan targets or to reach the next level or grade.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Opportunities for extra-curricular and enrichment activities are satisfactory. Accommodation and resources, including staffing, are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's commitment to equality of opportunity and its strong set of values ensure that all pupils feel included and respected.
- The introduction of the 'flexi-days' benefits the whole school, and enhances and enriches the curriculum.
- Extra-curricular opportunities in sport have improved significantly.
- The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good and meets their needs well.
- Some elements of citizenship and the provision for ICT in Year 11 do not meet statutory requirements and the school does not ensure that all pupils have a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

22. The curriculum has some strong features as well as some areas of weakness. It meets National Curriculum requirements other than in the provision of ICT in Year 11 and some aspects of citizenship. The school also does not ensure that all pupils have a daily act of collective worship. Consequently, these areas do not meet statutory requirements.

23. The school is a fully inclusive school. Pupils experience a balanced curriculum, including religious education, and the time allocated to each subject is broadly average. French is now the only modern foreign language taught. The introduction of a series of 'flexi-days', which enable pupils to take part in a range of subjects and cross-curricular learning for an entire day, benefits the whole school, enhancing and enriching cross-curricular teaching and learning, especially in the arts. Positive links have been made with a school in Kenya and, as a result, a highly successful flexi-day was organised on African arts. The allocation of time to English and mathematics in Years 10 and 11 has increased since the last inspection and it is now appropriate. Pupils in Year 10 have a specific lesson allocated for ICT but there is no provision for pupils in Year 11. This means that it is not possible to guarantee that all pupils receive their entitlement to ICT as their experiences in other subjects are not clearly identified or assessed.

24. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have the opportunity to study a range of GCSE courses, which includes a variety of design and technology courses, expressive arts, applied business, and the successful ASDAN course. Pupils in Year 10 were also able to choose a GCSE course in ICT for

the first time this year. The curriculum has been extended this year, but the small size of the school constrains its ability to provide a wide range of vocational courses. The school's success in gaining specialist school status for business and enterprise (including the rural dimension) from September 2005 is enabling further curriculum improvements to widen the choice of courses available to extend pupils' career pathways. They include the introduction of a GCSE course in physical education and qualifications in agriculture, horticulture and enterprise. These subjects are already recruiting well.

25. Pupils with special educational needs experience a curriculum that is not significantly different from other groups of pupils in Years 7 - 9. Access to the curriculum is helped by careful grouping, which provides focused support for lower-attaining pupils. Structured withdrawal for one-to-one and small group teaching in the specialist support centre helps to boost pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy and in their personal and social development, and assists their inclusion in main school lessons. Pupils with a statement are receiving a curriculum that is compatible with the requirements of their statements. In Years 10 and 11, there are appropriate, externally accredited courses for pupils with special educational needs. All are involved in work experience schemes.

26. The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The programme covers sex and relationship education and gives appropriate attention to alcohol and drug misuse. Citizenship has been introduced satisfactorily as an integral part of the personal, social and health education programme, but there is insufficient linking of the three elements of citizenship, and systematic assessment procedures have not been established. Although a positive start has been made in developing the programme for citizenship, it does not fully meet requirements. The provision for work-related learning is good.

27. Good provision is made for preparing pupils for life after they leave the school. A comprehensive programme of topics is taught as part of the personal, social and health education programme. Pupils consider that they receive good guidance and advice from these lessons and through interviews with professional careers advisers. Visitors to the school give further advice about the range of opportunities for young people in employment and further/higher education at evening meetings, when parents can attend. Pupils have easy access to the resources on careers held in the school library. Pupils feel well informed about the routes open to them.

28. Work experience makes a very good contribution to preparing pupils for their future life. The isolated rural location of the school makes it difficult to arrange placements centrally. For this reason, many pupils arrange their own work experience successfully, and describe what they have gained from it with enthusiasm. The partnership with the Stradbroke Business Network is helpful in finding work placements. Extended work experience is arranged for some pupils with special educational needs, or for whom the full academic curriculum is inappropriate. This occurs in Year 11 for one day a week, and helps pupils to relate learning at school to the workplace. Preparation for work experience is thorough and well organised. Subjects, such as English, use pupils' work experience in lessons and support pupils when they write evaluations of their work experience in their National Record of Achievement.

29. The school offers a satisfactory programme of extra-curricular activities and opportunities to enrich the curriculum. Although the provision is improving, especially in sport, the number of clubs, visits and trips is limited. Visits and trips to support the curriculum and pupils' wider developments in art and design, geography and modern foreign languages are well planned and organised. Participation overall is variable. The school production, which takes place in the autumn term, is very successful, with high levels of participation. However, other opportunities for the performing arts are limited in music, drama and dance. In most subject areas, there are drop-in revision clinics to support pupils who need extra help. The library is used well during the school day. Planned activities to extend class work and their contribution to pupils' achievement, attitudes and participation are not monitored and evaluated.

30. The specialist support centre is used as a 'drop-in' centre before school and at break and lunch times for pupils with special educational needs. There is a happy buzz of activity at these times, with pupils of all ages finding information on the Internet, doing homework or discussing work or personal problems with the teaching assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator.

31. The staffing of the school curriculum is good. In nearly all subjects, staff are well qualified and have good subject knowledge. Staffing difficulties in religious education have been resolved. The only unfilled posts in the school are within the special needs department. Non-specialist teachers take some classes but this arrangement has no significant impact on pupils' learning other than in physical education and dance. An effective team of technicians, administration and other staff gives good support to the teachers. The technical support seen in science, design and technology and ICT has a direct positive impact on the teaching, enabling teachers to respond to a range of learning styles.

32. The school is in the process of an extensive building programme. The accommodation to support the curriculum is good. It is very good in the newly-built facilities for English, modern foreign languages, art and design, music and graphics, and for pupils with special educational needs. The areas in mathematics, science, history and geography are older and in need of renovation. The playing surfaces of the indoor facilities for physical education are unsatisfactory and require attention.

33. In most subjects, teachers have good resources to support the curriculum. The resources in the specialist support centre for pupils with special educational needs are good, including the ICT resources. Some departments, such as art and design, French, geography, physical education and music, have difficulty in gaining access to computers for whole-class use. The school is in the process of providing additional ICT resources for specific subject areas to improve the situation. The resource centre is well organised and used by many teachers for classes in a wide range of subjects. There is adequate access to computers for pupils at lunchtimes.

Care, guidance and support

Standards of care, welfare, health and safety are good. Pupils receive satisfactory support, advice and guidance from their teachers. The arrangements to involve pupils in the school's work and development are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-monitored procedures ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment.
- Systems for monitoring pupils' academic progress and their achievements are not sharp enough.
- Pupils readily relate to their teachers, with whom they have very good and trusting relationships.
- Induction and transfer arrangements are very good through the school's close links with other schools.
- The school provides pupils with good support and guidance when choosing careers and further study opportunities.
- Pupils have a strong voice in the school, which is recognised and listened to.

Commentary

34. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to provide a good level of care and support for pupils. Parents are satisfied with the pastoral care their children receive. Good procedures ensure that health and safety issues are monitored effectively. The behaviour and discipline policy is well established and consistently applied. Child protection procedures comply with those adopted by the local Area Child Protection Committee and all staff are aware of the school's responsibilities. Pupils are well protected when using the Internet through the installation of efficient filters on all ICT equipment. Pupils feel secure that the staff, and especially their form tutors, know them well as individuals and are readily available to help them.

