

INSPECTION REPORT

TESTWOOD SCHOOL

Southampton

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116499

Headteacher: Mr I M Appleton

Lead inspector: Mr D Roberts

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st April 2005

Inspection number: 273842

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1035
School address:	Testwood Lane Totton Southampton Hampshire
Postcode:	SO40 3ZW
Telephone number:	(023) 8086 2146
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Jerrett
Date of previous inspection:	October 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Testwood School serves the community of Totton on the north-western fringes of Southampton. It is an average sized mixed comprehensive school, where girls outnumber boys in most year groups. The socio-economic profile of the pupils' backgrounds is broadly in line with the overall national profile, and pupil mobility is at an average level. While the pupil population is very predominantly of white British origin, the school benefits too from the presence of small numbers from a range of ethnic heritages. A very small number of these are still in the process of gaining English language skills. The proportion of pupils deemed to have special educational needs is above the national average, although the number with statements of special educational need is below average. In terms of prior attainment levels before they started at this school, the pupil population is again broadly in line with the national profile.

The school achieved specialist sports college status in 2004, following the award of Sportsmark in 2003 and a School Achievement Award in both 2002 and 2003. The school is involved with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and the Prince's Trust.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7582	D Roberts	Lead inspector	
9588	A West	Lay inspector	
12857	R Bailey	Team inspector	English Drama
19867	M Pettitt	Team inspector	Art and design
31441	M King	Team inspector	Mathematics
13122	S Matthews	Team inspector	History Leisure and tourism
12336	M Overend	Team inspector	Geography
18032	I Randall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
13155	J Dixon	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
8360	F Peacock	Team inspector	Music
18755	R Whittaker	Team inspector	Physical education
21825	E Kelly	Team inspector	Design and technology Health and social care
28002	S Taylor	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language
10160	R Bagguley	Team inspector	Science
1517	D Griffith	Team inspector	Citizenship Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. It demonstrates significant improvement following a very unsettled period. Teaching quality is satisfactory overall, although inconsistency does affect achievement. Leadership has satisfactorily addressed the crucial issues facing the school and ensured a sharp focus on raising quality and standards. The school's recently acquired specialist sports college status is already having a positive impact on morale and resources. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- The sensitive and well-respected leadership provided by the headteacher has brought stability and a renewed sense of purpose to the school after a highly unsettled period.
- Teaching is of very good quality in science and drama and good in many other subjects; however it is unsatisfactory in mathematics and religious education in particular, resulting in standards that are too low in these subjects.
- Line-management of some subjects and the oversight of some key priorities are inadequate.
- Pupils, in the main, now bring positive attitudes to the school, reflecting the good guidance and support the school provides for them, including on transfer from primary schools.
- Attendance and punctuality are good, reflecting the successful actions to promote these.
- The school provides very good enrichment for the curriculum, including additional lessons.
- The curriculum in Years 10/11 has been well developed to meet the needs of the range of pupils.
- Unsatisfactory timetabling results in too many split-taught classes, often involving the use of non-specialist teachers.
- Data is being well used to identify, and provide for, pupils likely to benefit from additional support to raise their achievement.

The school was last inspected in autumn 1999. While it was identified then as a good school, leadership and management were indicated as needing some improvement. This improvement did not take place and the school went through a very unstable period up to 2002. Since the last inspection, improvement has not been sufficient, as reflected in the now satisfactory standards and quality compared with the good standards and quality found then. However, improvement since the low point in 2002 has been at least satisfactory. Staffing is again stable and morale is good, pupils' attitudes and attendance are good and governance is more effective.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is satisfactory overall in all Years 7 to 11 and standards of work seen are broadly average. In relation to the core subjects, achievement is good in science and, in Years 10/11, in English. However, in mathematics it is unsatisfactory, leading to the below average standards seen. Results in tests at the end of Year 9 have declined overall since 2001. However, the pattern is inconsistent and in 2004 they were well below those for similar schools in mathematics and science but well above in English. As shown in the table, GCSE results continue to compare well with similar schools although too few pupils have been reaching higher grades in recent years. The larger than average gap between the achievement of boys and girls is closing.

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

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

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Pupils show good interest in school activities and the school provides good personal development for them. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall, but with insufficient preparation for life in multicultural Britain.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with about a sixth of lessons very good but about a tenth not satisfactory. Where teachers combine good subject knowledge with enthusiasm, good relationships with the pupils, and well-planned challenging lessons, pupils learn well. They learn less well where teachers' expectations are too low, where planning is less effective, where a non-specialist teaches, and/or where behaviour management is inadequate. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory, taken overall, but the quality of marking by too many teachers is inadequate. Improvements to teaching and to the Years 10/11 curriculum are having a positive impact on achievement and standards. There is very good curriculum enrichment.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory, taken overall. The headteacher, supported by many other key staff, has provided good, sensitive leadership in rebuilding the school's morale and effectiveness, although the pace of improvement in some areas has been too slow. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses; they give good support but have been insufficiently challenging. There are good models of departmental leadership and self-evaluation, but inconsistency is not being adequately tackled. Pupil performance data are being well used to set improvement targets and to identify and support underachieving pupils. Staff recruitment and development strategies have been successful but deployment of specialist teaching staff is unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

It is difficult to assess parents' views of the school as few completed the questionnaire made available. Those who responded seem broadly satisfied with provision and feel their children are well cared for. A significant minority express concerns about the use of non-specialist teachers and about the inconsistent way in which unsatisfactory behaviour is addressed by teachers. They feel well informed about their children's progress. The inspection confirms this picture. Pupils are also broadly happy with the provision the school makes. Older pupils are very clear about the significant improvements recently achieved. Like parents, some rightly worry about unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority of their peers. Their very positive questionnaire response to the quality of teaching is not fully borne out by the inspection and many spoken to are rightly concerned about the detrimental impact of split-taught classes.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Address weaknesses in teaching, especially in religious education and mathematics, with a focus on behaviour management and assessment.
- Ensure that timetabling leads to the effective deployment of all teachers and does not create split-taught classes or the use of non-specialist staff.
- Improve the management capacity for oversight of key whole-school priorities, including promoting information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum and provision of learning support.
- Improve the line management of heads of department, and the management of departments, to ensure that self-evaluation processes are consistently robust and lead to improvement.

And, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that religious education in Years 10/11 meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and that effective citizenship education and work-related learning takes place.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 11, and standards of work seen are broadly average. As regards the core subjects, achievement is good in science and, in Years 10/11, in English. However, in mathematics it is unsatisfactory, leading to the below average standards seen.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in tests at the end of Year 9 have declined overall since 2001; in 2004 they were well below those for similar schools in mathematics and science but well above in English.
- GCSE results continue to compare well with similar schools although too few pupils have been reaching higher grades in recent years.
- Achievement in subjects ranges from good to unsatisfactory, with mathematics included in the latter.
- Improvements to teaching and, in Years 10/11, to the curriculum, are having a positive impact on achievement and standards.
- Much effort is going into raising the standards reached by pupils in Year 11 who experienced unsatisfactory teaching earlier in their time at the school, and to those in Year 7 who entered at below expected levels.
- Pupil performance data is being used well to identify appropriately challenging targets and where improvements can be made.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.0 (32.4)	n/a (33.4)
mathematics	32.6 (33.9)	n/a (35.4)
science	30.5 (33.5)	n/a (33.6)

There were 193 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	34 (44)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	90 (89)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	36.1 (40.5)	41.4 (40.6)

There were 219 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 declined after 2001 and remained well below the average for similar schools in 2004 in mathematics and science. However, in English the proportion of pupils who reached the expected level or above was above the national average, and well above the average for similar schools, indicating a very strong recovery from the low point in 2003. In GCSE examinations, based on the average scores attained by pupils, the school's results have compared well or very well with those of similar schools in three of the last four years, including those in 2004. However, the proportion reaching the higher grades has been below average for similar schools for the past three years. The pattern of all these results shows that, other than in English, the school has not been sufficiently successful in ensuring that pupils who are capable of the higher levels are reaching them. This is likely to have been a consequence of the very unstable staffing situation at the school during 2001 to 2003 which significantly reduced the quality of teaching, including in the core subjects. The lack of appropriate progress has been more prevalent among boys than girls during those difficult years for the school, but this gap in achievement is no longer prevalent. However, in Year 9, where a gap was identified by an analysis of the data, the school has established a boys-only group in both mathematics and science in an attempt to close the gap. It is too early to be able to evaluate its impact.
2. Achievement has improved recently although there remains inconsistency between subjects. In Years 7 to 9, achievement has been very good in drama, good in science and physical education, and satisfactory in all other subjects except in mathematics, religious education and art. In Years 10/11, achievement is very good in science and drama, good in English, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and the vocational subjects and satisfactory in all others except mathematics, ICT and religious education.
3. This pattern of achievement, and in some cases underachievement, is reflected in the standards seen in pupils' work. In Year 9, these are above average in drama, and average in all other subjects except mathematics, ICT, religious education, art and music where they remain below average. In Year 11, standards are above average in several more subjects than in Year 9, including modern foreign languages, physical education and health and social care. In all other subjects they are average except in mathematics, ICT, history, religious education, technology and music.
4. The introduction of vocational subjects in Years 10/11, to be examined for the first time in 2005, has had a positive impact on the achievement of the pupils concerned. The stable staffing position established since September 2004 is leading to better teaching and higher standards across the school, but standards do remain lower than they should be in several subjects in the current Year 11. However, recognizing the unsatisfactory provision made for these pupils during 2001 to 2003, the school has worked extremely conscientiously, making good use of pupil performance data, to identify those pupils who need remedial support as they approach their GCSE examinations. A wide range of catch-up strategies is now being provided for them. Similarly, the school is working very effectively to boost the achievement of pupils who enter the school at below expected levels. Performance data is now used well, alongside national benchmarks, to set targets for individual pupils. Aggregated at whole school level, these targets are realistic and challenging.
5. Pupils' English language and literacy skills are adequate for their study needs in most subjects, although not in history. Their competence in ICT is average, although they do not have sufficient opportunities to use it in a number of subjects. Pupils' competence in mathematics is below average, and it is not developed adequately in subjects where it can benefit learning, particularly science and geography.
6. The achievement of the very few pupils who are still acquiring the English language is satisfactory.
7. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream lessons is satisfactory overall. The achievement of pupils who take part in specific lessons to improve their literacy is good. Other pupils who attend special classes to improve their attitudes to

school make good gains in terms of team building and increased confidence. This is because the lessons are specifically tailored to the specific needs of the pupils.

8. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is similar to that of other pupils. They achieve well in those mathematics and science lessons where they are challenged by the higher level of work. In music some pupils do so in activities that extend their experience. The school aims to raise the expectations of all pupils, including those who are gifted or talented. It identified this group of pupils last year and their experience has been tracked and reported to staff for discussion. The action plan to provide challenge for gifted and talented pupils has been held back until a new coordinator is appointed, and this has slowed the school's response to the needs of these pupils. Some Year 11 pupils have benefited from special provision at the local college. While other courses to raise the aspirations of these pupils have been planned, they have not yet had an impact on achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality at the school are good; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Pupils show good interest in school activities and the school provides good personal development for pupils. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The disruptive behaviour of a small minority of pupils interferes with learning.
- Older pupils' attitudes are more positive and this contributes to their progress as learners.
- The school's strategies for pupils' personal development overall are good.
- Attendance and punctuality are good and strategies for their improvement are well considered and effective.
- Pupils are insufficiently well prepared for life in multicultural Britain.

Commentary

9. Pupils throughout the school have positive attitudes towards school and learning, especially the pupils in Years 10/11. Pupils' behaviour overall is satisfactory but, as in the previous inspection, a small minority of pupils disrupt their own learning and that of others through their inconsiderate behaviour. A significant number of those parents who completed the questionnaire expressed concern about the quality of behaviour and instances of bullying. A significant minority of parents and pupils felt that the school did not always deal well enough with specific instances. While pupils acknowledge that bullying does take place on occasions, they assert that the school deals with it speedily and effectively. Behaviour interfering with learning is less of an issue for older pupils.
10. In class, at assemblies and around the school, the great majority of pupils behave well. However, in lessons a minority of pupils do not always behave appropriately. The school has implemented strategies and staff training, and pupils and staff confirm that this has achieved improvements in behaviour. Where teaching is less structured and in some instances insufficiently challenging, pupils' behaviour deteriorates. The school's strategies for improving behaviour by the use of sanctions and rewards do not always have the required effect, especially when teachers are not consistent in applying the rules. The great majority of pupils co-operate in a variety of work situations and the attitude of older pupils, especially, supports learning and progress well.
11. There are few instances of racial harassment. Pupils of all abilities work hard, remain on task and concentrate well. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work and they behave well in lessons which are specifically tailored to meet their needs.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.1	School data	1.3
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. Attendance and punctuality are good. Attendance in the year 2003/4 at 92.6 per cent was above the national median of 91.9 per cent and the average in the local education authority (LEA). Unauthorised absences have risen to just above the national median for secondary schools, which the school believes is due to its tougher line towards approving additional holidays in term time. The school is aware of those pupils whose attendance raises concerns. The school has enjoyed significant support from the LEA's educational welfare service. Recently, however, this provision has been reduced. The school makes first day calls for all pupils where the reasons for absence are not known and analyses well individual and group attendance. The school employs a good variety of strategies of reward and sanction to support and improve punctuality and attendance. The use of permanent exclusion is rare and that of fixed period exclusions is high but reducing.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	989	232	2
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0

Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	21	0	0

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

13. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Their moral and social development is good, and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
14. The pupils are developing their own sets of values, principles and beliefs supported by whole school planning. This is clearly expressed and on occasions very well presented in assemblies, where pupils take a full part through readings, technical support and receiving rewards for success. Too many teachers do not take advantage of tutor time to reinforce pupils' spiritual development and it is neglected in subject lessons, even where topics and discussions have obvious links. Pupils are not required as a matter of routine to listen attentively in lessons, or to reflect on and highlight the significance of what they are learning.
15. Pupils are polite and know right from wrong. They observe the school's moral code in orderly behaviour in corridors, before school, at breaks and lunchtime. They make good use of the available space and grounds. The importance of the moral development of pupils is underlined in the schools' personal, social and health provision and guidance. The school's behaviour policy is well thought out but pupils' observance of it is not followed by staff, thus weakening its impact and limiting opportunities for pupils to see the modelling of good behaviour.
16. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibilities through the prefect system, the school council and through activities and trips. Pupils' good social development is shown by how very supportive they are of each other around the school. Pupils are confident to rehearse music and drama in front of others who provide encouragement, and leavers are organising their own celebrations. There are good opportunities for large numbers of pupils to take part in school productions and to work with others. Senior pupils organise circle time for Year 7 pupils, twice weekly, while sports enthusiasts in Years 10/11 run tournaments for younger pupils.
17. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to be involved in touring drama productions to primary schools, dance festivals, science trips, and some geography and history trips. Some pupils go abroad on educational trips as part of their history and French courses. Overall these cultural outings are limited and do not involve large numbers. Subjects do not adequately reflect the contributions that different cultures have made to British society, so pupils are missing opportunities to understand the interaction between cultures and to learn about the richness of the cultures of their peers in the wider community. Pupils' multicultural development is unsatisfactory and the school is not carrying out its responsibility for preparing pupils to live in a multi-racial society, and not using the curriculum and display to challenge stereotypical views.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as is teachers' assessment of pupils' progress, although with a number of inconsistencies. The school provides a good curriculum, increasingly tailored to different pupils' needs. Very good curriculum enrichment is provided. Staffing is not well enough matched to the curriculum. The school involves and supports pupils well. Good links have been established with other schools and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, taken overall. Quality is inconsistent between, and sometimes within, subjects. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory, taken overall, but with clear strengths and weaknesses.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nearly two-thirds of teaching in Years 10/11 is good or better.
- Teaching is very good in science and drama but the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics and religious education is too high.
- The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is hampered where teaching is split between two teachers, especially where this involves a non-specialist.
- Good use is made of pupil performance data to target pupils in danger of underachieving in English and science, but marking and assessment practices across the school are inconsistent.
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils, coupled with teachers' good subject knowledge and high expectations prompt pupils' desire to learn in most subjects.
- Teachers' expectations are too low in art and religious education; in the latter case this is related to a lack of subject expertise.
- The use made of ICT to stimulate learning is inconsistent.
- A good variety of activities characterises the best lessons but in others planning is inadequate.
- Inadequate behaviour management hampers progress in some subjects, but well thought out practice works well in others.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 128 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	21 (16%)	51 (40%)	44 (34%)	11 (9%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)

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

- Over half of teaching is good or better, with more of this quality of teaching seen in Year 11 than in other year groups, such that nearly two-thirds of teaching in Years 10/11 is good or better. Just over 90 per cent of teaching is at least satisfactory, with the unsatisfactory teaching tending to be concentrated in a few subjects, particularly mathematics, religious education and, in Years 7 to 9, art. On the other hand, teaching in drama is very good, as it is in science in Years 10/11. Science teaching is good in Years 7 to 9; good teaching also predominates in physical education, geography and in Years 10/11 in English, modern foreign languages, music, health and social care, leisure and tourism and in personal, social and health education.
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils, coupled with teachers' good subject knowledge and high expectations prompt pupils' desire to learn, notably in science, modern foreign languages, geography, history, drama, music, physical education and health and social care. Challenging teaching leads to responsive learning and good achievement, notably in English, science, drama and some mathematics and design and technology lessons.
- Teachers' planning is generally effective, except in art and religious education. This means that good use is made of ICT to stimulate learning in modern foreign languages, science, history and leisure and tourism, but such opportunities are not taken in mathematics, geography and art. Important opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their learning, including independent learning skills. A good variety of activities characterises lessons in drama, physical education, vocational courses and sometimes in English. Except in science and design and technology, pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to work independently, particularly in Years 7 to 9.

21. Inadequacies in the behaviour management strategies used by a significant minority of teachers hamper pupils' progress in many mathematics, and some English, lessons. In a number of subjects, in Years 7 to 9, the teaching of some classes is split between two teachers. Particularly where one of these is not a specialist in the subject concerned, this leads to unsatisfactory provision. There are also situations where, although a class has only one teacher, this teacher is not a specialist. The impact of either or both of these arrangements is impinging on the progress of some pupils in English, mathematics, geography, ICT, history, religious education and art.
22. The teaching for pupils in special classes to meet their learning or behaviour needs is good and consequently they learn well. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons by learning support staff who are well trained and very aware of pupils' needs. Too often subject teachers are over-reliant on the competent support staff to make a significant contribution to managing classroom behaviour. Overall there is too little planning for teaching of pupils with special educational needs within lessons. The teachers often do not use the good quality individual education plans provided to adapt learning resources or strategies to meet their needs. They frequently do not plan for the productive use of learning support staff in lessons.
23. A major thrust of the school's development planning over recent times has been to develop assessment procedures which can promote learning at each stage, and which can contribute to the way in which the school reduces underachievement. Much work has been done by senior staff and the whole teaching body to develop a system which helps pupils to learn through ensuring that they fully understand the steps they will take towards the next objective.
24. There are developing procedures in school for the use and recording of information about how pupils are progressing. Subject teachers and form tutors work together to identify pupils who are making good progress or who are not doing as well as they should, and there are suitable procedures for keeping parents informed if their children's progress at school is not good enough or well above average. The twice-yearly academic review days where parents and pupils examine progress and set targets for the future are proving to be increasingly effective in raising standards of achievement. The standard of reporting to parents on their children's progress is good.
25. In English and science, teachers are now using pupil performance data well to identify those pupils in danger of underachieving and to put in place appropriate intervention strategies, including modification to teaching strategies as necessary. However, in most other subject areas, teachers do not yet make sufficient use of this information and, as a result, the work can be less well suited to the needs of individual pupils.
26. A key to the success of the school's developing assessment procedures is in the standard of marking of pupils' work, and the information given to pupils about how they are doing and how they can improve. Across the subjects of the curriculum, the standards of teachers' marking are unsatisfactory because too many do not follow agreed school policy and this does not help some pupils to have a clear idea of their progress. This is an area that the school needs to address if it is to ensure the success of its well-formed assessment policies.

