

INSPECTION REPORT

FULLHURST COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester City

Unique reference number: 120298

Headteacher: Mr W Morris

Lead inspector: Robin Coulthard

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st April 2005

Inspection number: 273877

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	900
School address:	Imperial Avenue Leicester
Postcode:	LE3 1AH
Telephone number:	0116 2824326
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Debra Gilbert
Date of previous inspection:	18 th – 22 nd November 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Fullhurst Community College is a mixed comprehensive school for students aged 11 to 16. It has achieved the following awards: CareerMark (2004) and Investors in People (re-awarded in 2005). It is involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Project Trident, the Children's Fund and Skillforce. The school is part of the national college for School Leadership as a networked learning community and is part of an Excellence in Cities Action Zone. It is about the same size as other high schools, with 900 students. Students of a wide range of attainment attend the school, including some with high ability but many who find learning difficult. Overall, standards are well below average at the start of Year 7. The school has a higher-than-average proportion of lower-attaining students on entry. The school has very few students at an early stage of acquiring English. Over a quarter of students, an above-average proportion, have special educational needs. These relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural problems, dyslexia, speech impairment, hearing impairment, medical and physical needs and autism. The school has 49 students with statements of educational need, an above-average number. More than a quarter of students are entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average. Almost all students come from the socially challenging area immediately surrounding the school. Twenty two per cent of students are from other than White-British backgrounds and 18 students are supported through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. The community is making increased use of school facilities for sports and community outreach programmes.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11746	Robin Coulthard	Lead inspector	Religious education
9537	Caroline Marden	Lay inspector	
34521	Ruth Westbrook	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language
18072	Joan Stephens	Team inspector	Mathematics
3242	Mike Newman	Team Inspector	Science
32231	Adrian Lyons	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology Business education
32590	Roger Fenwick	Team inspector	Design and technology
33135	Kim Ropek	Team inspector	Art and design
35060	Keith Robinson	Team Inspector	History, Geography
34084	Mary Davies	Team Inspector	Music
23307	Neil McDonough	Team Inspector	Citizenship
30800	Betty Colley	Team inspector	Physical education, Special educational needs
32208	Derek Aitkin	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Fullhurst Community College is a popular and oversubscribed school. It provides students with a **satisfactory** education with some good and very good features. The principal's very good leadership ensures that staff work with a strong sense of common purpose. The school provides very well for students with particular gifts and talents and effectively meets the needs of students with special educational needs. Overall achievement, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Barriers to higher achievement and to more effective overall provision are attendance and punctuality that are well below average overall and the disruptive behaviour of a small minority of students. Many students are from disadvantaged backgrounds, and join the school with very low standards of speaking and literacy. Parents are pleased with the education provided. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- GCSE results have improved above the national rate over the last five years
- Across the curriculum, students' standards in speaking and writing and their competence in numeracy and in using information and communication technology (ICT) are not high enough
- The good curriculum is enhanced by very good enrichment activities. Provision is very good in work-related learning. It is poor in religious education
- Students are well looked after
- The principal's dynamic leadership encourages staff to embrace local and national initiatives. Staff are very committed and work with a strong team spirit
- The attendance and punctuality, particularly of a small but significant minority of students, remain poor and behaviour is unsatisfactory, and some students lack motivation

Students' results and achievement are better than reported at the last inspection, although attendance is lower and unauthorised absence has increased. The number of exclusions is high. More teaching is very good and excellent. The school provides a stimulating curriculum. Very good opportunities for extra-curricular enrichment are provided and the provision for work-related learning is very good. The school takes good care of its students. Partnerships with other schools and colleges have improved and are now very good. Links with the community are better. Improvements have been made in all of the issues raised at the last inspection, and **overall improvement since then has been good.**

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Students' achievements are satisfactory overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In 2004, GCSE results improved from well-below-average to below-average. Results are similar to those obtained by students in similar schools. This represents satisfactory achievement, given that students' standards on entry are well below average. Overall standards in Years 10 and 11 are below average. Students who attend regularly achieve well in English, mathematics and science. Achievement is good in ICT, modern languages, history, art and design, music, physical education, business education and work-related learning. Achievement is unsatisfactory in design and technology and religious education. Current standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average. Standards in mathematics and modern languages are well below average. However, students who attend regularly achieve well in English, history, geography, art and physical education. Achievement is unsatisfactory in music and religious education. Achievement is satisfactory in other subjects. Students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students. Gifted and talented students achieve well and make better progress than others in the

school. Students' English language and literacy skills and competence in the use of number and ICT are below average.

Students' personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Students' attitudes in lessons inspected were usually good. Overall, however, attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory as indicated by the large number of exclusions, the low levels of attendance, poor punctuality and internal truancy from lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory education.

Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and work is well matched to the needs of individual students. Most students who attend regularly have positive attitudes to learning. Learning is not always as effective as it should be because of students' poor organisation, and concentration and below-average literacy skills. Occasionally, teachers' expectations of what students could achieve are too low. Teachers do not make effective use of ICT across the school. Students and teachers generally get on well together, and this benefits learning. The curriculum is good. Students have opportunities to take part in a very good range of extra-curricular activities. A daily act of collective worship is not provided. Arrangements for the care, guidance and support of students are good, as are links with the community. There are very good links with other schools and colleges and links with parents are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The principal has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and plans for development are appropriate. The leadership of senior managers is effective and management is good. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning are good, but information from assessment is not used well enough to guide planning and target setting. Financial management is very effective. Governors challenge and support the school well.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the education provided. Some parents do not take their responsibilities seriously; they do not encourage their children to attend regularly or complete homework. Students are extremely positive about the school and are confident that their views are taken seriously.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Raise levels of attendance and eliminate internal truancy
- Improve the behaviour of the small minority of students who disrupt lessons
- Improve speaking and writing skills and students' use of numeracy and ICT
- Improve provision in religious education
- Use data from monitoring and assessment more constructively to raise standards

and to meet statutory requirements

- Introduce a daily act of collective worship

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in, subjects and courses

In the national examinations at the end of Year 9 in 2004, results for English were average. In mathematics and science, results were well below average. Results show an improving trend when compared with similar schools. GCSE results were below average in 2004, having risen from well below average in 2003. Students' achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 11. Standards in Years 9 and 11 are below average. Gifted and talented students achieve well and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results have improved faster than the national trend over the past five years
- Results in English, in the 2004 national tests in Year 9, were well above those of similar schools
- Students who are gifted and talented achieve well
- Students with special educational needs achieve as well as the majority of other students
- Standards in religious education and in design and technology are too low
- Standards are adversely affected by the poor attendance of a minority of students

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.5 (31.6)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	32.0 (30.4)	35.4 (34.7)
science	30.0 (28.5)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 165 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. The attainment of students on entry to the school, based on their Year 6 results, is well below average. In the end-of-Year 9 national tests in 2004, students had made steady improvement and their overall standards were below average. In the 2004 tests, students attained average standards in English, an improvement on the 2003 results, which were below average. These results were well above those of similar schools. Results in mathematics and science were well below average, the same as in 2003. Differences in boys' and girls' results are similar to the national differences. The trend of improvement in these results over the five years up to 2003 is below the national trend, but when 2004 is included it is likely to produce a more positive trend of improvement.
2. Students with special educational needs achieve as well as other students. Students do well when results at GCSE are compared to test results on entry into the school in Year 7. Individual students achieve well in GCSE examinations and others improve so that they are removed from the register of special educational needs as they progress through the school. A small but significant minority of students have poor attendance. This seriously impairs their achievement. Teaching assistants help specialist subject teachers to provide guidance in lessons to help students with special educational needs to achieve satisfactorily. This concentrated support also helps them to improve their literacy and numeracy and to achieve as well as other students in the school.
3. Students identified as gifted and talented make good progress and achieve well because of the additional targeted support they receive. In most subjects, high expectations and good opportunities are helping to raise the standards and achievement of these students.
4. Current standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average but, because of the low base on entry, students' achievements are satisfactory overall. In English, students make good progress in lessons, but literacy development and attendance at lessons are barriers to improving standards further. Standards are below average in science and well below average in mathematics. In citizenship, students have attained standards in line with the national average. Standards are below average in other subjects except in modern foreign languages where they are well below average. Students make good progress through the early stages of learning English. The achievement of

students with English as an additional language is satisfactory in classes without support, but good when receiving additional support.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	38 (33)	52 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	72 (73)	89 (88)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	89 (91)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	27 (25)	35 (35)

There were 184 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. The proportion of students gaining 5 or more GCSE grades A* to C was below the national average, which is an improvement on the previous year. The number of students attaining five or more A* to G grades was well below the national average, as was the number gaining one or more GCSE passes.
6. During the last five years, girls' results have been generally higher than those of the boys, except for 2003. However, when compared with national averages for each gender, boys do better than girls. The trend in the average total GCSE points achieved by students is above the national trend of improvement over the five years up to 2004. When compared with all schools, in 2004, results were best in double award science and French, and not as good in religious education, mathematics and art and design. The highest results for grade A* and A were in English, geography, and double award science. Students gained a greater proportion of A* and A grades in double award science than the national average. No student achieved a pass at A* or A in single award science.
7. In Years 10 and 11, students' standards are below average. They are achieving at the expected rate compared to their standards at the start of Year 7. However, poor levels of attendance have a detrimental effect on their achievements. Those students who do attend regularly make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Students also achieve well in ICT, modern languages, history, art and design, music, physical education, business education and work-related learning. Progress is satisfactory in geography and citizenship. It is unsatisfactory in design and technology and religious education. Students' competence in using language, number and ICT in other subjects is below average. Students enter the school with skills in literacy which are well below average. By the end of Year 9, standards are below average and remain below average by the end of Year 11. The school works assiduously to improve literacy, but the development of skills in speaking and listening is given insufficient emphasis across the school. In most subjects, these low standards hamper the progress which students make in their learning, and have an impact on standards of achievement. Although students' competence in numeracy is below average, it does not inhibit their learning in other subjects. Exceptions are ICT, where the quality of course work suffers because of below average numeracy skills, and science, when students do not have sufficient understanding to interpret graphs. Students do not have sufficient opportunity to extend their skills in ICT across different subjects.
8. Compared with standards at the time of the last inspection in 1999, students' attainment has improved in all three core subjects at the end of Year 9. GCSE results are higher now, with the proportion gaining five A* to C increasing from 28 percent to 38 percent.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are well below average. Students' personal development is satisfactory, overall. Provision for social development is good. It is satisfactory for cultural and moral development but unsatisfactory for spiritual development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Levels of attendance and punctuality are well below average
- Monitoring of internal truancy is ineffective
- Behaviour is unsatisfactory with a high level of fixed term exclusions
- Attendance is well monitored, with some very good initiatives to improve attendance levels
- Good systems are in place to manage poor behaviour
- Opportunities for spiritual development are not planned and rarely occur in lessons

Commentary

9. By national comparisons, the proportion of students who have very low attendance is very high. Currently, nearly three out of twenty have less than seventy per cent attendance. Consequently, their achievement is affected as they are not always present when new ideas and skills are taught. The school works very hard to improve attendance. A good action plan is in place to do this and the school is investigating electronic systems of registration. The school is now being much more rigorous in authorising absence and this accounts for the rise in recorded unauthorised absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	10.3%	School data	3.2%
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.