35. The care, guidance and support offered by the school to the pupils with special educational needs is good. They feel safe and valued, and know that if they have a problem, the special needs co-ordinator, teachers and teaching assistants will help and support them. Pupils are not sufficiently familiar with the targets in their individual education plans and most are not sure what they have to

do in order to achieve them. The school makes good use of the available external support agencies and other professionals.

36. Although there are strengths in the personal support pupils receive, the monitoring of their academic progress is not robust or systematic enough. The school collects and analyses data on pupils' achievements and some potentially good whole-school systems are being developed. Subject departments have access to a range of data but not all use them consistently to monitor the progress and achievements of different groups of pupils. There are, however, examples of very good practice in art and design and design and technology, where the tracking procedures are very thorough and systematic.

37. There are very good induction arrangements for pupils entering Year 7, including a series of visits, joint activities and shared information from primary schools. Pupils have access to a range of support and guidance, for example, in selecting the courses to follow in Years 10 and 11. The school provides well for pupils in preparation for further education. Pupils have knowledge of a wide range of choices and a good perception of the requirements of careers and higher education.

38. Pupils value the fact that the school listens to their views and that they are given the opportunity to contribute their ideas for improvements to the school environment. The school council is a well-established forum for pupils, which is effective as a channel of communication between pupils and staff. Representatives from each tutor group are elected by their peers and confidently speak of their responsibility for reporting back the council's debates and decisions. Pupils are proud of their role as fundraisers and instigators of new arrangements for managing the restricted space in the dining hall. A pupil task group was consulted about, and helped to write, a learning handbook for use throughout the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a good partnership with parents. Links with the community are very good. There are good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most parents are supportive of the work of the school and have confidence in the education it provides.
- The school has good links with the parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs.
- Reports to parents do not give enough information about pupils' progress, achievements and targets.
- Very good community and business links provide pupils with additional opportunities.
- Good links with other schools enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

39. The contribution of parents to the work of the school is good and most parents are supportive and interested. Parents speak positively about the school and most are satisfied that their children are achieving well and making good progress. However, a few parents have concerns that pupils are not always encouraged to reach their full potential. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are particularly pleased with the quality of support the school provides and their children's progress. The school's partnership with parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs is good. The school is welcoming to parents and contacts them promptly to discuss any concerns or to celebrate success. All parents are members of the Friends of Stradbroke High School Association (FOSHA) and the group raises significant amounts of money to support the school. The Friends have contributed very well towards the school's successful bid for business and enterprise status.

40. Overall, the quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Parents value the regular newsletters informing them about activities, organisation and pupils' achievements. The school provides parents with helpful information about option choices to assist them in helping pupils in Year 9 to make informed decisions about the subjects to study in Years 10 and 11. The school has sought parents' views through a recent survey, but a significant number of parents do not feel that their views are always valued or acted upon. Some parents, particularly in the lower school, successfully use the pupils' planners as a means of communication with teachers.

41. The extent, quality and consistency of the information parents receive about their child's progress are unsatisfactory. Parents receive an interim assessment report during the year showing a grade for effort, which is mainly related to the pupils' attitudes but unrelated to their progress in meeting their targets. Parents comment that they would like more regular information about topics to be covered in individual subjects, assessment and pupils' targets. The annual reports to parents are inconsistent in style and in the clarity of information provided about pupils' progress, achievement and attainment, and in the setting of specific subject targets for improvement.

42. Community links are strong and the school has a very high profile in the local area. Pupils' personal and social development is enriched by the school's strong business links and opportunities to take part in local activities. The rural nature of the area places the school in a high profile position as the provider for adult education courses and facilities for local organisations. Leisure and learning activities take place continuously throughout the week and a large number of adults attend a wide range of well organised courses. The school organises arts experience workshops each term and a significant number of families join together to work with professional artists and musicians. The school's sports facilities are in regular use by groups such as the youth club, badminton and football clubs and other sporting activities. The school is currently involved in the Extended Schools pilot scheme which is further strengthening its community links to include a wide range of support services for families and community learning.

43. The recently established Stradbroke Business Network involves a large number of local businesses who are providing valuable support for the school and enriching the curriculum for pupils. The school has received very good support from businesses for its bid for business and enterprise status. Through the well-organised programme of work experience, which is well supported locally, a number of pupils have successfully gained employment. The Young Engineers Club, which is sponsored by national and local companies, has enabled pupils in Year 9 to take part successfully in the National Robot Challenge. With the support of the school's business links, pupils enthusiastically undertake a number of mini-enterprise projects that support the curriculum well in such areas as applied business, ICT and mathematics. This makes a strong contribution to raising pupils' self-esteem and to their personal and social development. Visitors from the local community support the school well through working with pupils and sharing their expertise on a range of topics.

44. There are good links with other local schools. The school works closely with the primary schools to ensure that pupils are supported well prior to their induction into Year 7, arranging joint activities and sharing resources and information. The School Sports Co-ordinator Partnership, which is working well, provides a good opportunity for pupils to take part in regular sports fixtures with other schools. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 benefit from the school's strong links with the partnership sixth form, and through regular visits and staff consultation, pupils receive valuable help when choosing A-level and GNVQ courses. The school is successfully developing its links with a school in Kenya. This has raised pupils' awareness and enriched the curriculum through the experience of organising an Enterprise Africa Project in support of the Kenyan school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The good leadership provided by the headteacher and other key staff is moving the school forward successfully. Governance is good but the governing body has not ensured that all statutory requirements are met in the provision of a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, citizenship and ICT in Year 11. Management of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision and high aspirations for the school.
- Senior managers promote inclusion very well and provide very good role models for other staff and pupils.
- Financial management is very good.
- Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and support senior managers effectively.
- Lack of rigorous monitoring means that whole-school policies for homework, literacy, numeracy and ICT are not applied consistently.
- The school reviews its performance appropriately but not enough use is made of the information gained to improve the performance and progress made by individual pupils.
- The school's systems for monitoring the extent and pattern of internal exclusions are not robust enough.

Commentary

45. The headteacher's good leadership and high aspirations for the school have resulted in significant changes since the last inspection. These include gaining specialist school status for business and enterprise and additional funding, and raising the school's profile very successfully within the community. He provides a very strong sense of direction for the whole school and the curriculum, and has the full confidence of pupils, staff, parents and governors. He is closely in touch with day-to-day events and active in setting the tone and direction of the school. Along with other senior managers, he successfully promotes a positive ethos, which values all members of the school community and underpins the pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Senior staff provide effective support to the headteacher in the day-to-day leadership of the school, although they have significant subject responsibilities to cover as well as undertaking their senior management roles.

46. Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provided invaluable support to the school in seeking specialist school status. They are beginning to fulfil their role as critical friends more effectively. A number of governors have or have had children in the school. The governing body has not ensured that the school meets all statutory requirements.