The curriculum

The breadth of curriculum opportunities provided is good, especially in Years 10/11. Opportunities provided for the enrichment of the curriculum for pupils are very good. While accommodation and resources for learning are broadly satisfactory, there is an unsatisfactory match of teachers to the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good programme of personal, social and health education but there is some confusion between this and the provision for citizenship.
- Very good progress has been made in developing a more flexible curriculum in Years 10/11.
- The curriculum, including extra-curricular activities, has already begun to benefit from the school's specialist sports college status.
- Pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties are well supported outside mainstream lessons.
- There is an unsatisfactory match of teachers' specialisms to the needs of the curriculum, reducing the quality of education in several subjects.
- There is a very good library and very good sports facilities, inside and out.
- In some subjects, accommodation or resources are inadequate for the needs of the curriculum.

Commentary

27. The school provides a curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 which is adequately broad and balanced. However, staffing difficulties have led to a reduction in the time allocated for music which is only half that needed to cover the national programme of study. A good programme of personal, social and health education is included (see Part C) but while citizenship education is included, the planning and teaching of this subject are not yet well enough defined. Pupils' entitlement to access ICT across a range of subjects, in support of their learning, is met only in part.
28. For Years 10/11, the school has made very good progress in developing a curriculum which is well matched to the needs, interests and aspirations of all pupils. Alternative pathways were introduced in September 2003. As a result, about a quarter of pupils in Year 11 currently have some vocational element included in their curriculum. Pupils from the school will be assessed in these new courses for the first time in summer 2005. Evidence from this inspection suggests that pupils have found these vocational courses to be well motivating, with pupils who take them achieving well. As a result of positive early evaluations and following further curriculum review, the school is introducing three further vocational courses from September 2005. Pupils currently in Year 9 have been allocated to one of three pathways for Year 10 on the basis of their scores in Year 7 in cognitive ability tests. This may prove to be too rigid a process but parents have been fully consulted, and both pupils and parents are responding well to the new arrangements.
29. Other developments in the Years 10/11 curriculum have included successful key skills training for pupils who need this in order to better access the school curriculum and the demands of the workplace when they leave school. As yet, developments in work-related learning have been insufficient, and there is a need too for better links with the community. As a specialist sports college, the school is required to teach a greater amount of physical education for all pupils, and this will be introduced from September 2005. There is too small an allocation of time in these year groups to religious education to allow the locally agreed syllabus to be covered. As in Years 7 to 9, a good programme of personal, social and health education is provided (see Part C).
30. While a substantial minority of pupils are now engaged in vocational courses at the school or the local college, the school is yet to formally address the wider aspects of the new statutory framework for work-related learning. It has already established good practice in careers guidance, subject choice in Years 9 and 11 and for work experience in Year 10, but these have not been built into an effective continuous programme of work-related learning that systematically permeates lessons across all subjects. Teachers are yet to be formally trained for the introduction of work-related learning. However, effective planning for work-related learning is taking place in science.
31. In relation to pupils with special educational needs, provision is satisfactory overall in lessons, although arrangements are unsatisfactory in art, music and religious education. There is a good range of provision for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties which is enabling

these pupils to achieve well in specific areas. The assessment of the effect of some of these interventions is beginning, as is the analysis of which pupils are most suited for specific programmes. At present, however, there is little consideration given to overall planning of provision for these pupils to ensure that they have access to the subjects and courses that are most beneficial for them.

32. There is a very strong programme of enrichment activities that are popular with pupils and parents alike. Because of the sports college status, there is a wide variety of sporting activities during the school day, after school and at weekends. Other provision includes the homework classes, holiday study courses, family learning and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Some subjects, including history and leisure and tourism, provide additional lessons outside the school day and these have supported pupils' confidence and achievement well. To support personal development further, pupils help out in local schools and take part in leadership courses. This is complemented by cultural and educational visits at home and abroad, particularly benefiting pupils' learning in modern foreign languages, leisure and tourism, drama and physical education. However, in art and geography, pupils are not being provided with opportunities for educational visits or fieldwork and this is hampering achievement. The dance festival and the annual school show involve large numbers of performers and play to very big audiences. All of these activities raise pupils' expectations and broaden their horizons. They introduce pupils to a world of opportunities that are available beyond the school. Because the sport college status was only very recently granted to the school, monitoring and evaluation is not fully in place.
33. The match of teachers to the curriculum is unsatisfactory because there are too many lessons taught by teachers who are non-specialists. About a half of the teachers are currently teaching a second subject. Examples of this are found in English, mathematics, geography, history, ICT, art and religious education. Since there are also a number of teachers sharing classes, particularly in history and geography, this affects pupils' achievement and adds to inconsistency of approach. While the recruitment and retention of teachers is better now than it has been in the past, the timetable already constructed for 2005/06 continues with the substantial deployment of teachers outside their specialism and with a number of split-taught classes, which is poor planning. There are sufficient support staff to allow the school to function effectively.
34. The accommodation is satisfactory in most curriculum areas. However the mathematics classrooms are cramped and dilapidated, the science accommodation does not meet the needs of a modern curriculum and the specialist religious studies room is in a poor condition. Whilst some of the corridors have been decorated, and now present very attractively, there is still much more to be done to improve the environment, including upgrading the pupils' toilets. There is access to lower floors for pupils and adults with mobility difficulties but access to the first floor is impossible. Whilst the library/resources centre is an excellent facility it is not well used either during many lessons or by pupils at lunchtimes and after school. The sports hall and dance studio have been greatly improved and, together with the school grounds, are a first rate facility.
35. The resources to support the curriculum are satisfactory but development is limited because of budget constraints. Consequently there are insufficient text books in mathematics and a shortage of resources in religious studies, citizenship and music. The library is not yet fully used as a learning resource and there is a shortage of non-fiction books. The majority of computers throughout the school are in need of replacement, many being currently unreliable. Equipment for teaching and learning in the resistant materials area of design and technology is outdated.

Care, guidance and support

The care of pupils, their welfare, support and guidance are good; their health and safety is satisfactory. Pupils' involvement in the work and development of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know the pupils well and provide for their specific welfare, medical and social needs well.
- Induction into the school and into further education is well organised.
- Child protection arrangements are good.
- Careers provision is good, increasing pupils' confidence in making choices.

Commentary

36. The pupils' introduction to the school is handled well. Members of staff are aware of pupils' specific needs. The monitoring of their academic and pastoral progress through the school is good and this is used well to inform twice yearly reports and mentoring. However, teachers' marking of coursework and homework does not always provide for improvement and progress on a day-to-day basis.
37. Support for pupils from within the school or from outside agencies is well organised and targeted. The school provides a variety of strategies for pupils who may need to be reintegrated into school after periods of absence. The school is providing well for pupils who may benefit from a more flexible curriculum. Careers advice is included in the pupils' personal, social and health education and parents and pupils confirm that this is good provision, including work experience for all pupils in Year 10. Outside speakers, a theatre group, careers conventions and visits all contribute well to pupils' knowledge of careers. Personal and social education is included in tutorials and assemblies. Pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties have strong relationships with learning support staff so that they have someone to talk to for advice when needed.
38. Pupils are able to name an adult they would refer to if needed. Pupils are provided with several opportunities to take on responsibilities contributing to the running of the school. Pupils from all year groups can be elected as lead pupils for their tutor group and for each year as members of the school council. Pupils in Years 10/11 can be elected as prefects, sub-prefects and as head boy and head girl. Pupils are encouraged well to develop as active and involved citizens. Opportunities to work as mentors, as sports leaders and participation with the feeder and special schools give pupils good opportunities to mix with and help younger and less able pupils. As well as working as monitors in a variety of roles, pupils assist office staff during the course of the day and take these responsibilities seriously. Pupils have been involved in decorating and organizing displays in their tutor areas.
39. Pupils who are members of the school council agreed that it is worthwhile and that they feel valued and involved; they confirm that they are able to influence life within school and they are listened to. Pupils confirm that they are able to communicate easily with members of senior management and the headteacher and that their opinions are valued. Pupils' welfare is very well provided for, the school has a full time nurse who oversees individual pupils' medical and welfare needs well. Health and safety arrangements in school are satisfactory and most statutory requirements are met.
40. Child protection procedures are well managed, the school complies fully with local requirements and enjoys good relationships with the local caring and emergency services. Members of staff are regularly trained in child protection procedures.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with the primary and first schools, the receiving local colleges and other local schools are good.
- Many parents do not actively engage with or support the school.