10. The school's policy of telephoning home on the first day for all unaccounted absences, and in working closely with outside agencies, ensure that truancy from school is quickly identified. When necessary, the school does not shirk from supporting legal action to oblige parents to ensure that their children attend school. In recognising the need to tackle attendance and behaviour issues, the school has introduced an alternative curriculum for specific students. This has been successful in significantly improving the attendance of over half the students on the programme. The number of exclusions for this group has dramatically decreased.
11. Many students are late and this can disrupt the start of lessons. The procedures for monitoring students' attendance to different lessons during the day lack rigour and do not allow the school to identify those who are missing from individual lessons or to identify different patterns of attendance between subjects.

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	696	169	7
White – Irish	4	0	0
White – any other White background	15	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	29	8	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	13	3	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	82	4	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	6	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	2	0
Black or Black British – African	20	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	7	0	0

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

12. Students' attitudes in lessons during the inspection were usually good. Students readily responded to instructions, and, when the teaching was good, they were well motivated and worked hard. However, many students lack confidence and this, in conjunction with low levels of speaking skills, makes many reluctant to contribute to discussions. The school provides many enrichment and extra-curricular activities to help improve motivation and confidence and these are well attended. However, some students forget equipment they need for lessons and fail to complete or return their homework.
13. Behaviour during the inspection was satisfactory, both in lessons and around the school. Often it was good. Occasionally, unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons interrupted the learning. A consensus between staff, students and parents confirmed that behaviour does cause disruption to learning and staff. Students thought the behaviour was better than usual during the inspection week.
14. Fixed-term exclusions are used appropriately as a sanction for actions such as violence and verbal abuse, but the high number reflects the level of unsatisfactory behaviour. In many cases, one fixed-term exclusion for a short period is an effective sanction, but a core of about thirty students re-offend and they account for almost half the fixed-term exclusions. A daily system of staff on a 'duty call' swiftly responds to teachers' requests for disruptive students to be removed from their lesson. This minimises the interruption to the learning of others. The comprehensive system of support for those students who find it difficult to behave well is effective in keeping students in school and has reduced the level of permanent exclusion. The school's learning mentors make a significant contribution to helping students overcome behavioural difficulties. Permanent exclusion is used when necessary, but only when all other methods have failed. Students are confident that bullying is not widespread and when it does occur it is dealt with effectively. Students are confident that they can take their concerns to members of staff and that the adults will listen, give advice and where necessary, take appropriate action.

15. Teachers promote social development well in virtually all lessons. They provide opportunities for students to work together and for them to listen respectfully to each other's ideas. Teachers provide very good role models for students and have very good relationships with them. Teachers take this aspect of their role very seriously as it is central to motivating students and developing their self-esteem. Students from different ethnic groups work well together.
16. Students take on responsibilities, such as ambassadors, school councillors and librarians, readily and make a good contribution to the life of the school. They act as guides for new students and parents when they visit the school and help as mentors for younger students during the summer school. Moral issues are discussed in different subjects, for example in history, where students consider issues about the emancipation of black slaves after the War of Independence. There are satisfactory opportunities for students to learn about their own and other cultures, for example in English, when students compare poems from different countries. However, opportunities are lost, for instance in food technology, where there is very little about foods from different cultures. During the inspection and in samples of students' work, few examples of provision for students' spiritual development were noted. Planning for this is ineffective and there is no systematic monitoring of provision.
17. Students with English as an additional language have positive attitudes to the school and value the support which they receive from staff. This is evident from the way they speak confidently about their work and experiences in school.
18. Students' attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning are not as good as was reported in the previous inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory. The curriculum is good with very worthwhile extra-curricular activities. Students are well looked after. Beneficial educational links are maintained with other establishments. The school ensures students are well supported in their learning and development throughout the school. Links with parents are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Poor attendance, personal organisation, concentration in lessons and attitudes to homework restrict learning for some students. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most students who attend regularly are well motivated and keen to learn. Assessment systems and practices are satisfactory with some inconsistencies.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between students and teachers are good
- Teaching in some lessons is better than students' learning
- The quality of teaching in religious education is unsatisfactory
- ICT is not used effectively to engage students in their learning
- Some departments are not as good as others in setting targets for students and helping them to see what needs to be done to improve

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 109 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (4%)	21 (19%)	47 (43%)	28 (26%)	9 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

19. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In Years 9 and 10 the quality is good. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in Years 7, 10 and 11. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in all years. No poor teaching was observed. The good relationships that exist between students and teachers contribute greatly to positive learning and were a good feature of many lessons.