47. Management is satisfactory overall. A detailed, comprehensive school development plan, which builds well on improving departmental evaluation, is a significant strength. It sets out clear, realistic targets but what the school intends is not always followed through consistently. Whole-school policies for citizenship, literacy, numeracy and ICT, for example, have been put in place but are not pursued rigorously enough to ensure success. Whilst there is regular monitoring of the school's work, such as the review of examination results, the outcomes of these reviews are not always recorded formally and evaluated, which makes it difficult to track trends and gauge effectiveness. Not all middle managers are rigorous in ensuring that they monitor the work in their departments on a regular basis and take firm action to make improvements. As a result, there is inconsistent practice within some departments, particularly in mathematics and science.

48. Leadership of subject areas and courses is good. It is very good in art and design and design and technology, and good in English, mathematics, science, French, geography, music and physical education. Elsewhere, it is satisfactory. Several subject leaders are comparatively new to the school and are receiving good support from the senior management team. Departmental management is very good in art and design and design and technology, and good in English, music and physical education. It is satisfactory in all others, with the exception of religious education, where it is unsatisfactory as there are no systems in place for assessing pupils' performance or for rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation.

49. Management of the recruitment and retention of staff is effective. Arrangements for the induction of staff are good, with a supportive mentoring system for new teachers and those new to

the school. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and for the most part are well supported in these.

50. The school's commitment to inclusion is very good. The needs of most pupils are catered for well but systems for internal exclusion, where pupils are removed from lessons for misbehaviour and other inappropriate activities, are not clearly written down in the discipline policy and are not robust enough to enable the school or its governors to monitor the extent and pattern of any occurrences. The current procedures require review to ensure that pupils are fully supervised during these periods.

51. The business manager has a clear and comprehensive overview of all budgetary matters and provides the headteacher and governors with accurate and useful information and guidance. All issues identified in the last audit report have been resolved. There are clear procedures for recording and monitoring financial transactions. School improvement plans include closely estimated costs and are integrated with overall budget plans. Plans and budgets are monitored carefully. Best value principles are well embedded in the school's procurement of goods and services and a recent review of management responsibilities has been carried out to identify potential savings and efficiencies. Balanced budgets are forecast for the next three years. The costs per pupil are relatively high because of the small size of the school.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,693,508
Total expenditure	1,725,738
Expenditure per pupil	4,973

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	34,064
Balance carried forward to the next year	1,834

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good partnerships with local businesses help to promote WRL.
- Successful work experience makes a valuable contribution to WRL.
- Specialist school status for business and enterprise gives the school greater capacity to extend the number of business partnerships and promote WRL further.
- WRL is developing through a number of curricular areas.

Commentary

52. The school makes good provision for WRL and plans to develop this provision further from September 2005 as part of its specialist school status for business and enterprise. The school initiated a partnership with about 40 local businesses two years ago with additional funding from the Learning and Skills Council. A training base on the school site, which is now managed by the school, provides good facilities for business people to train and develop additional skills as well as providing additional resources for pupils. Funding associated with its specialist status will allow the school to continue the work of the Stradbroke Business Network and develop further the vocational curriculum. The school raised funds for its application through a variety of mini-enterprise ventures. In Year 10, for example, design and technology teachers used the GCSE syllabus topic of production systems to teach the elements of batch production, based on designing and making 80 photograph frames. These were sold at a major school fundraising event.

53. Work experience gives pupils very good opportunities to learn about the skills required to do a variety of jobs in commercial, professional and manufacturing businesses and public services. There is evidence that such placements are leading to full-time employment for some pupils.

54. As part of the DfES-funded Enterprise Learning Pathfinder School initiative, departments have identified examples of curriculum activities that contribute to business and enterprise. For example, expressive arts obtained or made articles with an African theme in order to sell them to raise money for the school in Kenya. This fitted in with the GCSE syllabus requirement for a study of African art. In addition, work with visiting African artists at a local arts centre led to the creation of two pieces of work involving art, drama and music. In September 2004, an applied business course was introduced in Year 10. Part of this course requires pupils to develop mini-enterprises, one example of which was the sale of vegetables by pupils. Across the school, pupils are purposefully involved in a range of WRL activities. These have included a competition to advertise and promote a new product in association with a local company. In addition, the Young Engineers Club were runners-up in a competition using robotics. To encourage WRL, the school subsidises the cost of visits if teachers include WRL activities in their planning. For example, on a history visit to Ypres, pupils also investigated the impact on local businesses of visitors to the First World War battlefields.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above national expectations and are improving over time.
- Pupils achieve well because of their positive attitudes to learning and because of the good teaching and constructive assessment they receive.
- The good leadership and management of the acting head of department have minimised the impact of an absent colleague.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is weighted too much towards literature.

Commentary

55. The results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were below the national average overall but close to the average for the proportion reaching the expected Level 5 or above. They were below the national average at the higher Level 6 or above. The higher attainers did not do quite as well as the teachers' own assessments of their capabilities, which judged a higher proportion to be attaining above the expected level, in line with the results in previous years and with those in mathematics and science. The evidence shows that teachers' assessments are accurate. In 2004, the GCSE examination results in English were above the national average at grades A*-C, although the boys' results were slightly below the national average. The results in English literature were significantly above average for those gaining grades A*-C; indeed no pupil gained less than a grade D. However, nearly a third of the year group were not entered for this subject in 2004.

56. Standards in Year 9 are above national expectations, with pupils achieving well. This shows an improvement over the test results in 2004, brought about because of the good teaching and the constructive assessment pupils receive. Their writing is good, although standards of presentation could be better. Many lack the confidence to speak out in lessons. The relative standards of boys and girls reflect those found nationally. Pupils with special educational needs achieve at least as well as other pupils. In Year 11, all pupils study both GCSE subjects; they achieve well and standards exceed the level expected nationally. Pupils' strength lies in their writing. Redrafted work using ICT is frequently of a high standard.

57. The positive attitudes of pupils contribute to their achievement. They behave well, and their personal development is enhanced in lessons through opportunities to work together and to discuss the spiritual, moral and social themes that feature strongly in this subject. Their cultural development is enhanced by their encounter with the British literary heritage and by texts from other cultures in every year group.

58. Good teaching also contributes to pupils' achievement. Although the head of department has been absent for most of the past year through illness, and temporary staff are covering a third of English lessons, there has not been a serious impact on learning. Pupils learn well because teachers prepare thoroughly and manage their lessons with skill. As a result, pupils work sensibly and productively. Their ability to analyse poems is a strong feature of their work. Their efforts are enhanced by the quality of the teachers' assessment, which leaves pupils in no doubt about what they are achieving and what they need to do next.