Commentary

41. The information provided to parents at the mentoring and progress events, pupils' reports and the regular newsletters, as well as curriculum and careers information events and school performances, testify to the school providing parents with good information in many forms. However, a minority of those parents who responded to the questionnaire expressed concern that the school does not respond to them speedily or positively enough.
42. Parents support the school through the school association, which raises considerable sums of money. However, some feel they are unable adequately to help their children at home and that homework is not always challenging or appropriate. Inspectors found that the marking of coursework and homework does not always provide pupils with sufficient information on how they can progress. The assessment data and twice yearly written reports do provide detailed and helpful information on what pupils have done, are able to do and how they can improve.
43. The school has not generally involved the parents in decision-making processes but has canvassed the parents' opinions adequately through the use of questionnaires at school events. The school's prospectus provides required statutory information, but the governors' annual report does not include the required information on access for the disabled.
44. The arrangements made for pupils transferring from primary and junior schools are good. Parents involved in the process of pupils' choices for GCSE subjects confirm that the arrangements are generally well documented and organized. However some parents have complained that there was a lack of information about mock examinations and the timing of coursework requirements and GCSE examinations. The steps into sixth-form college, other further education institutions or the world of work are well organized.
45. The provision of two opportunities a year to receive detailed information on pupils' progress is good. Parents appreciate the invitation to attend these academic mentoring meetings with their children, but a minority complain that the tutors do not always have sufficient knowledge of their children's progress.
46. In relation to pupils with special educational needs, the school has good links with outside agencies and so is able to access high quality advice about pupils' specific needs. However, this is infrequently used to plan strategies in lessons. There are very good links with primary schools to ensure that pupils who have already identified special educational needs are planned for on entry. However, the system for the identification of special educational needs after entry is still developing. The school has good links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. All parents of pupils with statements attend their child's annual review. Parents are involved in the review process for individual education plans and there are strategies in the plans to ensure that parents know what they can do to support their child's learning.
47. Links with other schools are good and are strengths of the school. The school is playing a pivotal role for several schools by helping to improve their provision for sport and physical education. Other schools including a special school praise the benefits they have gained from the school's special sports status and the involvement of pupils in coaching and leading sports and physical education activities in their schools. Pupils have been very successful in a wide range of sporting events and competitions.
48. This school has good links with the local community, the sixth-form college, universities and with adult education providers. The school is involved locally with businesses in securing work experience placements and training. The school's resources are used extensively by the community. The school organises many visitors and visits to enrich the curriculum in lessons

and assemblies. The school has good relationships with support agencies and links with the local education authority have improved considerably.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The governance of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher's leadership, as well as that of other key staff, is satisfactory. There are a number of inadequacies in management which render it unsatisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has provided good, sensitive leadership in rebuilding the school's morale and effectiveness.
- The school's leadership has established a very clear focus on improving standards and quality, although the pace of improvement in some areas has been too slow.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and give the school good support.
- There are good models of departmental leadership and self-evaluation, but weaknesses in some are not being adequately tackled.
- There is inadequate management of some important whole school priorities, including numeracy and ICT across the curriculum and citizenship education.
- Pupil performance data are being well used to set improvement targets and to identify and support underachieving pupils, but practice is underdeveloped in some areas.
- There is insufficient clarity about roles and responsibilities within learning support provision.
- Staff recruitment and development strategies have been successful but deployment of teaching staff is unsatisfactory.
- The specialist sports college status is already having a positive impact, particularly on pupils' attitudes.

Commentary

49. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has recently reconstituted itself after a period of crisis and is now running its affairs in a fully satisfactory manner, including securing training for its members. Governors are becoming more knowledgeable about both the school and their role. They understand well the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provide good support to the head and senior staff. They are starting to question the information provided but are not yet providing sufficient challenge to the school when holding it to account. They fulfill most statutory requirements but do not yet have a race policy, nor do they meet all the requirements of the race relations act. The governors' annual report to parents does not include information about compliance with the disability discrimination act.
50. The headteacher has provided the school with the sensitive leadership which was necessary to repair relationships and trust within the school and with its community following the very unsettled few years that the school experienced. He has also very successfully established key foci on the improvement of teaching and learning and the flexibility of the curriculum, designed to generate the better standards which pupils at the school should be achieving. He has been effectively supported, in the main, by a small leadership team in this process, and other key staff have committed themselves enthusiastically to taking a lead on some of the planned improvements. This includes a number of middle-leaders (heads of subject and heads of year) as well as colleagues who have been identified as lead teachers. Others have

joined the school's teaching and learning forum or have volunteered as teaching and learning coaches. The LEA has supported the headteacher's leadership in its early days, recognising the particular demands placed on a relatively small and inexperienced team. Circumstances suggest this should, if possible, continue for the time being.

51. Strategic planning is generally effective and has identified the appropriate priorities. However, it does not yet relate transparently enough to the regular reviews of performance, nor to the quantified targets for improvement in pupil performance which the school has now identified. The planned timescale of some of the actions planned has become too long and a greater sense of urgency, and an even sharper focus, is now required to build effectively on the foundations so well laid. Many departments have yet to draw together a coherent group of key policies; department planning is inconsistent in its quality and is not always sufficiently related to the well-selected whole school priorities. However, in the best departments, including English and science, development priorities are clear. Several heads of year and heads of subject have, through the quality of their leadership, created effective teams of tutors or teachers. This has worked particularly well in science and drama but also in English, modern foreign languages and physical education.
52. The day to day running of the learning, literacy and behaviour components of learning support is good overall. Recently introduced interventions indicate a strong vision and determination, and staff show enthusiasm for new approaches. However the leadership and management of these areas are not sufficiently co-ordinated to ensure that they work efficiently together. Roles and responsibilities are currently insufficiently clear to ensure that staff are fully clear about what is expected of them. The new interventions are not yet sufficiently monitored to ensure that criteria for identifying pupils and those for measuring success are clear.
53. The school's machinery for self-evaluation is well established. It relies particularly on reviews of the quality of provision in subjects, including through regular observation of, and feedback to, all teachers. The school has benefited from the support of the LEA in providing the resources for some of these reviews. All middle-leaders experience frequent meetings with their line managers. Many find these most valuable, and both supportive and challenging. However, the quality of these sessions is too variable, depending on the skills and commitment of the individual line manager. While they work well in English, science and physical education, for instance, arrangements are not well developed in modern languages, music and religious education. A very helpful calendar of self-evaluation activity by senior and middle leaders has been drawn up, designed to aid monitoring of the process. Already, there are good arrangements within modern foreign languages, science and the vocational subjects for monitoring, self-evaluation and sharing of good practice.
54. Management of a number of key whole school priorities is not as robust as it needs to be; for instance, the establishment of a citizenship education course which meets requirements, the management of the computer network, standards in mathematics and the use of ICT across the curriculum.
55. The school now collects and analyses the appropriate range of pupil performance data which facilitates staff, at senior and middle-leader levels, in identifying those pupils at risk of falling below their targeted achievement levels. These data are used well to identify appropriate targets for pupil performance in public tests and examinations and these are now much more robust from 2005 onwards as a result. Data have also been used to target specific interventions to support such pupils, for instance the establishment of boys-only sets in mathematics and science in Year 9 to tackle the identified underachievement of some. Similarly, individual programmes are increasingly being formulated for pupils who enter the school at below expected levels to ensure they make as good a start as possible, and can access the curriculum well. However, data and their analyses are not yet well enough used in many subject areas, partly because teachers are not always able to access them straightforwardly.

56. The school satisfactorily meets statutory requirements in respect of reviewing the performance of staff and is aware of the need to link performance management to school improvement and development planning. There are effective programmes for the induction for newly qualified teachers and non-teaching staff and good quality ongoing support from both the school and the LEA. Arrangements for supporting more experienced staff are less consistent. Trainee teachers based at the school welcome the good quality support given by both school and departmental mentors and contribute effectively to teaching and learning during their time in school. An effective programme of continuing professional development is in place for all teaching staff and is increasingly linked to the need to improve achievement through teaching, learning and assessment. A key input has been the sequence of three in-service training days on the theme of assessment for learning. While their impact cannot yet be evaluated in terms of pupils' achievement, it is clear that staff valued the input enormously. They recognise it as a key component in the headteacher's ongoing determination to improve quality and standards.
57. The management of staff deployment is unsatisfactory. The school timetable as it currently stands, and that being developed for next year, are unsatisfactory. Too often the allocation of non-specialist teachers to classes, groups taught by more than one teacher, and/or the way subjects are blocked lead to lessons in which teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. The multiple roles experienced by some key staff hamper their effectiveness.

Specialist sports college status

58. The recent achievement of specialist sports college status has had a significant impact on the ethos of the school. Both parents and pupils support this view. While the school is at an early stage in its implementation, much development work has already taken place. The school has successfully raised the understanding of many of its partners about the philosophy of the sports college status. Teachers are working with colleagues in partner schools and significant progress has been made in developing partnerships with the wider community.
59. The leadership and management of the work are good. A group representing the school and partner organisations monitors the achievement of targets. A deputy headteacher, who works very closely with the subject heads of department, manages the day-to-day implementation. This group has a clear vision of how the specialist sports college status can raise standards in the school. The effect of developments is already being demonstrated across other subjects. Technology, mathematics, science and learning support are some of the curriculum areas which are benefiting from funding and new support structures. The new ethos is helping to improve pupils' attitudes to the school and their learning. Breakfast clubs, dance productions, improving facilities and resources are among a range of new initiatives, which are helping to raise pupils' self-esteem.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,679,041	Balance from previous year	- 137,043
Total expenditure	3,628,743	Balance carried forward to the next year	- 86,745
Expenditure per pupil	3,398		

60. The school acknowledges that, following a time of some difficulty in balancing the budget, there is an inadequate link between the school's strategic planning and financial planning. Governors have worked hard with the bursar and headteacher to identify how the budget can be brought back into line, and this has been largely successful. There is not always sufficient

use of benchmarking data in setting budgets and best value principles are not well enough applied. A number of non-teaching functions are still carried out by senior members of the teaching staff and this does not reflect the most efficient use of resources.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The English department is well led and managed with clear priorities for development.
- Standards are now steady and pupils achieve well in Years 10/11.
- There is good use of data to target pupils who may underachieve.
- Too many non-specialist teachers teach English.
- There are inadequacies in some lessons in the management of pupils' behaviour.