20. Teachers use their good subject knowledge and experience to prepare interesting work. Lessons are planned to provide a suitable range of structured learning activities which are matched to students' individual needs. Lessons generally build well on previous learning, and levels of challenge are gradually and appropriately increased. Lessons that had this structure were invariably good or better and resulted in students who concentrated hard and made good progress. The school recognises the need to develop lesson structure further and the 'change team' is focusing on planning for 'learning outcomes' as a key to improvement.
21. The recommendations of the National Strategy for teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are being introduced. Most, but not all, lessons start with teachers making the lesson objectives clear to students. This is followed by a starter activity to motivate and involve them. Some lessons had a useful session at the end where learning was checked and consolidated. However, this was sometimes too brief because not all staff organised the available time well enough.
22. An excellent Year 7 English lesson provided a model of good practice. The teacher planned the lesson using the Ruth Miskin literacy programme for a lower set. The activities were at a suitable level for each member of the group. A lively and relevant starter activity engaged the interest of the students and led smoothly to the main reading activity. A teaching assistant supported students very effectively. Time was carefully apportioned to each activity to maintain a good pace of learning. Students fully understood what was expected from them at all times and worked enthusiastically.
23. At times, the quality of teaching was better than learning and achievement because of students' levels of concentration, personal organisation and poor attendance. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson, although teaching was lively, students were unable to focus on the subject for sustained periods and this affected their learning. In a Year 10 French lesson, students' lack of personal organisation reduced learning, and some had not completed homework on which the lesson was based.
24. Students' below average standards of literacy and speaking are developed inconsistently across the curriculum. Some lessons make good use of key words. Students are asked questions in a targeted way and answers are not accepted only from volunteers. In an excellent religious education lesson in Year 7, students' natural reticence was effectively combated. Their speaking became more assured as they retold the main points of a Parable. Learning was of high quality because the teacher challenged them and had high expectations of them. This contrasted conspicuously with a religious education lesson in Year 11, where few students were prepared to speak. The teacher's expectations were too low and a discussion was inadequately led. As a result, the topic was dominated by a noisy few, who interrupted each other and did not value the views expressed by others.
25. Some teachers are using ICT well to enhance and make their lessons more interesting. A very good example was in an excellent Year 11 mathematics lesson where the teacher used PowerPoint as a concluding activity to assess learning about four-circle geometry. The school has a sufficient range of ICT resources but some of these are out-of-date with a lack of networking in some rooms. Regular access to ICT rooms is difficult. As a result, teachers do not make effective use of ICT across the school. Not all teachers are confident in using ICT. Currently teachers make more use of ICT than do students and as a result students' learning is restricted.
26. The teaching and learning of students with special educational needs in mainstream classes are satisfactory. Teachers are supplied with good information and know students well. Some teachers make good and appropriate use of individual education plans, created through regular reviews of students' needs. Most teacher assistants are effective in lessons because they know students' needs and are well trained. There are inconsistencies in recording areas for improvement so early action and preparations for reviews are not as effective as they could be. Students with special needs are well supported at lunchtimes and after school. Activities are planned well to extend learning; for example, students are given individual opportunities to use specific ICT programs which help develop their reading skills.
27. Teaching and learning of students with English as an additional language are satisfactory overall. Thirteen students receive support across a range of lessons. Students who are withdrawn from lessons for English language teaching are well taught. However, where there is no targeted support, lesson planning is less effective. Assessment procedures for students with English as an

additional language are good. Students are assessed when they first start at the school, they are provided with an appropriate individual education plan and their progress is monitored regularly.

28. Overall, assessment is satisfactory. It is better in GCSE courses than in Years 7 to 9 although good practice exists across the school in English, science, history and, in Years 10 and 11, in music and ICT. In these subjects, students know their National Curriculum and GCSE current grades their targets. Features of good assessment include: thorough marking of students' work with clear guidelines for improvement, explanations from teachers at the start of lessons about progress and areas for development and students' involvement in their own assessments. Unsatisfactory assessment occurs, in Years 7 to 9, in mathematics, music and modern languages. In these subjects, students either do not know or are unsure about their National Curriculum levels and targets and have no clear direction in how to improve. Sometimes this is because individual teachers lack a full understanding of levels within their subject. In their work-related learning course in Years 10 and 11, students carry out a self-assessment of their skills and qualities, reflect on future work, and set their own targets. This activity is tracked thoroughly by teachers and is recorded in students' progress files, and represents good practice.
29. Since the time of the last inspection, the proportion of good and better teaching has improved, but more unsatisfactory lessons were observed. As was the case in the previous inspection, no poor teaching was observed. The quality of teaching now leads to better results. Overall, satisfactory improvement has been made in the quality of teaching and learning.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good. It is broad and generally well-balanced. National Curriculum requirements are met. Provision is adapted well to meet a wide range of needs in Years 10 and 11. Some issues of continuity in Years 7 to 9 remain unresolved, partly as a result of staffing difficulties. Very good opportunities for enrichment are provided. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The wide-ranging and inclusive curriculum meets the needs of students well
- Extra-curricular provision is very good, particularly for gifted and talented students
- Arrangements for work-related learning are very good
- The curriculum is well managed and seeks to build on best practice
- Statutory requirements are not met for a daily act of collective worship
- Issues concerning staffing and timetabling hinder progress in religious education, design and technology, music and modern foreign languages

Commentary

30. The curriculum provides students of all levels of attainment with good opportunities to develop their learning. It is regularly reviewed and evaluated by enterprising managers seeking to learn from innovative practice elsewhere. For example, the school is interested in exploring 'Learning2Learn' initiatives in the humanities. A substantial number of initiatives, principally in Years 10 and 11, have been implemented to combat disaffection by providing a wider range of vocational and key skills courses, including the Skillforce programme. These have resulted in a steady increase in numbers proceeding into further education and employment. The school responds flexibly to a wide range of needs, for example through the extension programme. Students are very well prepared for the world of work through the well-established and very good work-related achievement programme (WRAP) programme, which includes college-linked taster courses for all Year 10 students.
31. The curriculum is good in all years in English, history and science. A common strength in these subjects is well-planned schemes of work to cater for students of widely varying attainments. However, in design and technology, the curriculum is limited; this affects the composition and organisation of courses and has an impact on achievement in Years 10 and 11. In all other subjects, the curriculum is satisfactory, except in Years 7 to 9 in music, where the structure of the course is not effective in ensuring continuity in learning, and in modern languages, where time allocation and timetable arrangements are unsatisfactory.