59. The acting head of department, though relatively inexperienced, has provided good leadership and effective management. In her own teaching, she provides a very good role model, and she has a very clear view about the future direction of the department. She has already begun to enhance the book resources and is alert to the need to review the way pupils are organised in classes. Her thorough analysis of data has shown her, amongst other things, that the preparation for GCSE examinations needs more emphasis on language work: the bias towards literature work has not helped boys, in particular, to excel in English. The quality of teaching is monitored effectively, and she is well supported by colleagues and senior staff. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The new classrooms mean that English benefits from very good accommodation. More curriculum time is available for the subject now and standards have risen. Teachers have higher expectations, contributing to better achievement overall.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Standards of literacy in the school are not a barrier to achievement across the curriculum. Overall, they are in line with national expectations, and in some subject areas, such as art and design, English, geography, mathematics and physical education, standards are higher. The school librarian co-ordinates literacy. She has made significant strides in enhancing provision since taking on the role in September 2003 and works effectively with various departments on specific literacy units. Some useful work has recently been done in science, for instance. Word lists have been updated in all subject areas, and teachers are more alert to the range of writing that could or should be used in their subject. Reading is given emphasis, particularly in Years 7 and 8 and amongst pupils with special needs. There is good liaison with primary schools and the co-ordinator endeavours to hear every child read *before* they come to Stradbroke High. She hears every Year 7 pupil read during the weekly reading lessons allocated within English. The size of the school is an advantage in this respect, as she can be aware of the needs of every pupil. Younger pupils are helped with their reading during morning registration by Year 11 pupils and in the reading breakfast club.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 11.
- Most pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching, learning and very good feedback but the higher attainers are not always challenged enough.
- Very good relationships between teachers and pupils result in very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Assessments against National Curriculum levels are not always accurate and the information gained is not used consistently to plan future work.
- Computers are not used enough to enhance the learning.

Commentary

61. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 showed that a much lower proportion than found nationally reached the expected level, particularly in the case of boys. An analysis of current work in Year 9 and of pupils now in Year 10 indicates that these assessments were inaccurate and underestimated pupils' attainment. Current standards by Year 9 are in line with national expectations. Higher-attaining pupils write several sentences in past and present tenses about themselves and home, average attainers produce extended work in the present tense and lower attainers answer questions accurately following a pattern. Pupils achieve well in Years 7 - 9, with girls doing better than boys.

62. The GCSE examination results in 2004 were above the national average. Boys did particularly well but few pupils gained the highest grades of A* and A. Current standards are in line

with national expectations in Year 10 and exceed expectations in Year 11. Pupils achieve well. The highest attainers in Year 11 write fluent French of a very high standard whilst lower attainers, with some support, write paragraphs comprising several short sentences. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls in Years 10 and 11. Pupils with special educational needs achieve in line with their peers but the considerable support provided by teachers to help all pupils means that the highest attainers are not achieving as well as they should. In all year groups, listening skills are well developed because of teachers' regular use of French in the classroom, but speaking skills are not as good because pupils do not have enough opportunities to use the language being taught.

63. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers share clear learning objectives with pupils and provide a range of activities which enable them to learn well. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils result in very good attitudes and behaviour. Planning is generally good but sometimes lacks detail, which slows the pace and results in too little challenge for the most capable pupils. Teachers give very good feedback when marking work but the level descriptions outlined in the National Curriculum are not always applied accurately. Not enough use is made of computers to enhance the learning process and apart from the development of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, little overt development of literacy or numeracy skills was seen during the inspection.

64. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Leadership is good and a range of structures has been put in place which is beginning to help to raise standards and to stabilise the department. The curriculum for French is good. Study visits, day trips to Boulogne, the added advantage of a French assistant and the newly introduced 'flexi-days' all help to develop pupils' understanding and knowledge of French culture well. Resources are now good, with the exception of resources for ICT, which are satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improved standards have resulted from effective departmental leadership.
- Some pupils receive insufficient guidance on how to improve their work and are given inadequate homework to ensure in-depth understanding.
- Achievement is good but a lack of challenging work prevents some capable pupils from progressing well.
- Pupils' interest in their work and effective learning are rooted in good relations with teachers.

Commentary

65. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004, the results overall were in line with the national average, with boys doing better than girls. Pupils achieved very well and the results were similar to those in science and better than those in English. Overall, standards improved in 2003 and the improvement was maintained in 2004. By Year 9, current standards are in line with national expectations and pupils are achieving well. Pupils are good at investigative work, competent in the use of number and show confidence in oral communications. However, diagrams and graphs are completed without appropriate attention to detail.

66. In the GCSE examinations in 2004, the results were in line with the national average, but the highest grades of A* and A were slightly under-represented. Pupils achieved well overall and all of those entered obtained a GCSE grade. Pupils in Year 11 are working at the standard expected nationally but with a lower proportion demonstrating the skills required for higher grades. Pupils are good at showing the steps in their calculations and have completed their coursework successfully. However, standards in Year 10 are considerably higher than those in Year 11. Overall, pupils are achieving well in Years 10 and 11.

67. Teaching and learning are good overall but some approaches are less successful. For example, pupils completing routine exercises of many similar questions progress more slowly than those engaged with stimulating problems set in interesting contexts. Pupils in Year 7 learned very well using a range of resources, including computers and catalogues, to determine their individual spending priorities. Very good teaching of transformations in Year 9 rapidly extended pupils' knowledge and skills through discussion, written description and by drawing. On occasions, teachers' expectations of pupils are too low, for example, in not setting precise requirements for diagrams to ensure that they are supportive of understanding. Some pupils make too little progress because homework has not been developed as an integral aspect of study. The marking of pupils' work is variable: constructive guidance for improvement ensures that some pupils' books show comprehensive development of topics; in others, marking does not promote learning well enough.

68. Pupils are actively encouraged to attend after-school classes to improve standards prior to examinations; ten pupils in Year 11, aspiring to a grade C, are studiously participating. Capable pupils are entered for national mathematics challenges, but a mathematics club has not flourished. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support, often by teaching assistants; others work well in very small groups in the specialist support centre. Projects requiring more substantial applications of mathematics are planned well; for example, pupils in Year 10 with special educational needs tested a hypothesis with the aid of a computer. Mathematics teaching is not structured to develop aspects of citizenship, social or cultural understanding.

69. Leadership of the mathematics department is good. The head of department sets a very good example in his teaching and has high but realistic expectations of standards. A thorough review of the work of the department has identified appropriate priorities for improvement. The tracking of pupils' progress year-on-year is in place and is guiding the setting of targets. Over-reliance on textbooks, reported in the last inspection, is being addressed. Management of the small team of mathematics teachers is satisfactory but there is insufficient monitoring to establish common high standards. Continuity from primary school to Year 7 and from the end of Year 9 to the GCSE course is managed well. This, together with the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy, has ensured high standards of work in Year 7 and Year 10. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. Pupils' competence in mathematics is satisfactory and is not a barrier to their learning in other subjects. Planning for developing and using mathematics across the curriculum is at an early stage within the school. In science and design and technology, the use of numeracy is planned effectively and good support provided in lessons. Data handling is used satisfactorily for population graphs and study of weather in geography. Statistics are interpreted in English but written deductions are not made from graphs produced during ICT lessons. In art and design, links with mathematical concepts and terminology are being identified by teachers and work with tessellations and nets of objects has been included in the 'flexi-day' programmes.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership has improved many aspects of the science department since the last inspection.
- The teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge.
- There is insufficient challenge in lessons for some higher-attaining pupils, who do not always reach their full potential.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good.
- Teachers do not set sufficiently high standards for some pupils.

- Teachers and pupils receive good support from an effective technician and learning support assistants.

Commentary

71. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004, the results were in line with the national average. The trend has been upwards, in general, since the last inspection. Based on the pupils' earlier attainment, the results were well above those in similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 6 or above was below the national figure. In the GCSE examinations in 2004, the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was similar to the national average. All pupils gained a pass grade. The trend has been variable over the past few years and the results were not as high in 2004 as in the previous two years. The proportion of boys gaining grades A*-C was below that of girls.