Commentary

61. Results in the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 9 were average, with an improvement on previous years in the number of pupils gaining the higher grades. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2004 were average for English and an improvement on the previous year. However, the 2004 results for English literature were below average.
62. By the end of Year 9, most pupils' skills in English are satisfactory. For instance, they understand the importance of setting and atmosphere in building up a sense of horror in their writing, derived from a reading and understanding of Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein'. Average and above average pupils in Year 9 show a satisfactory understanding of plot, language and character in 'Macbeth'. However, most below average pupils have only a basic understanding of the plot of the play and a sketchy notion of the characters. Below average pupils do make rapid progress in learning with the intensive language support provided in lower Year 7 classes. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 11 is good. Above average pupils write good, extended critical essays in preparation for GCSE. They understand how to link visual and sound images to convey meaning in their writing. The majority of pupils show good reading and analytical skills in comparing the similarities and differences of two poems from different cultural backgrounds. Their responses are carefully structured using well-chosen quotations from the poems. Below average pupils achieve well; show some insight into the texts chosen for study and respond well in their writing.
63. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory overall but individual lessons vary between very good and unsatisfactory. All lessons use the National Literacy Strategy to break down the teaching time into manageable and varied different activities. Where this works well, lessons are lively and challenge pupils to achieve well. For instance, in a Year 7 set for lower attainers, pupils made very good progress in developing vocabulary and spelling through

reading 'Tom's Midnight Garden'. In this lesson, pupils made good progress because they were all challenged, there was a good use of praise and reward and an instant response from the teacher to any inattention. Where lessons are only satisfactory, or unsatisfactory, the planning and structure are sound but there is a lack of sufficient engagement of pupils through challenging and enjoyable activities. There is also some unchecked unsatisfactory behaviour from a minority of pupils in these lessons. Teaching and learning in Years 10/11 are good and pupils make good progress. Teaching methods are good, lesson objectives are clear, teachers have good subject knowledge, lessons are well planned, there is a variety of different activity and pupils are challenged to do their best. For instance, in a Year 10 lesson on the poem 'Salome', pupils were challenged to understand how the language expresses the attitude of the poet to Salome's enjoyment of John the Baptist's decapitated head on her pillow. This learning developed through the variety and pace of class discussion, paired work and group work. The assessment of pupils' work is good in all year groups and teachers are able to target and support those pupils in danger of underachieving.

64. The department is managed well with clear priorities for development. Staff are well supported, standards have been consolidated and the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with much good practice. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The department is now poised to build on the good features of teaching and learning in order to further raise standards and achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

65. Pupils' literacy skills across the school are average and generally satisfactory for their needs, although at present the development of literacy is uneven across subjects. It is well developed in science and music, underdeveloped in history, art and ICT and satisfactory in other subjects.

Modern foreign languages

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department is well led and managed, and teachers work well as a team.
- There are clear signs of improving standards and achievement.
- Teaching is at least satisfactory, and often good or very good.
- Teachers do not sufficiently practise speaking as a whole-class activity.
- Some teachers' marking is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

66. French was one of the lowest-performing subjects in the school in 2004. Results in GCSE were well below the national average. Practically half of those entered achieved the lowest grades. Pupils' performance in French was well below the standards they reached in the other subjects they took, and the performance of boys was particularly poor. German results were

below the national average but markedly better than those in French. Boys did better than girls and were not far short of the national average.

67. Standards seen in French at the end of Year 11 were slightly above average. Pupils are developing confidence in writing and speaking but are still prone to simple errors. Year 10 pupils achieve well in French because relationships are good and the pupils are keen to learn. In German pupils in Year 11 are well motivated and standards are above average. All pupils achieve well, including the average and lower attaining pupils. Pupils studying Spanish in Year 11 achieve well. They have reached average standards after a two-year course. A characteristic of all pupils in Years 10 and 11 is that they have mature attitudes towards their work and respond well to teaching. This promotes good levels of achievement. In Year 7 most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in French or German and some achieve well. Able pupils in Year 8 achieve very well because of the innovative and imaginative teaching. By the end of Year 9, most pupils are making satisfactory progress and standards are in the main average. For the more able pupils, there is too little challenge in lessons and expectations are insufficiently high in both speaking and understanding. The achievement of girls is higher than that of boys.
68. Teaching in over half of lessons is good or very good. Examples of the best teaching were seen at all levels, although teaching was better in Years 10/11. The best teaching was characterised by high expectations of pupils and by good relationships between the pupils and the teachers which promoted the desire to learn. Some teaching is imaginative and has high expectations of the pupils. In some lessons there is insufficient challenge and not enough opportunities for teacher and pupils to practise spoken language together. Listening skills are often underdeveloped as a result of too little use, for instance, of recordings of authentic voices. Good use is made of ICT to support learning in languages. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in trips and excursions, and to correspond with young people in France and Germany. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Whereas most work is well and helpfully marked in line with the school's policy, some marking is unhelpful and slipshod, and this is reflected in the work pupils produce.
69. The leadership of modern foreign languages is good; in the comparatively short time she has been in post, the subject leader has built a team which works very well as a unit, provides very good mutual help and support, and which is taking the subject strongly forward. The management of the department is good. The subject leader monitors the work of the department both formally and informally through visiting and observing lessons. Other teachers observe one another teach in order to share good practice, and a folder of good teaching ideas is kept. Changes have been put in place to improve examination results. Whilst there are departmental policies and statements of intent, these are not yet shared via a departmental handbook and line management of the head of department has insufficient impact. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make less progress than expected given their average standards on entry to the school.
- The quality of teaching is highly variable, embracing too much that is unsatisfactory.
- The head of department leads by example and has identified the main strengths and weaknesses in provision.
- Many classes are taught by more than one teacher, including non-specialists, and poor co-ordination adversely affects continuity of learning.

Commentary

70. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were below the average and well below results for similar schools. Boys did less well than girls, although in previous years they had done better. Analyses presented by the school show these results represented poor achievement. GCSE results in 2004 were below average, especially in the proportion securing higher grades. This is a fall from 2002 when results were average. Boys again did less well than girls, even though they had better results at the end of Year 9 two years earlier. School analyses identify unsatisfactory achievement, especially for boys.
71. Standards seen during the inspection were below average by the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Standards are comparable in all aspects of mathematics. Pupils do not make the progress they should from their average standards on entry. However, there is great variation in achievement due to variable quality of teaching and continuity. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as a result of good support from teaching assistants. Pupils' attitudes are also variable. Some pupils are very conscientious, but too many present untidy, unfinished work. A significant minority do not make any progress during Years 7 to 9. Achievement is better in Years 10 and 11 due to better continuity of teaching.
72. Teaching in one third of lessons seen was less than satisfactory; the quality ranged from very good to poor. The quality of planning and behaviour management show most variation. In better lessons, work is well planned to match the needs of pupils, lessons are well structured and maintain a good pace. As a result, pupils have work with the right level of challenge, concentrate on their learning and make good progress. In unsatisfactory lessons, planning is superficial and does not take account of the range of needs within the class. Pupils' behaviour is poorly managed so that time is wasted waiting for pupils to pay attention, or poor behaviour is left unchallenged, disrupting the learning of others. Pupils respond unsatisfactorily in these lessons and learn too slowly. Assessment is similarly variable. Some books are carefully marked with suggestions as to how pupils can improve. Others are left unmarked for long periods, or superficially ticked. Classrooms are very cramped and in a dilapidated condition. This makes it difficult for pupils to move around the room, so that learning activities are restricted. There are insufficient textbooks, so pupils have to share and cannot take them home. Pupils make little use of ICT.
73. Leadership is satisfactory. The head of department is a good role model and leads by example. Management is unsatisfactory. The head of department has clearly identified strengths and weaknesses. A senior staff review confirmed these. Although strategies have been used to improve teaching, these have not yet successfully addressed the inconsistencies. Tracking of pupils' progress is not yet systematic across the department. There are few departmental policies and school policies are not always adhered to. Non-specialists teach a significant number of lessons. There are two or three teachers for some classes and co-ordination between teachers is of variable quality. For pupils in these classes, learning lacks continuity. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. There has been a significant turnover of staff. Standards have fallen and, although there are examples of very good practice, the overall quality of teaching has deteriorated. Weaknesses, such as monitoring progress and providing work suitable for the needs of all pupils, have not been fully addressed.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. Pupils' standards of mathematics across the curriculum are below average. There are few examples of pupils using their mathematical skills in other subjects across the curriculum, although in art pupils make good use of proportion, scale and perspective. However, in science and geography they make little use of graphical skills to support their work. Middle and lower attaining pupils, in particular, are hindered in science by poor numerical skills. Standards are below average in the use of spreadsheets in ICT. A draft policy was prepared in 2003 but has never been finalised. As a result, there is no systematic, planned development of mathematical competence through other subjects in the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management are focused on raising standards.
- Teachers' knowledge of science, hard work and effective planning enables most pupils to make good progress and to achieve well.
- Teaching and learning strategies do not exploit the full potential of the national Key Stage 3 strategy.
- Pupils are not challenged enough to make predictions, to design and to form hypotheses.