32. Students with special educational needs have good access to the curriculum. The experienced teaching assistants help to improve students' personal and social development and literacy and numeracy skills through intensive support in Year 7. Alternative courses to the school curriculum are available in Years 10 and 11. These courses support students' preparation for work by building up self-esteem, developing responsibility and confidence, improving literacy skills and giving students opportunities of making decisions through a range of problem-solving activities. This is particularly evident on the ASDAN and other basic skills courses. Some students have better access to the curriculum because they are provided with laptops to aid literacy and research possibilities.
33. The provision for personal, social and health education is taught through the tutor group structure and this follows a carefully planned programme which meets requirements. Form tutors know the students well and have good relationships. Citizenship and careers form part of the PSHE programme. The school fails to provide a statutory daily act of collective worship.
34. Many very worthwhile activities and initiatives are provided to enrich the curriculum of gifted and talented students. For example, in mathematics and French, Year 9 students may follow an accelerated programme of study, and for Year 11 an A-level course is provided. In science, gifted students are offered three single sciences, and a full GCSE in ICT. In design and technology, students have designed a robot as part of a national challenge competition. A philosophy course allows gifted students opportunities for further study and research. Students run the school's newspaper and attend summer schools, such as Write Away. Older students attend master classes at Leicester University, as part of the Aim Higher project which also encourages students in mathematics, the arts and science. Talented sports students attend courses and events at Loughborough University.
35. The school tries to make all activities as widely available as possible. A wide range of extra-curricular activities supports learning. These include booster sessions, drop-in sessions in music and Italian, residential visits and a good range of sporting opportunities open to all students. Very good links and visits from speakers help to raise the expectations of students.
36. Staffing overall is satisfactory. Many departments are well staffed. However, there are recruitment difficulties. The school is managing this difficult position well and makes good alternative arrangements where possible. Only in religious education does the school not have a subject specialist.
37. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. It has been improved in some areas, such as the excellent sports hall, and a substantial re-build is planned to upgrade the overall learning environment. Spaces for students to socialise are limited. Resources are satisfactory overall. Library resources are well managed and used effectively to support the curriculum. ICT provision has been much improved, but is still insufficient in many subject areas. There is no computer-aided design resource in design and technology.

Care, guidance and support

Overall, the quality of care is good. The provision for health, safety, care and welfare is good. Provision for support, advice and guidance is good. Involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Levels of care and concern for students' welfare are good, and students feel that they can turn to adults working in school if they are worried
- Students with special educational needs receive good support
- Careers education and guidance are very good
- Induction arrangements for new students are thorough and helpful
- Pastoral staff do not have sufficient time to carry out monitoring tasks

Commentary

38. The school regards everyone as having equal worth and staff work hard to meet the needs of all students. Teachers and support staff know the students very well and they work closely with outside agencies concerned with students' welfare. For example, the school education welfare officer is in school for most of the week and liaises closely with pastoral staff.
39. The special educational needs coordinator is the named child protection officer and she carries out the duties effectively. Adults working in school are well aware of the school procedures. The governors' health and safety committee is vigilant in making sure appropriate safety procedures are carried out. Health and safety is a routine agenda item at all departmental meetings. The school has good arrangements for students in public care.
40. The school is a caring institution and pays good attention to all aspects of physical care and well-being of all its students. The teachers, including the leadership team, know the students well and students feel safe within the school environment. Practices have been developed to support vulnerable students, for example the Year 10 group following an alternative curriculum that has resulted in a dramatic reduction in the level of exclusions and improvement in attendance. Prompt actions are taken to help students who may be experiencing difficulties. Students talk very positively about their teachers and they are confident that there is always someone they can talk to if they have a problem, including 'open-door' access to the school counsellor. The outward-bound courses in Years 7 and 8 help establish and strengthen the relationships between form tutors, heads of year and the students. Heads of year work well as a team to provide a consistent level of pastoral care but are not provided with sufficient time to undertake their role effectively, particularly to improve the level of academic monitoring.
41. Students are well supported in their induction into the school. Arrangements include learning mentors working with students in Year 6 and moving with them into Year 7, one-to-one interviews with parents, a summer school and a two-week induction at the start of Year 7. The outward-bound course significantly helps the settling in. There is strong liaison between the school and the primary schools. This level of support continues throughout the school for students who return after exclusions or lengthy absences. Students feel well guided and supported in their option choices and the transition into Year 10.
42. The school provides good individual guidance for students who have special educational needs and regular reviews track their progress. Transition and induction arrangements help students entering Year 7. The newly formed Nurture group in Year 7 is designed to integrate students with special needs; it encourages attendance and punctuality as well as appropriate attitudes and behaviour. Year 9 students are prepared well for examination courses and Year 11 students are well prepared for leaving school or going on to college. Good links have been established with the local authority and the local Connexions service is involved in the placement of these students in employment. Some students have the benefit of extended work placements. The librarian is aware of the needs of these students and a stock of easy reading material and audio books is available for visually impaired students. Access to areas of the library for physically impaired students is difficult.
43. The quality of care which students with English as an additional language receive from the staff is good. Students are able to seek help outside of lesson time and staff act quickly and effectively to resolve any difficulties. External agencies are involved in supporting students with English as an additional language when necessary.
44. The very good careers provision throughout the school has resulted in a high reputation within the community and wider area resulting in the CareerMark award. This provision is strengthened by the progress file that students compile as they go through the school and supports their transition to higher education or a work placement. A wide variety of opportunities are offered to aid the transitions at the end of Year 11 resulting from strong links with local organisations and colleges, including a careers forum, 'Careering Ahead', organised by the school for both students and members of the community.
45. The school is developing the role of the school council and students are encouraged to express their views. There is a school suggestion box for any student to raise issues to be included as agenda items at meetings. A senior teacher has responsibility for coordinating the role of the student voice. Issues concerning the school toilets and uniform have been discussed and the