72. Pupils' work shows that standards are in line with national expectations by Year 9 and by Year 11. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is broadly average and their achievement is satisfactory between Years 7 and 11. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by both teachers and teaching assistants and achieve well. The achievement of some higher-attaining pupils is restricted by the lack of challenging extension work.

73. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching. In these lessons, effective planning ensures that pupils are fully engaged and challenged by setting a range of suitable activities. An example of this was seen to good effect in a Year 7 class investigating energy changes in a range of children's toys. Pupils' attitudes to science are good and they are confident to enter into the well-handled class discussions. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, which leads to a pleasant, co-operative atmosphere where pupils learn well. Teachers use a wide range of teaching and learning approaches, including the use of computers. Lessons are well planned within a well-organised course from Years 7 - 11. However, some pupils' progress and attainment are restricted by their poor notes, which are incomplete. These pupils, therefore, have an inadequate source from which to revise for their examinations. This is particularly true for boys and gives rise to their attainment being lower than that of girls. The marking and reviewing of pupils' notes lack rigour and closer monitoring is needed to ensure all the work is complete and of a sufficiently high standard.

74. Leadership of the department is good. The relatively new team of enthusiastic, well-qualified teachers have raised the standard of teaching and learning. The handbook, guidance and development plans are detailed and they give good support to teachers. The effective science technician supports teachers well, ensuring that all the required equipment is available. The introduction of a revised course in Years 7 - 9 has been successful, as topics are more relevant and engaging. The management of the department is satisfactory. The detailed development plan addresses all the major issues but the agreed procedures and strategies are not yet fully monitored to ensure that all staff follow a consistent approach. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards are higher, the teaching has improved and the organisation of the courses is better.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The introduction of a specific ICT course in Years 7 to 10 is leading to improved standards.
- There is no assurance that Year 11 receive their statutory entitlement to ICT, and their experience is not reported to parents.
- The teacher of ICT is well supported in the development of the subject.
- The arrangements for teaching pupils on the entry-level and GCSE courses together in Year 10 adversely affect the amount of guidance the pupils receive.

Commentary

75. In 2004, teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 show that a much higher proportion of pupils than found nationally attained the expected level. They are higher than most other subjects assessed at the same time, and show that boys performed better than girls. These assessments are based on work carried out in other subjects and are not accurate. They are in line with the skills of current pupils but represent levels of thinking higher than those seen during the inspection. No records exist of pupils' attainment by Year 11 in 2004.

76. Standards of pupils' current work are at the levels expected nationally, both on entry to the school and by the end of Year 9. Their achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 - 9. Pupils have good communication skills but do not consider purpose and audience enough when designing presentations or publications. Higher attainers have a good awareness of appropriate software for their needs; the majority are competent users of ICT. Lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs cope with tasks set when given individual attention, especially with the help of a teaching assistant. Boys are more proficient with a range of software, but girls, having a more careful and systematic approach, develop their thinking skills better than boys. Pupils work at the nationally expected levels in Years 10 and 11, with a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. Pupils taking the full GCSE work at higher levels than those taking entry-level qualifications. The work of both groups is in line with the expected levels for the courses. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils in Year 11 have good skill in the use of communication software from word processing to website design. Entry-level pupils carry out the required tasks competently. At present, the GCSE folders have too little evidence of the thinking behind the pupils' decisions, and no evidence of the development of work from first draft. Pupils are intent on reaching the stage of realisation without having analysed and designed in full.

77. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with strengths in the teacher's subject knowledge, lesson structure and informal support for individuals. The teacher and support assistant work well together. Pupils' literacy and numeracy are appropriately developed in line with the intentions of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy and GCSE courses. Pupils use contexts for learning that encourage informed thinking about moral and social issues. However, there is not enough specific planning to challenge higher-attaining pupils or to support those with special educational needs. Marking and end-of-unit assessment informs pupils about their attainment, but does not give clear advice on specific targets or on how to reach them. Pupils in Year 11 do not have specific ICT lessons and there is no guarantee that they receive their statutory entitlement to ICT as their experiences are not mapped and audited. Their attainment is not assessed or reported to parents. However, pupils in Year 10 are in the first year of a two-year course that meets statutory requirements.

78. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. The teacher of ICT is well supported by school management in the development of courses and in moves to meet statutory requirements. The school has recognised the deficiencies in its provision for ICT and is making good progress in improving its offer to pupils. The school has recognised the problem in assessment at the end of Year 9 and is working to ensure that it is accurate and informative to pupils. There has been good improvement in the extent to which pupils learn and use ICT through the growth of resources and the introduction of ICT lessons. There is not enough communication between the ICT department and other teachers to ensure that the use of ICT across the school meets subject requirements and complements the teaching of ICT as a separate subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils' skills are sufficient to enable them to apply them effectively to support their learning. Computers are used well to support learning in English, science, design and technology, geography and business education, and used very well to develop thinking skills in history. Their use in mathematics is satisfactory. Not enough use is made of ICT in art or music. The use of ICT in other subjects has grown recently, as the school has taken steps to improve the availability of rooms for whole classes. Teachers have limited access to data projectors for whole-class demonstration or discussion. There has been

some overview of pupils' use of ICT but not enough to make sure that they receive their statutory entitlement throughout the school.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn effectively and achieve well because teaching is well planned.
- Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour because lessons interest them.
- Pupils do not always know how well they are achieving and how to improve.
- The subject is led enthusiastically, and enriched by fieldwork for all pupils.

Commentary

80. In the teachers' assessments of standards at the end of Year 9 in 2004, a lower proportion of pupils than found nationally reached the expected levels. As this year group entered Year 7 with slightly weaker skills in geography, their achievement was satisfactory. Girls performed better than boys and the difference was greater than the difference nationally. Standards of work of the current pupils in Year 9 are in line with national expectations. There are no significant differences in standards between boys and girls. Pupils achieve well across Years 7 - 9. Pupils have good skills for investigating topics independently and make effective use of ICT, especially the higher attainers.

81. The GCSE examination results in 2004 were above the national average at grades A*-C and at grades A*-G. However, no pupil gained the highest grade of A*. Girls did better at grades A*-C than boys, although the difference was less than the national difference. In relation to their previous attainment, however, boys did better than the girls. Standards by Year 11 are above the level expected nationally, reflecting the GCSE results in 2004. Pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11. The results of a decision-making exercise, taken in January 2005 as part of the GCSE modular assessment, provide further positive evidence of above-average performance. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils.

82. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout. The teacher's subject knowledge is good, and it is used well to plan lessons so that pupils learn effectively by building on their existing knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils know at the start of lessons what they are expected to learn so they are well focused. Lessons begin with short starter activities that introduce topics and clarify pupils' understanding of information from previous lessons and homework. Pupils show enthusiasm because tasks have relevance to pupils' lives. In Year 8, for example, the poisoning of the water in Camelford had greater impact because pupils had calculated water consumption at home. Older pupils use the skills they learn through fieldwork to investigate issues independently, such as possible uses for a former hospital site in Norwich. The teacher often provides lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs with resources that help them to progress well. In the one lesson where teaching was satisfactory, the opportunity to challenge more capable pupils was missed in a class of higher-attaining pupils. Not all pupils in Years 7 - 9 are clear about their level of attainment in relation to the National Curriculum or what they need to do to improve, as teachers' comments on their work are infrequent and vague. However, pupils undertake end-of-topic assessments. A system for giving pupils guidance on how to improve has been implemented in Year 7, and will be introduced in all years. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are better informed about their achievement and the grades they are expected to reach in the GCSE examination.