Commentary

75. The Year 9 results in the 2004 national tests were well below average for both the expected Level 5 and the higher Level 6, when compared with those in all schools. These results continue a pattern of fluctuating standards over recent years, and were very low when compared with similar schools based upon prior attainment. Results in science were not as good as those in English and mathematics. Girls did better than boys having not done so over recent years. Results in the GCSE dual science award examination for pupils gaining A*-C grades were significantly below the national average for all schools and below average when compared with similar schools based upon prior attainment. However, for pupils taking GCSE examinations in biology, chemistry and physics, results were average to above average when compared with all schools. Pupils' progress in science in the school has not been as good as the other subjects they take. Boys did better than girls but neither did as well as boys and girls nationally. Results do not yet meet ambitious targets set for science, but attainment is now improving.
76. The standards of work seen reflect well the school's own assessment data. Most pupils achieve the learning objectives at an appropriate level and although standards seen in Year 11 are average, achievement in Year 10 is very good due to the very good teaching now provided and pupils' positive response to the new curriculum. In practical work, they handle apparatus safely and can discuss their work. Higher attaining pupils, including those identified as being gifted and talented, present their work well. They ask good questions to increase

their knowledge and understanding of the topic. There is little difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Lower attaining students and those with special educational needs achieve well in response to the good support they receive, but there is insufficient planning of lessons with teaching assistants. However, many do not take sufficient pride in the presentation of their work and their low levels of literacy and numeracy skills are a barrier to learning. Overall, good behaviour and positive attitudes to work are helping most pupils' improving achievement. Some do go off-task; this happens when they are not being sufficiently challenged in active learning situations and when ground rules for behaviour are not established.

77. Most teaching is good or very good. In a very good lesson on moments in Year 9, a class of higher attaining pupils responded very well throughout when challenged to apply their thinking to everyday practical situations and when practising their literacy and numeracy skills. During a very good lesson in Year 11, effective planning for the use of ICT resulted in most of these lower attaining pupils understanding the cost issues related to the production and consumption of electricity. They were able to discuss very well future energy needs and the associated environmental issues. In both of these lessons the department teaching and learning policy was employed to great effect. All teachers set and mark homework regularly, but marking does not set short-term targets. Very thorough assessment data is shared well with pupils but, as yet, pupils are not skilled at self-evaluation.
78. There is very knowledgeable and innovative leadership of teaching and of the curriculum. A clear vision and a sense of purpose are shared by a very well motivated science team. Rigorous self-evaluation directs changes within the department. There is a strong commitment to staff development. Thorough monitoring of teaching and learning has not yet secured consistent practice across the team. The head of department works very hard to counter the effect on teaching and learning of a previously high level of staff turnover, often due to teachers gaining promotion elsewhere. The department has addressed well the issues raised at the last inspection. The very good nucleus of key science staff can secure future developments, assuming the further necessary appointments are made. Laboratories are out of date and the current budget is insufficient to fully resource planned curriculum developments.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Insufficient assessment is carried out to inform pupils about the means by which they can improve.
- The timetable arrangements for Years 10/11 are unsatisfactory.
- The unreliable equipment impedes learning and discourages the use of ICT to help learning.
- The use of ICT in other subjects is not monitored to ensure that National Curriculum requirements are met.

Commentary

79. Results in the 2004 examinations were well below those expected in GNVQ.
80. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with standards below national expectation and which remain so by the end of Year 9. Achievement is therefore unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Work seen during the inspection shows that Year 11 standards are below expectation. Girls' work is usually more carefully done and is more complete than that of boys, so that the highest attaining girls work at expected levels while boys tend to underperform. The lowest attainers in Year 11 show above expected levels of understanding and competence but are struggling to catch up with their coursework because of their lack of progress while in Year 10. They annotate their work to show what they have done, but only higher attainers use this to explain their thinking. Year 10 pupils struggle to use databases because they have too little knowledge of their functions. Achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11, although girls' achievement is better than that of boys because of their more careful approach.
81. Teaching is now satisfactory overall after recent improvements in lesson planning arising out of work in the national Key Stage 3 strategy and in the development of higher expectations of GCSE pupils. Teachers make good use of homework to reinforce learning and to prepare for future work. They encourage pupils to learn by evaluating their own work and that of others. Assessment is unsatisfactory, with too little marking to show pupils how they can improve, although teachers give good informal oral advice for improvement. In some lessons poor behaviour of a few pupils disrupts learning.
82. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection, with coverage of all required areas now established. However, the teaching of data logging is theoretical because of shortage of equipment. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow at least a short GCSE course, with some taking an optional applied GCSE course. However the timetabling arrangements for GCSE courses are damaging to standards since many pupils have too little time in comparison with those on similar courses in the school. Teaching in examination classes lacks continuity as they are taught by two different teachers, and with different fellow pupils in some lessons. Some lessons have classes consisting of pupils from both the short and double award GCSE.
83. The leadership and management of ICT are both unsatisfactory overall. The department has improved the curriculum and lesson planning with the advice of an external specialist, and teachers of ICT share lesson plans based on the national Key Stage 3 strategy. There are good plans for the improvement of assessment. The school has already taken action to deal with deficiencies in resources, although the new network is not yet in place. While the head of ICT is capable of leading the subject forward satisfactorily, there are weaknesses linked to whole-school management: in the timetable and staffing arrangements that disrupt learning, and in the unreliability of the current computer network, which makes many teachers wary of using computers. There is no overview of the extent to which other subjects meet their National Curriculum or GCSE requirements to use ICT.
84. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory as most issues identified at that time have not improved. The national programme of study is now taught to all pupils, although data measurement and analysis are theoretical only, because of shortage of equipment. The new equipment arriving after the last inspection was not accompanied by plans for renewal, leaving the school with its present difficulties in funding complete renewal of the network. Non-specialists are still used to teach ICT, while specialists are deployed elsewhere, and there are no arrangements for training staff in the use of ICT.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. Pupils' skills in using ICT across the curriculum are average, meeting their needs where they are given the opportunity. The use of ICT in other subjects has increased since the last inspection, but there is still no planned entitlement for all pupils to the use of ICT as specified

in the National Curriculum or GCSE syllabuses. There is good use of ICT in modern foreign languages, where pupils show very good ability to learn through ICT. It is used well in history, leisure and tourism and health and social care, and also by some teachers of science. In other subjects, it is sometimes used but use depends on the preferences of individual teachers, and the school does not ensure that it is an integral part of schemes of work.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are very well planned, managed and resourced.
- Effective use is made of assessment.
- Insufficient use is made of fieldwork and ICT for teaching and learning.
- Too much use is made of non-specialist teachers, split classes and timetable blocks.

Commentary

86. Examination results have declined since the previous inspection. In 2004 results in GCSE examinations were below those obtained nationally and had fallen over the past four years. In teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, fewer pupils than the national average gained the expected level. In all these results girls perform better than boys. By the end of Year 9, pupils' geographical knowledge and skills are close to the national average. This represents good progress for pupils who entered the school with somewhat below average levels of prior attainment in the subject. As they move through the school, pupils understand increasingly complex concepts, make effective gains in knowledge and improve geographical skills that help them to use data to reach conclusions, as seen in a Year 11 revision lesson on Brazil. Pupils with special educational needs make comparable progress to their peers through appropriate tasks and additional support from teachers.
87. Teaching is good overall and this is helping to secure at least satisfactory achievement by pupils. Lessons are very well planned, objectives and outcomes clear, time and pupils well managed and a variety of tasks motivate pupils and stimulate interest. Good use is made of adequate resources and learning is enhanced because pupils apply themselves well, behaviour is good and they work well together. However, practical work, especially fieldwork and the use of ICT, do not feature and, despite other good aspects of teaching, their absence restricts learning experiences and reduces achievement overall. There has been recognition of assessment as a tool to raise standards although, overall, assessment relies too heavily on a limited number of assignment tests.

88. Standards, while average, are not as good as they could be because there are weaknesses in the management of the department. The department lacks formal procedures to monitor and evaluate the work of staff and pupils. There is no departmental handbook, minutes are not kept of meetings, schemes of work lack detail and there is no current development plan. Wider issues relate to the use of non-specialist teachers, classes taught by more than one teacher and timetable arrangements that discourage some essential management practices. There has been too little improvement since the last inspection and standards have fallen.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of skills in the use of evidence is good.
- History makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
- Skills in literacy are not being developed well enough.
- There is not always enough challenge for the highest attaining pupils.
- Staffing and timetable issues are adversely affecting pupils' achievement.

Commentary

89. Standards in history are average at the end of Year 9 and this indicates satisfactory achievement from an average starting point. Pupils show secure levels of knowledge and understanding; they have been taught well the required skills in the use of evidence. Their oral work is often good although their written work is less secure. GCSE results were well below the national average in 2004. In that year, very high numbers were entered for the subject. Fewer pupils are taking history at present and standards are below average overall, but stronger in Year 10 than Year 11. There is no evidence of boys achieving less well than girls and pupils with special educational needs are achieving as well as others. Overall achievement is satisfactory. In most lessons, attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory, although a few pupils find difficulty in behaving appropriately in class and in completing homework or coursework.
90. Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes very good. In the most successful lessons, teachers use their subject knowledge very well and have high expectations of the work and behaviour of pupils. Challenging behaviour is managed very well, resources are well chosen and tasks meet the needs of all pupils. Year 9 pupils clearly make very good gains in learning, for instance about life in Hitler's Germany, because of the skilful use of high quality resources produced by the department. However teaching and learning are inconsistent and, in less successful lessons, pupils are not managed well and tasks and resources are not matched to the range of ability in the class. Pupils with special educational needs do receive extra support and guidance. Pupils with higher levels of potential attainment are not sufficiently challenged and extension work is not always provided. Standards in written work in Years 9 and 11 are

below the national average because the department is not placing sufficient emphasis on raising standards in written work. Pupils respond well to teachers' questioning and this aspect of assessment is good. Routine marking is not sufficiently thorough and there are inconsistencies in the setting and marking of assignments in Years 7 to 9. However most pupils are aware of their levels and targets and, as a result of teachers' feedback, they do know how to improve. Pupils' progress on the GCSE course is monitored well. Teachers provide extra classes for coursework and revision. Resources, including ICT, are used well and most teachers use a variety of strategies to make lessons interesting including games, simulations, video and role-play. When given the opportunity, most pupils work well in pairs and small groups and are capable of some independent learning and research. Year 11 pupils made very good progress in a lesson on the Cuban Missile Crisis because of the varied and effective teaching strategies used. History makes a valuable contribution to moral, social and cultural education particularly in the trips and visits available to pupils.