senior management has asked the council for its views on new school facilities proposed through Building Schools for the Future. Students have had the opportunity to give their views on teaching through the humanities department questionnaire.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Links with the community are good, and partnerships with other schools and colleges are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good links with local primary schools
- Very good partnerships with local colleges and higher education institutions
- Good provision of sports facilities for the local community
- Some parents do not actively support the school

Commentary

46. The school has improved information about students' attainment levels in Years 7 to 9 and has maintained its strong links with the local community.
47. Links with parents are satisfactory. The school tries very hard to work with parents and changes its practices to improve this partnership. For example, in response to the low attendance of parents at the consultation meetings with teachers, progress review days have been introduced, which have resulted in many more parents attending. Information for parents is satisfactory, overall, and information about students' attainment and progress is good, although attainment in citizenship is not made clear to parents. A number of parents are not supportive of education and do not actively encourage their children to attend school regularly or support the regular completion of homework.
48. Curricular links with primary schools contribute to students' achievements by ensuring continuity of learning as they move to secondary education. By working together on such projects as 'philosophy for children', the schools are working to raise the levels of literacy throughout the age range. They provide good opportunities for the personal development of students at Fullhurst. For example, students help with the Bright Sparks science club for primary students. Links with further education colleges are very effective in providing work-related courses and in meeting the needs of disaffected students. Links with higher education institutions provide good extension activities for gifted and talented students.
49. The school's work with local primary schools makes a very good contribution to the smooth transfer of students. For example, all Year 5 pupils in partner schools within the Fullhurst Improvement Zone visit the library to complete an information skills project. Students in primary schools with special educational needs are introduced to the school nurture group and this helps to make a successful transition from primary schools to become fully integrated into the school by the end of Year 7.
50. Links with the community are good leading to increased resources. For example, the Braunstone Community Association provides funding to improve literacy standards. The school provides sports facilities for the local community and adult education classes are delivered on the site. An on site crèche enables more people to attend these courses. Good links with local businesses provide extended work experience placements for students on work-related courses and support and enrich the curriculum for students on the business studies course.
51. The level of attendance at meetings of parents of students with English as an additional language is similar to that of other parents. The department makes use of interpreters when required and is beginning to translate some key documents for parents.
52. Overall, improvement has been good since the previous report. Links with parents remain satisfactory and links with the community are good, but the links with other schools and colleges are now very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are good. The very good leadership of the principal has enabled significant improvement in results. Senior staff lead well. Management is good. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The principal has a very clear and shared vision for shaping the future direction of the school
- The governors are knowledgeable about the school and support the principal well in his commitment to raising standards
- Data is used insufficiently to monitor and support students' progress
- Effective systems to monitor internal truancy are not in place
- Effective business management has a positive impact

Commentary

53. The principal provides very strong and effective leadership. He has a highly visible presence around the school. He is approachable to staff and students and ensures that the priorities of the school improvement plan remain central in all decision-making. There is a strong desire for continued improvement. Very good relationships have created a hard working and loyal staff. The relationship between the principal and staff is both warm and constructively critical in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Recent improvements in examinations are a result of strong senior leadership coupled with determined and dedicated management.
54. The school development plan is a very good document which is focused on achievement and reflects the aims and goals of the school. Senior managers work well together as a team. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have the capacity to improve further. They clearly understand their particular areas of responsibility. Senior managers are strategically positioned around the school to ensure students have adequate supervision around the building.
55. Monitoring is effective. Subject line managers belong to the curriculum focus group which monitors teaching and learning across the school. All subject areas continually carry out an in-depth evaluation using a set schedule and this contributes to the regular whole-school self-evaluation. The school's standards inspector from the LEA works closely with senior leaders in the monitoring and evaluating of lessons during the autumn term each year. Department progress is reviewed formally by the senior team each year and, as a result of the review, student achievement targets will be set using a combination of cognitive ability tests and the data from Year 6 tests.
56. The school has been helped by access to considerable additional external funding which has been possible as a result of the proactive work of the principal and other leaders in seeking additional funding to support the school's work.
57. The school takes seriously the demands of workforce reform. The continuing development of teaching and non-teaching staff is seen as a priority. The impact of staff development is monitored effectively through performance management and school development planning and is focused on the school's priorities. Newly-qualified teachers and other new staff are supported very well by senior management, although support at departmental level is less consistently strong. Good links have been established with local initial teacher training institutions. The principal makes an annual visit to a local university to talk to trainee teachers and this increases the pool of applicants for teaching posts. The school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training.
58. Governors are committed to and supportive of the school. There is a full complement of governors, and elections often have to be held to fill vacancies. Governors are aware of the school's strengths and areas which are in need of improvement, and pay regular visits to the school to keep abreast of developments and lend support. There is a clear committee structure, and governors are developing links with particular departments. Governors exercise their role as critical friend well by expecting the principal, and others shaping policy, to justify their plans before agreeing to them. They are kept well informed by the school. They are fully involved in the school budget planning process and challenge school leaders appropriately on financial matters. Governors ask challenging questions about the school's performance. Although they have not yet played a full role in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance, they are engaging in training to make sure they fully understand the data, and are in a better position to influence strategic development.