83. The subject has good leadership and satisfactory management. The head of department has introduced new approaches to teaching and learning in response to the evidence from monitoring pupils' work, pupils' evaluations, and professional meetings. Assessment data are used to place pupils into teaching groups, but data are not used sufficiently to probe issues, such as the

performance of boys and more capable pupils, in order to raise standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards at the end of Year 11 have risen, and the quality of teaching is better.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the GCSE examination in 2004, pupils did not do as well in history as they did in their other subjects.
- Teaching does not deal sufficiently with the principles underpinning historical processes and skills, but is beginning to develop pupils' thinking skills.
- Teachers assess pupils' work well so that they know how to improve.
- Pupils are taught to use ICT very well to help their learning in history.
- The history curriculum makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy.
- The higher-attaining pupils and boys do not achieve as well as other pupils.

Commentary

84. The assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2004 showed that a much lower proportion than the national figure reached the expected levels, with the girls doing better than the boys. The proportion assessed as reaching the higher levels was also low, suggesting under-performance by higher-attaining pupils. Pupils' current work by Year 9 confirms the low proportion of the higher levels but is of a higher standard overall than the teachers' assessments in 2004 would suggest, as it matches the level expected nationally. Pupils enter the school at expected levels, and so their achievement is satisfactory overall by Year 9. Higher attainers achieve less well than expected but the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Boys' attainment is lower than that of the girls because they take less care in the organisation and presentation of work. Average and lower attainers do not select material well to support their ideas. In general, however, pupils express their ideas logically and fluently, especially their identification of different aspects of situations. They use ICT well to analyse and express historical ideas.

85. The GCSE examination results in 2004 were well below national average and also well below the results of the same pupils in their other subjects, which is a decline since the last inspection. The small groups taking history in Years 10 and 11 are more capable than those in previous years and the quality of their work is, therefore, much higher than the standard indicated by last year's GCSE results. Standards by Year 11 are in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This shows in their mature expression of ideas, coupled with understanding of the significance, purpose and impact of historical sources. The weakness of pupils' work in Year 11 lies in their examination technique, in particular the need to select at speed the most important points to support an argument.

86. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Most lessons focus well on the development of pupils' thinking. A good range of activities covers all of the areas of the National Curriculum and the GCSE syllabus, although there is sometimes too much emphasis on presentation at the expense of thinking. Teaching provides good examples of planned arguments and source evaluation, but lessons pay insufficient attention to the underlying principles that are transferable to other examples. The department has improved, in that work is assessed well, it is marked regularly for improvement in terms of history, and end-of-unit assessments inform pupils about their levels, strengths and weaknesses. Pupils are beginning to learn to assess their own work, but at present their comments are general and superficial. Resources and tasks do not match the specific needs of pupils closely enough. This means that pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented do not have planned support or challenge. In a specialist history day, however, gifted pupils were challenged well by their presentations about a recent visit. The curriculum is well

matched to the needs of the pupils, with good planning for the development of thinking and very good use of ICT to support learning. Essay writing and source analysis develop pupils' literacy well. They also use their numeracy skills satisfactorily to collect, graph and analyse data about the impact of the First World War on the armed forces.

87. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. The head of department is working hard to develop cross-curricular areas of learning within history, especially thinking skills. This is an improvement since the last inspection. He has identified areas of weakness that led to low GCSE results in the past and has adapted the curriculum to include areas of interest for all pupils. He is a leading practitioner locally in the use of ICT in history. However, the larger task of ensuring that the principles underpinning historical process arise out of individual tasks remains to be resolved. The number of pupils selecting history as a GCSE course has fallen. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good specialist teaching is helping pupils to learn well, although the standard of pupils' work in Year 11 is well below average.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive and the subject makes a good contribution to their personal development.
- Systematic procedures for assessment are missing.
- Management through rigorous monitoring and evaluation has not yet begun.

Commentary

88. Pupils' work by Year 9 is at the standard expected by the local agreed syllabus. Pupils know the beliefs and practices of Christianity and of the other religions they study. They understand the similarities and differences across religions. They write in their own words about religious concepts, such as enlightenment in Buddhism. They apply religious ideas to their own experience and know how religious belief makes a difference to a person's life. Pupils have positive attitudes and make steady progress during Years 7 - 9. Their achievement is satisfactory.

89. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow the GCSE short course. The results in the GCSE examination in 2004 were well below the national average. Pupils benefit from the course, in which they look at personal and social issues from the perspective of different religions. In the present Year 11, standards are also well below national expectations. The proportion of pupils estimated to attain grades A*-C remains well below expectation. Because of their limited previous experience, they are not acquiring the detailed knowledge and depth of understanding of which they are capable. Many exercise books lack the quantity and quality of work typically found as pupils approach the end of the course. In lessons, pupils in Year 11 show neither confidence nor facility with religious ideas and vocabulary. These weaknesses suggest that the staffing difficulties in 2004 have had, and continue to have, a deleterious effect on pupils' attainment. Nevertheless, pupils' attitudes are positive and their achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory overall as they are now benefiting from more effective teaching.

90. Teaching and learning are good in all years but have not yet had sufficient time to overcome the lack of specialist teaching in the past. The teaching shows strong command of the subject, good planning and high levels of intellectual engagement with pupils. Teaching methods and the use of time are good. Although the pace is brisk, pupils still have opportunities for reflection. The use of learning resources, such as animated video for Hinduism, Magic Eyes for Buddhism and the pupils themselves for religious issues raised by use of contraception, is very effective. In the best lessons, pupils developed their thinking and speaking skills in groups followed by their writing skills individually. Most pupils, but not quite all, respond well to the teacher's insistence on good

behaviour. Pupils benefit from good specialist teaching, with continuity of provision and high expectations, and so make good gains in learning.

91. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory but, without assessment tasks that match the levels, systematic tracking of individual pupils is not possible. Although learning objectives are clear in lessons, pupils have no way of measuring their own attainment. Procedures for assessment are insufficiently developed. Pupils have too little awareness of how well they are doing and of what they need to do to improve.

92. Leadership by the subject leader, who is new in post this year, is satisfactory, showing a sense of purpose and recognition of what needs to be done. The curriculum meets the requirements of the agreed syllabus but the present schemes of work are poor. The highest priority, rightly recognised in the departmental action plan, is the need to write lesson-by-lesson schemes of work. Such a process would naturally include the development of appropriate assessment tasks. Without systematic procedures for assessment, management is unsatisfactory, because the department lacks the capacity for rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation. Since the last inspection, teaching and learning have improved but standards have remained low in Year 11. Although a considerable amount remains to be done, improvement so far has been satisfactory.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE examinations are above average overall and well above average in textiles and graphics.
- Because the teaching is very good, pupils of all capabilities achieve well.
- Pupils' achievement in Years 7 - 9 is good.
- Pupils' very good attitudes have a positive impact on learning and achievement.
- The very good systems of assessment provide useful feedback for pupils and this helps them to improve.