91. The head of department ensures that teachers in this large department are supported well. Overall planning, for example in relation to the introduction of a new GCSE syllabus, has been effective. However there are serious timetable and staffing issues that adversely affect teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9. Classes are shared between teachers and this affects continuity and progression. Some of the ten teachers in the department are not subject specialists. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 7 to 10 unsatisfactory teaching and learning leads to underachievement.
- Lesson plans are not linked to the local agreed syllabus.
- The use of non-specialist staff leads to below average attainment.

Commentary

92. Three pupils, who were taught out of school hours, gained A*-C grades in the GCSE examination in 2004. Their number is too few for national comparisons, but they met school expectations. By the end of Year 9, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the range of responses to the teachings of three religions are below average. They have consolidated their knowledge of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, without extending primary school attainment. They are aware of the range of human choices raised by different views about abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty and having a religious faith, and can say which choices they would make. They have not developed the skills to identify the issues raised by different religious interpretations of teachings about these topics among believers. By the end of Year 11, pupils' ability to comment on and evaluate information on religious and charity websites is below average. They have insufficient time to develop appropriate subject research and technical vocabulary and concept skills. In all years, the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of their peers.

93. In Years 7 to 9, the unsatisfactory quality of teaching and learning reflects the lack of specialist teachers. Lesson plans are insufficiently linked to the structure of the agreed syllabus. Aims are not clear and are therefore not shared with pupils. Expectations are low and tasks do not engage pupils, impacting negatively on behaviour and attitudes. Pupils' work does not adequately benefit from appropriate resources on world religions today, links to current events nor through exploration of the local and wider community. Although pupils show awareness of religions in the news, teachers' narrow use of questioning restricts pupils from developing the higher level subject skills of enquiry, weighing up arguments and evaluating consequences, which they need in order to improve. The specialist classroom is not well maintained, with broken blinds, and poor use of display. In Year 10, the potential for ICT-based independent learning is not realized. However, where teachers provide a purpose and relevance, for example to produce a PowerPoint presentation on a charity, pupils' application and productivity improves.
94. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. In the current situation, leadership is provided by a non-specialist head of department who is expected to manage the input of 11 other non-specialist teachers, as well as teaching a second subject. No training in the subject, or in the agreed syllabus, has been undertaken by staff. Line management arrangements for the subject are unsatisfactory, with no senior management support or subject annual review. The school has not recognised its statutory responsibility to teach the subject weekly to all pupils in Years 10 and 11, thus also restricting short course examination opportunities in the subject. This is unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection when this was also an issue.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average in Years 10/11, especially in resistant materials and graphics.
- The teaching in textiles is good, resulting in good achievement.
- Relationships and mutual respect between teachers and pupils are good.
- Assessment and monitoring are underdeveloped.
- Pupils have insufficient access to ICT.

Commentary

95. Results of teacher assessments in Year 9 are in line with the national average. Results in the GCSE examinations were well below average in 2004. The results varied across different aspects of the subject, being average in food and textiles and well below in resistant materials and graphics. Girls performed better than the boys. Achievement overall is satisfactory. The majority of pupils are achieving at a satisfactory rate in Years 7 to 9 because most of the tasks

are appropriately challenging. They use a range of tools and equipment competently and select the appropriate tools for the material with which they are working. Pupils make more progress from Year 7 to 8 especially in textiles and food. Some Year 9 pupils, mainly boys, lack concentration and commitment, which thus restricts their progress. The current standards in Year 10 are below average in resistant materials and graphics due to staffing difficulties and pupils' lack of some of the basic skills normally learned in Years 7 to 9. Current standards of work seen in Year 11 reflect the variation seen in GCSE results in 2004. Standards are above average in textiles and food. ICT skills are satisfactory, but the lack of access to appropriate equipment makes it difficult to meet the needs of the curriculum. This is impeding the presentation of GCSE coursework, and preventing experience of computer-aided manufacture. Girls are performing better than boys and the predicted grades reflect this. The progress of students with special educational needs is satisfactory; they are well supported and cope well alongside others, although they have insufficient specialist support during practical sessions.

96. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some lessons being very good, especially in textiles in Years 7, 10 and 11. Most lessons are well organised and have good strategies to ensure safe working practices. Lessons on textiles are especially well planned. They are characterised by well-planned tasks that challenge and reinforce what is already known. Marking effectively helps pupils to know how to improve their work. Teachers have high levels of subject knowledge. Their enthusiasm, and the good relationships they have with the pupils, effectively motivate their pupils. A real sense of purpose is seen in most lessons with good support for all. Pupils are independent learners and are progressing in line with their ability in most aspects of technology. Year 11 pupils are now making good use of the examination criteria and constructive marking. In one lesson seen, there was good recap of previous work supported by effective question and answer techniques which aided the reinforcement of knowledge. Resources used were well chosen to suit the tasks set and ensured that pupils had equal access.
97. The very recently appointed head of department provides the potential for improved curriculum leadership. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection. However, the department is now a committed team with a clear vision for the subject and the determination to vastly improve standards by securing good teaching across the department. The assessment and monitoring programme is currently unsatisfactory. As yet, teachers are not making adequate use of National Curriculum levels to inform pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Accommodation is good but equipment in resistant materials needs replacing. A committed technician provides support that has a positive impact on standards.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils demonstrate good behaviour because teachers manage lessons well.
- Weaknesses in the teaching, staffing and timetabling contribute to pupils' underachievement in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils lack opportunities to use ICT to generate artwork.
- Pupils have insufficient art enrichment opportunities to broaden their vision.

Commentary

98. In the 2004 GCSE examination, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades was well below average, but shows a rising trend. Girls achieved better results than boys. By the end of Year 9 standards are below average and represent unsatisfactory achievement since pupils enter the school with average levels of competence in art. By the end of Year 11, standards are about average and represent satisfactory achievement over Years 10/11. Throughout Years 7 to 11, girls demonstrate higher standards than boys. Pupils with special educational needs, and those deemed talented, do not always achieve as well as they could. Pupils behave well and show good attitudes. In Years 7 to 9 pupils produce effective work in printing and ceramics. In Years 10 and 11 work in textiles and painting shows some thoughtful development from initial ideas. Throughout the school, work is marred by fundamental weaknesses in observational drawing. Pupils' understanding of artists and styles is weak. The quality of contextual research and use of sketch books is generally weak. Pupils lack confidence in discussing and evaluating art.
99. Pupils are productive in art because teachers manage them well, providing a supportive learning environment. Teachers' good subject expertise ensures that pupils experience a good range of media and styles. However pupils underachieve in Years 7 to 9 because teachers' expectations are too low and lessons lack challenge. Lessons lack incisive questioning or opportunities for focused class discussion to help pupils develop an understanding of art. Teaching lacks explicit strategies to extend more able pupils or encourage the less able. Teachers accept a leisurely pace of working, and much time is wasted at the start and end of lessons. Pupils are not helped to improve their literacy skills as, too often, errors in spelling, sentence construction and presentation go uncorrected. Few lessons are planned to provide opportunities for pupils to fully evaluate their work. Homework is well used to extend pupils' learning.
100. Day-to-day running of the department is orderly. Teachers provide good role models to pupils. However, weaknesses in strategic management restrict what might be achieved, being insufficiently focused on raising pupils' attainment. The department is insufficiently self-evaluative. Current procedures for department review lack rigour and development planning fails to focus on strategies to raise pupils' attainment. There are no systematic arrangements for monitoring teaching. Pupils lack the stimulus of gallery visits, visiting artists and competitions. They have no opportunities to generate artwork using ICT. The potential for art to contribute to pupils' spiritual and cultural development is insufficiently developed, particularly in the multicultural dimension. Some classes experience non-specialist teachers and a lack of continuity because of the idiosyncracies of the school timetable. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory.

Drama

Provision in drama is **very good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is consistently very good teaching by the two specialist teachers.
- The pupils achieve very well and develop in confidence, develop social skills and improve speaking and listening skills.
- There are very good extra-curricular activities which enrich work done in lessons.
- Leadership is enthusiastic, energetic, committed and very effective.
- There are too many non-specialist teachers teaching drama to pupils in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

101. Results in the 2004 GCSE examination were above average and continued a rising trend. Increasing numbers are now taking the subject at GCSE. By the end of Year 9, all pupils are showing above average attainment, reflecting very good achievement. For instance, in a Year 9 lesson on theatrical conventions, pupils were seriously involved in creating character from a newspaper article. They understood thoroughly the theatrical conventions of still image, thought track and narrator. Below average pupils make considerable gains in confidence, and above average pupils develop an understanding of some of the complexities of feeling in the scenes they are developing. All pupils in these years are developing well their speaking and listening skills.
102. By the end of Year 11, pupils show a mature and serious approach to presenting their work to others. They evaluate their own work, and that of others, constructively. They show a good understanding of theatrical conventions and a considerable enthusiasm for their work.
103. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are very well planned with a very good variety of activities which ensure that all pupils are learning. The very good relationships between pupils and the teacher enable some impressive learning through discussion, for instance around the theme of unreasonable and anti-social behaviour. Teachers employ very good behaviour management strategies to ensure all students are fully involved. In Years 10/11, teaching is also very good. There is very effective class management, very good collaborative work and a very good pace to lessons which ensure all pupils are learning well.
104. The department is managed very well with energy and commitment. There is a clear direction for development and excellent collaboration between the two core teachers. Extra-curricular activities are very well developed with impressive productions, many theatre visits and many pupils involved in dance, including an excellent boys' dance group. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Growing numbers of pupils now choose GCSE drama as an option.