Appropriate performance targets are set for the principal. Governors do not ensure that the school meets the current legal requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.

59. Although teachers take registers in lessons, systems are not in place to check the validity of students' absence. Heads of year have insufficient time to fully carry out their responsibilities for the number of students with complex needs. Many students have low literacy levels, poor attendance patterns and challenging behaviour. Some parents are acquiescent over a significant proportion of unnecessary absence from school. As a result, raising standards is a significant challenge. Although some subject areas, such as ICT and business education, have good systems for recording the progress of students, such systems do not exist centrally. To develop the constructive use of data, the school is adopting the national student data systems provided by the Fischer Family Trust.
60. The leadership and coordination of special educational needs provide a good workable structure and training for all staff has taken place in the New Code of Practice. Primary schools pass on information to assist the transition of students with special needs. Initial testing in spelling and reading of the whole intake has been successful in identifying all students' needs. Statements of special needs and individual education plans comply with guidelines. The school makes every effort to involve students and parents in this process.
61. The leadership and management of English as an additional language are good. The area is part of special educational needs within the school but has had a distinctive profile within that area for only two terms. The development of the area is being addressed effectively by the staff involved, and training has been appropriately prioritised. Good support from the local education authority is available and used by the school.
62. Financial procedures are very good. Financial resources are carefully allocated to support planned developments. Every opportunity is taken to reduce expenditure through negotiation to achieve best value for money. Through its continual self-evaluation, challenge and rigorous systems, the school is demonstrating, very effectively, the implementation of best value principles. These principles extend beyond the financial area to human resources and marketing.
63. Leadership and management remain good features of the school. Key issues identified in the previous report have been tackled. The strengths identified at that time have been consolidated. Financial management has improved.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,555,139	Balance from previous year	139,267
Total expenditure	3,551,997	Balance carried forward to the next	142,409
Expenditure per student	3,960		

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work-related learning is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision has very good features that make a significant difference to students' achievements
- Careers education and guidance are very good, ensuring that most students have plans, and acquire the necessary skills for the next stages of learning
- Very good partnerships exist between the school and other providers of work-related learning
- The programme is well led and is managed effectively
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent

Commentary

64. The work-related achievement programme (WRAP) is very effective because the school has developed an impressive programme that has gained national recognition and parity with other GCSE qualifications, from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Many features are outstanding such as the alternative curriculum programme that has proved to be highly effective in reducing exclusions and has made a significant difference to the most vulnerable students. Careers education contributes very well to work-related learning through industry days and a comprehensive programme of activities and guidance that prepares students well for the next stages of education, training or employment. This has also gained recognition through a Career Mark award for high quality provision.
65. Since the last inspection, the school has increased the range of vocational courses. Every Year 10 student has an entitlement to a taster link course taught in partnership with Leicester City School and can also choose to follow a good range of applied GCSE courses. Year 10 students also benefit from a two-week work experience placement. Some students who have diverse and complex needs follow an alternative curriculum, enhanced by the use of a Skillforce programme that makes excellent use of links with the uniformed services and leads towards a worthwhile vocational award. Further enhancement is obtained through use of initiatives such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and The Prince's Trust awards. Students have the benefit of attending an outdoor pursuits centre to build team-working, personal and social skills.
66. Work-related learning is led and managed very well. Students' achievements and plans are monitored very effectively through the use of individual progress files and portfolios. Many features of the curricular planning and the alternative programme are excellent. Planning for work-related learning is very good and the effectiveness of provision is regularly evaluated. The quality of teaching of the WRAP course varies and some inconsistencies were seen during the inspection. The provision for work-related learning provided by the WRAP and PSHE courses takes the emphasis off other curriculum subjects to plan for work-related opportunities.
67. Year 11 students who attend the school on a regular basis are all well organised for the next steps in education and training and have made plans and taken action to secure post-16 school places or employment. They plan their careers responsibly and effectively. The alternative curriculum programme has been highly successful and led to national recognition for achievements in the Prince's Trust scheme.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4 ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is good.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 9 students achieved exceptionally well in the 2004 national tests
- Teaching is planned and structured effectively to meet the needs of individual students
- Assessment is used well to tell students what they need to do to improve
- Students do not use computers regularly enough

Commentary

Examination results

68. Examination results in Years 9 and 11 have been improving in recent years at a rate which is higher than the national trend. Results in Year 9 tests in 2004 were average, but very high when compared with the results for similar schools. GCSE results in English language and literature in 2004 were below average.