Commentary

93. When pupils arrive at the school their capability in design and technology is broadly average. During Years 7 - 9 they make good progress and by the end of Year 9, standards are above the level expected nationally. These standards are higher than those assessed by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2004. Pupils' achievement in Years 7 - 9 is good.

94. In 2004, the GCSE examination results were above the national average. There was some variation across the courses studied. Result in graphics and textiles were well above average and, whilst they were below average in resistant materials and well below average in food technology, this represents satisfactory achievement for those pupils who were entered. Current work shows continued high standards in textiles and graphics, and an improvement in food technology and resistant materials, where standards are in line with national expectations. Teachers try very hard to ensure that lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs can succeed by providing them with opportunities to have their achievements recognised in Certificate of Achievement awards. Girls do better than boys but no more so than is found nationally. Pupils of all capabilities achieve well in Years 10 and 11.

95. Pupils show very good attitudes to their work. They arrive at lessons promptly and are prepared to work hard, responding positively to their individual targets and trying hard to meet the high expectations set by their teachers. Relationships are very good and make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of collaborative group work. Pupils in a Year 7 food technology

lesson worked very well in pairs, estimating the weight of different quantities of flour and testing each other's results.

96. The quality of teaching in Years 7 - 9 is very good. Teachers have a very clear understanding of what they want pupils to learn. They plan lessons well, ensuring that learning is stimulating, active and varied, and reflects and reinforces designing and making skills. In an excellent lesson, pupils in a Year 8 class gained a very good understanding about the different forces that affect structures. Because the teacher asked them to talk about injuries they had suffered and to identify the type of force involved, a difficult concept was taught well. Assessment is very good. Teachers share assessments with pupils, encouraging and developing their self-assessment skills. An excellent tracking system ensures continuity of learning and progression for pupils as they learn through a range of projects with different teachers. The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Teachers plan lessons well, making very good use of both time and resources. In an excellent graphics lesson, the teacher showed great inventiveness when using a digital video camera to project live, large-scale images as she demonstrated geometrical construction methods to help pupils as they revised in preparation for their GCSE examinations. Pupils of all capabilities are challenged to achieve well. Whilst teachers set demanding targets, they give very focused support and guidance to help pupils to reach them. Assessment is very good. It is thorough, systematic and closely structured on GCSE examination requirements. The detailed feedback and other comments that teachers provide for pupils help them to improve their grades and resubmit work for further assessment.

97. The curriculum is satisfactory and supports the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, there are insufficient opportunities to promote pupils' understanding of citizenship, or their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. The application of ICT is developing but it is not yet embedded well enough to have a significant impact on standards. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good because teachers take care to provide suitably adapted learning activities, and teaching assistants give very good support in lessons. The accommodation is very good but the lack of a specialist room for textiles is a weakness. Resources are good.

98. Leadership is very good. Although there have been a number of staffing changes and the responsibility for subject leadership has been re-assigned, staff work very effectively as a team. This gives pupils a clear and coherent experience of design and technology in Years 7 - 9, providing them with a very good foundation for their GCSE courses. Relationships are excellent and all staff show very professional approaches to promoting high standards. Management is very good. Courses are clearly defined in useful documents that ensure pupils' work is assessed systematically and consistently. Assessment data are analysed very thoroughly and used effectively to evaluate the course and to inform change and future improvement plans. Health and safety matters are carefully managed to ensure pupils and staff can work in a safe environment.

99. Since the last inspection, teaching has improved, accommodation has improved and standards have risen. Improvement since that time has been good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Expressive Arts

100. Only one lesson was seen in the GCSE expressive arts course and therefore it is not possible to make a judgement about provision, standards or teaching and learning. The expressive arts course enriches the curriculum in Years 10 and 11, is a popular subject and contributes well to the artistic, aesthetic and cultural development of pupils. Pupils choosing to study art and design as a full GCSE subject rather than taking art and design as an element within the expressive arts course have had an impact on the decline in standards over time. Although the GCSE examination results in 2004 were below the national average at grades A*-C, pupils achieved their predicted grades. This is now an improving subject and overall achievement is satisfactory. The drama and dance elements of the course are not taught by a subject specialist and this has had a particular impact on

standards in dance, where pupils lack a movement vocabulary, choreographic skills and an understanding of dance styles.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- All pupils achieve well.
- Pupils become increasingly independent and confident in producing personal responses in the subject.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to make creative use of ICT in the subject.

Commentary

101. Standards in art and design have been very high in recent years. In 2004, the assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Year 9 judged that a higher proportion than found nationally attained the expected levels. This is confirmed by pupils' current work, which is above national expectations by Year 9. In the GCSE examination in 2004, the results at grades A*-C were slightly below the national average. Standards of pupils' current work are in line with national expectations by Year 11. The subject is very popular at examination level, with a participation rate well over twice the national average. All pupils make good progress in relation to their earlier attainment. This is particularly impressive in Year 10, given the lack of continuity in provision for pupils on the expressive arts course. All groups of pupils achieve well, including those identified as having special educational needs. Throughout the school, the standard of work by girls is slightly higher than that of boys.

102. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. From Year 7, pupils rapidly develop essential skills and confidence in the use of a wide range of materials, tools and techniques. This is because of very enthusiastic, knowledgeable and challenging teaching that supports good quality work. Lessons are well planned, with clear aims and objectives that are shared with and understood by the pupils. Teaching is adjusted with sensitivity to take account of differing capabilities. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support. Lessons are characterised by high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Teachers maintain a brisk pace by giving clear instructions and advice and by providing effective demonstrations of skills, for example, in drawing. Teaching also makes effective links between practical work and the application of associated knowledge, and between different aspects of art, craft and design. More capable pupils are confident to express opinions about their own and others' work using an aesthetic and technical language.

103. Stimulating displays and examples of pupils' work are used well to show a range of creative solutions to a common problem, for example, visual research. Sketchbooks are particularly well used. They provide evidence of the sequential development of pupils' ideas, supported by earlier research and investigation. During lessons, the teacher intervenes thoughtfully with concise and accurate verbal assessments of pupils' work that are effective in helping them make progress. Pupils sustain their interest and concentration in lessons and know how well they are performing and what they must do to improve. Work is marked regularly with helpful and encouraging comments. The absence of computer equipment and associated hardware and software within the art department constrains the development of pupils' creative use of ICT.

104. Very good subject leadership supports high standards and good achievement. The curriculum and the quality of teaching are kept under review. Subject staff and teaching assistants work well as a team and share effective practice in teaching and learning. Management of the subject is very good. Monitoring and evaluation processes ensure that any weaknesses are identified quickly and

rectified. The progress that pupils make is tracked carefully using National Curriculum level descriptors. Groups of pupils, including particularly talented pupils, are routinely identified for additional support. Pupils benefit from additional access to the art room at lunchtimes, after school and during the varied programme of community provision. There is good awareness of cultural diversity and some of the influences that have shaped pupils' own visual culture. Excellent links with local artists and craftspeople extends pupils' understanding.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enthusiastic teaching challenges all pupils to do their best.
- Pupils work well together in ensembles and this makes a significant contribution to their personal development.
- There is a lack of computers to support learning in lessons.