Music

Provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

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

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Improvement since the previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher has good rapport with pupils and, in Years 10/11, this stimulates good progress.
- Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and gives consistency to the subject after a period of instability.
- There is insufficient time for the national programmes of study to be taught.
- The schemes of work and assessment are not fully in place.
- There is insufficient support to develop leadership and management skills.

Commentary

105. GCSE results over the past two years have been poor. Because of the inability of most candidates to produce coursework, only one pupil passed the examination in 2004. Due to regular teaching now being available, there is every sign that this year's results will be much better. Although standards in Year 9 are below average, achievement is satisfactory since most pupils enter Year 7 with few musical skills. Due to more stability in the department, there are clear signs that pupils in Years 7 and 8 are making faster progress. Achievement is good in Year 11, even though standards are still below average. This is because of a firm commitment to the subject by pupils and a curriculum that is now addressing their needs.
106. The teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9. The teacher's high expectations and good working relationships are improving learning particularly in Years 7 and 8. Because of this, pupils of all abilities are making satisfactory progress. Good teaching in Year 11 has encouraged all pupils to learn well and improve their musical knowledge. PowerPoint presentations on musical matters, which pupils prepare, are well researched by pupils of all abilities. Recorded compositions show that they are beginning to understand composing techniques.
107. At present, leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There is insufficient support for the unqualified teacher, who is currently in charge, to develop these skills to move the department forward. Clear signs exist that music is improving because of stability and regular teaching. However, there is insufficient curriculum time for the programmes of study to be adequately taught in Years 7 to 9. Even though a scheme of work is being developed, lessons lack variety and there is no effective assessment strategy. Although improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory, the ready acknowledgment of these points has formed the basis for future development. Extra-curricular activities are being developed and the steel pans groups are very popular.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Average	Average (above average in exam course)
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory (good in exam course)
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	

Improvement since the previous inspection	Good
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Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because they are well taught and have positive attitudes.
- GCSE results are in line with the national average, and above other subjects, which represents good achievement.
- Leadership and management are good, making use of the school's specialist sports college status to raise standards.

Commentary

108. GCSE results in 2004 were in line with the national average. The courses are popular and many pupils' results were higher than in other subjects. Pupils join the school with standards below the national average. Throughout Years 7 to 9 all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. They make good progress because good teaching stimulates their positive attitudes towards the subject. In Years 10 and 11, the standards in National Curriculum physical education are in line with those in most schools. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Time allocation for physical education is below recommendations. Pupils' positive response to opportunities to play, coach and referee invasion games enables some Years 10 and 11 pupils to gain accreditation through the Junior Sports Leader scheme. Good participation by boys and girls supports progress and provides continuity in learning. Standards in GCSE physical education and dance are in line with the national average. Pupils show good commitment to their GCSE work and achievement is good.
109. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are very knowledgeable and use varied teaching and learning styles which motivate pupils. They have good systems for the management of facilities and resources. Relationships are strong. In the most successful lessons, teachers ensure that pupils know what they are learning and why, and they regularly check progress by intervention with individual pupils. Pupils in these lessons are given tasks appropriate for their level of ability. In weaker lessons, teachers do not tell pupils what they are expected to learn, nor do they use assessment as part of learning. Here, pupils are too dependent on the teacher and sometimes work on tasks that are too advanced for their ability. Behaviour management of a few disruptive pupils is ineffective.
110. Leadership and management are good. The head of department is well supported by senior managers, one of whom coordinates the development and implementation of the specialist sports college status. They have a clear vision of how the initiative can raise standards more quickly. The head of department is a good role model for other teachers and the pupils. He ensures that the group of specialist teachers work well as a team. They share good practice and are developing strategies to improve pupils' achievement. A good extra-curricular programme enhances a good physical education curriculum. Links with partner schools and the community are developing well. The department has made good progress since the last inspection. The specialist sports college status has played a leading part in this improvement.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Health and social care

Provision in health and social care is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen		Above average
Achievement		Good
Teaching and learning		Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Improvement since the previous inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well planned, organised and managed.
- Relationships and mutual respect between teachers and pupils are good.
- Learning benefits from excellent support from external agencies.

Commentary

111. This is a new course and the first examination will take place in 2005. Coursework is well presented and pupils clearly take pride in this. As a result of good planning and management pupils are motivated and achieving well.

112. As a result of such a well structured and well organized course, pupils gain a good knowledge and understanding of a range of issues related to health and social care. Teachers draw effectively on personal experiences and external agencies to highlight issues which help pupils to appreciate the relevance of the work. Strong links with the local community and health service provide pupils with excellent opportunities for work placements and avenues for research. Pupils were clearly absorbing and understanding the principles of first aid presented during a Red Cross course. Pupils talk enthusiastically of their enjoyment of the course and their appreciation of the help and support they receive. Thorough and constructive marking and assessment of coursework make a strong contribution to the quality of learning.

113. Good leadership and effective management keep the development under constant review to maintain a high quality course.

Leisure and tourism

Provision in leisure and tourism is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen		Average
Achievement		Good
Teaching and learning		Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Not applicable	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good; pupils achieve well.
- ICT resources and college and business links support learning well.
- Not all pupils have work placements in the vocational area.
- Pupils' work is effectively assessed.
- Homework opportunities are used well.
- Management and leadership are good with real strengths in review and evaluation.

Commentary

114. No candidates were entered in 2004. Standards in Year 11 are broadly average. Standards in Year 10 are lower but achievement in both year groups is good, reflecting the good quality of teaching and the positive attitudes of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are progressing well because of the practical approach and the individual support available. Attitudes are generally good; many pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and intend to take higher-level courses or seek employment in leisure or tourism. However, a few fail to complete work on time and have not adjusted adequately to the demands of a double entry vocational course. Pupils in Year 11 show a good knowledge of marketing strategies and the ability to design effective promotional material.
115. Teachers are experienced and knowledgeable, particularly about examination requirements. Very good use is made of the support and resources provided through the partnership with the local college. Pupils benefit from trips and business links although the department is aware of the need to extend this provision and to encourage work experience opportunities. Teaching and learning are effective because of the use made of ICT facilities, particularly those in the learning resource centre. Assessment is thorough, pupils are well prepared for examinations and there are extra classes beyond the normal school day to help them complete coursework and revision.
116. This new course has been introduced effectively and assessment procedures, resources and schemes of work have been developed well. The subject leader is very clear about the need to review and evaluate and has a real vision of the potential for the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Improvement since the previous inspection	Not applicable	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 7 to 11 relevant modules produce satisfactory teaching and learning.
- In Years 7 to 11 lack of discrete citizenship lessons leads to underachievement.
- Gaps in the delivery of all the required topics produce below average attainment.
- There is no strategy to ensure all pupils receive appropriate curriculum time and participate in relevant citizenship activities.

Commentary

117. By the end of Year 9, pupils' understanding of how voluntary groups bring about change and the richness of the diverse backgrounds of the people in the United Kingdom is below

average. Pupils demonstrate increased awareness of the legal system and local and central government, but their knowledge and understanding of all the required elements of citizenship is too limited. By the end of Year 11, pupils understand the global need for fair trade, but lack knowledge of charities locally and nationwide when organising fund-raising activities. They have awareness of the meaning of racism, but show limited knowledge of current legislation and its impact on behaviour and values. They access the Internet competently in undertaking research.

118. In Years 7 to 11, citizenship has been integrated into the personal, social and health education programme. There is confusion between the different requirements for each subject in planning, delivery and assessment, and teachers and pupils are not clear about the distinction. The lack of discrete time available for citizenship leads to underachievement. In all years, relevant modules benefit from satisfactory teaching and learning. For instance, in Year 9, satisfactory learning was seen in the work of pupils, making useful notes on the work of parliament, making laws, and police powers, using a variety of recording styles. However some tasks remained unfinished and other topics did not develop the required skills of enquiry and communication. Statutory requirements for assessing and reporting are met, but teacher assessments are too generous and not supported by evidence. In Year 11, the link between citizenship and personal and social education was exploited well when pupils were planning community events to benefit the community. Pupils already involved in a sports leadership course were able to include work on organising actual events such as girls' soccer competitions. All pupils displayed positive attitudes to their learning.
119. Leadership is unsatisfactory. The school does not meet statutory requirements for ensuring all pupils' full entitlement to citizenship within the curriculum. An audit of subjects has been undertaken but with no current plan to coordinate appropriate links with other subjects. Management is unsatisfactory. The lack of discrete planning and monitoring restricts the time available for pupils to develop the required skills, knowledge and understanding. There has been no mapping of opportunities for pupils to participate in relevant school activities, or to enrich such opportunities through visitors or visits.

Personal, social and health education

120. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. It is well planned as the major component in a weekly lesson taught by each group's tutor. Topics cover the required elements of self-awareness, relationships and health, sex and drugs education and link well with preparation for the world of work. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are mainly satisfactory, except in a few lessons where pupils' behaviour is not managed well. In one group's work on take-home pay, pupils' weak numeracy skills were not well supported. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are good. In Year 10, well presented information on sexual health and responsibility by a visiting nurse engaged pupils well and resulted in very good learning. In Year 11, pupils worked well together and produced good and varied ideas and realistic plans for organising events to benefit the community. Pupils show mature and positive attitudes. Leadership is satisfactory. The recent introduction of citizenship modules has led to confusion over the different requirements and approach of this area of learning. Management of teaching and visitors is good, but insufficient attention is given to strategies to assess how much pupils' confidence and skills benefit. Statutory policies on drugs and sex education are in place. However, the new draft policy on sex education needs to ensure that the context within which sex education is taught promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, and needs to be agreed promptly by governors.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

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

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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