Commentary

105. All judgements in the report relate to provision in Years 7 - 9 as no teaching of music was seen in Years 10 and 11. According to the assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2004, a much higher proportion of pupils than found nationally reached the expected levels. Recordings and pupils' work seen during the inspection do not support these assessments, which are too generous. Current standards are in line with national expectations by Year 9, with boys' attainment slightly better than that of girls. Pupils co-operate well together in ensembles, giving each other advice and ideas. They are taught how to develop good techniques when playing keyboards. However, developing musical ideas into structured compositions is a weakness. Achievement is good for all groups of pupils, including those who are gifted and talented or have special educational needs.

106. The school does not offer a specific GCSE course in music to pupils in Years 10 and 11. Instead, pupils study for the GCSE examination in expressive arts. In the GCSE examination in 2004, the results were below the national average, with boys attaining better results than the girls, maintaining the recent trend in results. There was insufficient evidence relating to the music component of the expressive arts course to make a clear judgement on current standards in music by Year 11.

107. Teaching and learning are good. The teacher has clear enthusiasm for music which is conveyed to pupils and encourages them to do their best in lessons. Good questioning and systematic development of musical skills help pupils to understand and describe their learning using musical language. This oral work makes a good contribution to improving pupils' levels of literacy, but the spelling of technical language is weaker because written work is not marked consistently. Lessons are planned carefully so that all capabilities achieve well and understand what they are expected to do during practical work. However, the endings of lessons do not always allow pupils the opportunity to reflect upon and review the progress they have made. Pupils' work is assessed thoroughly and the regular recording of practical work helps them understand how to improve. Pupils participate in a range of interesting activities but the lack of computers constrains their learning.

108. Leadership and management are good. There is a strong drive for improvement to give all pupils the best possible musical experience. This is seen clearly in the enjoyment pupils in Year 7 have when they take part in the annual production. However, enrichment for other pupils is infrequent. A thorough review of assessment systems means that individual pupils' progress is monitored carefully and is now more accurate. Target setting is realistic and pupils enjoy setting themselves goals to achieve. However, the lack of ICT has still not been addressed. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is an improving department as a result of effective new leadership and management.
- Teachers develop very good relationships with the pupils, attitudes to learning are good and pupils enjoy physical education.
- Pupils respond well to the high expectations demanded of them and their behaviour is very good.
- Extra-curricular activities and sporting opportunities are good and have improved significantly.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is not supported by schemes of work.
- ICT is not used effectively to enhance teaching and learning.

Commentary

109. Standards by the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations. These standards match the assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2004, which showed that a similar proportion to the national average attained the expected levels. The department is currently developing its assessment procedures in order to moderate and assess pupils' achievements more accurately. There were no opportunities to observe pupils in Years 10 - 11 during the inspection and it is not possible to make a judgement about standards or achievement at this stage. There are no GCSE examinations in physical education at present. However, a short course is being implemented in Year 10 and a GCSE course is being introduced in September 2005. These courses are recruiting well.

110. Pupils make good progress as they move from Year 7 to Year 9 and achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the physical education programme, make good progress and achieve well. Lessons were seen in Year 7 and Year 9 in games and athletics. By the end of Year 9, pupils become more expert in their skills and techniques. In rounders, pupils perform batting and fielding skills with increasing confidence, control and accuracy. They demonstrate a sound understanding of games play and recognise the importance of rules in team games. The higher-attaining pupils observe and describe each other's performance fluently using technical language. In athletics, pupils improve their stamina, strength and judgement skills, and are able to pace themselves on timed runs.

111. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 - 9 is good and often better than this. Teachers are knowledgeable specialists, confident in teaching a range of activities. They are good role models and establish very good relationships with the pupils. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are good; they respond well to the high expectations demanded of them, behaviour is very good and they enjoy physical education. Participation in lessons and the wearing of appropriate clothing have significantly improved. Lessons are well planned, managed and organised, and teachers are implementing the recommendations of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy well. Assessment is being developed and pupils' observation and analysis skills are improving. Pupils are beginning to understand how well they are performing and what to do in order to improve. However, the use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning is not effective.

112. Leadership and management are good. The new head of physical education provides strong curriculum leadership and is a very good role model. A number of initiatives have been developed and implemented successfully, raising the profile of physical education and sport in the school. Clear policies and procedures are now in place. The curriculum in Years 7 - 9 has been reviewed and schemes of work support teaching and learning. A GCSE course is being introduced into the curriculum and pupils benefit from a well-planned extra-curricular programme. This is a developing department and improvement since the last inspection in a short space of time has been good.

113. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Pupils benefit from a wide range of activities. Dance has been reintroduced into the curriculum in Years 7 - 9, and health-related exercise and outdoor and adventurous activities enrich the programme. In Years 10 and 11, there are currently no schemes of work and no opportunities to study for vocational qualifications. Extra-curricular provision and sporting fixtures in all the major games are now good and participation is improving. The arrangement of one double lesson a week in the current timetable does not allow flexibility in curriculum planning in Years 7 - 9 and some pupils in all year groups are taught by non-specialists, who lack the knowledge and skills to provide high quality physical education. The School Sport Co-ordinator role is new to the school, developing positive links with the community but takes one of the two specialist teachers away from the department for two days each week. The quantity of facilities for the size of the school is good. However, both the major indoor floor spaces are in poor condition.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies

114. Only one lesson was seen in business studies and there is insufficient evidence to make judgements about the quality of provision, standards or teaching and learning. In this lesson, teaching and learning and pupils' achievement were satisfactory and standards were in line with national expectations.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

115. No lessons were seen in citizenship during the inspection and it is not possible to make a clear judgment about provision, standards or teaching and learning. Citizenship has been introduced satisfactorily into the curriculum and it is taught at specific points in the year as part of the personal, social and health education programme. The current arrangements do not fully meet statutory requirements. Specific units of work have been implemented for each year group to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of citizenship issues but they do not link explicitly with the other two strands of the programme of study, namely developing pupils' skills of enquiry and communication and those of participation and responsible action. The units of work include a range of tasks that encourage the active involvement of pupils in their learning but there is no clear identification of the objectives of the unit as a whole or for individual lessons to guide teachers or to enable pupils' progress to be assessed systematically. Clear assessment procedures have not yet been developed. The coordinator has a clear understanding of the actions that need to be taken to ensure that citizenship fully meets requirements. In the short time since his appointment, progress has been satisfactory.

Personal, social and health education

116. No teaching of personal, social and health education occurred during the inspection and therefore it is not possible to make a clear judgement about provision, standards or teaching and learning. The scheme of work, which has recently been updated, covers all the areas usually found in such programmes and shows some good sequencing of topics to develop pupils' skills, as well as their knowledge and understanding, in a systematic way. The content of, and the materials used in, some of the topics require updating as it involves the use of too many worksheets and does not give form tutors sufficient guidance on the most effective teaching and learning approaches to use. The programme meets the legal requirement to provide sex and relationships education and to give attention to alcohol and drug misuse. Careers education and guidance forms an important part of the programme and is valued by pupils. From a scrutiny of the documentation, including pupils' books, discussions with pupils and the evidence from their attitudes and behaviour around the school, the school's programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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