Standards and achievement

69. Students enter the school in Year 7 with standards which are well below average. In Year 9 standards of work are below average. This indicates good achievement. Year 11 students in 2004 had entered Year 10 with standards which were well below average, and left Year 11 with standards which were below average. The standard of work seen in English lessons during the inspection was below average. Achievement in English language and literature was good. Two thirds of Year 11 achieved two GCSE passes in English. This is a considerable achievement given the overall low language and literacy levels of students. Boys' achievement in both examinations was better than the national average, reflecting very good achievement. Students with special educational needs and students with English as an additional language make very good progress because of the targeted assistance which teachers give. A number of students do not gain external accreditation in English as a result of poor attendance. Students whose attendance is poor do not make satisfactory progress.

Teaching and learning

70. There were examples of very good and excellent teaching in the department. Teachers have good subject knowledge and knowledge of the external examination system. Lessons are well planned and structured with a range of activities which are matched to the differing needs of the individuals within the group. Liaison between the teacher and other adults in classrooms is good, ensuring that the greatest possible number of students is supported. Teachers are clear in expressing their expectations of students' behaviour and work. Teachers use an effective range of creative methods to help students with special educational needs and low-attaining students. This was seen in a Year 9 lesson where students were helped to develop a number of visual images to help in their understanding of the characters in Macbeth.

71. Good resources are used to support teaching, but the regular use of ICT by students is underdeveloped, largely because of issues to do with the school network. Work is closely monitored in lessons, and the teacher's questioning of students is targeted at individuals to involve and stimulate all. Teachers know students well and have high expectations of them. Good working relationships between students and their teachers benefit students' learning. Most students in a class respond well to the expectations of their teachers, but, in some lessons, a small number have negative attitudes to learning, and sometimes distract other students.
72. In Years 7 to 9, assessment folders contain clear evidence of progress through the years, containing detailed comments about a student's written work. Teachers use assessment consistently well and students have clear information on what they need to do to improve. Students have clear targets for speaking and listening. Targets for reading are not evident. Year 10 and 11 work is effectively assessed and very constructive feedback is given to students. Teachers use assessment strategies from the National Strategy confidently and provide students with many opportunities in lessons to talk about their work.

Leadership and management

73. The leadership of the department has clear plans for raising standards in Years 9 and 11, and courses are well planned. The department development plan has good priorities and is closely linked to the school's overall improvement plan. The department is very successfully pioneering the use of a literacy scheme and has attained very positive results in the improvement of reading ages of students in Year 7. The department is leading the school in the 'Assessment for Learning' scheme. Monitoring of teaching and learning is regular. The use of data to monitor the department's progress is underdeveloped. Good opportunities are provided for the staff to share experiences and a good sense of teamwork exists and strong commitment to raising the standards of literacy within the school. Teachers new to teaching receive good support within the department. Standards in Year 9 results have improved since the last inspection, as have teaching and leadership.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

74. Students enter the school with skills in speaking literacy which are very low. By the end of Year 9, standards are below average and remain below average by the end of Year 11. In most subject areas, these below-average standards hamper the progress which students make in their learning, and have an impact on examination performance. A number of additional programmes used by the English and special educational needs departments support well the development of literacy skills for students who enter the school below National Curriculum level 4 in English. These programmes are well organised and effective. A satisfactory start was made to introducing the National Literacy Strategy 2001, but the follow up to that day has not been effectively co-ordinated and the implementation of provision to support the development of literacy skills across departments is unsatisfactory. Science, humanities and art make a satisfactory contribution by incorporating spelling, word and writing strategies into their lessons. In mathematics, music, ICT and design and technology, insufficient support is provided in the form of templates, frames and use of ICT to support the development of literacy skills. The development of the skills of speaking and listening is given insufficient emphasis across the school. Recently, positive and worthwhile developments have been introduced to further the improvement of language and literacy across the curriculum.

Modern foreign languages

Students study either French or Italian from Year 7. In Years 10 and 11, students can study French or opt for Italian.

Provision in modern languages is satisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Well below average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Higher-attaining students achieve well in Years 7, 8, 10 and 11
- Teachers provide good role models and this motivates students to achieve well in Years 10 and 11
- Good relationships enable students to learn effectively in class
- Oral work does not challenge students sufficiently to develop independence
- Some classes in Years 7 to 9 have lessons that are not spaced out enough through the week to encourage systematic learning

Commentary

Examination results

75. Students enter the school in Year 7 with standards well below average. The results of teacher assessments in Year 9, in 2004, were well below average as has been the case in recent years. GCSE results in French and Italian have recently been well above average at A* to C, and an exceptionally able year achieved highly in French in 2004. Numbers of students opting for languages have declined. At both stages girls do better than boys, but by no more than the national averages.

Standards and achievement

76. By the end of Year 9, students have a satisfactory grasp of structures and vocabulary. Higher-attaining students in Years 7 and 8 make good progress. They cope confidently with clock times and can use basic forms of the perfect tense in writing. They have a number of opportunities to consolidate their knowledge and understanding by writing paragraphs of increasing length on the topics covered. They take care and pride in their work. The progress of middle and lower-attaining students is more erratic, interrupted by frequent absence, lack of organisational skills and fluctuating support for learning at home. The gap is reduced in Year 9 as the scheme of work is not accelerated sufficiently for higher-attaining students, the time allocation is below average in Years 7 to 9, and lessons are too closely bunched together in the week to encourage systematic learning. Students understand and respond correctly to teachers' questions in lessons. Their reading and writing skills are better than their oral skills as lesson content is biased towards the former. Students in Years 10 and 11 are generally well motivated, concentrate well and are prepared to work at a good pace. Higher-attaining students write fluently and accurately across a good range of topics. The strong focus on the comprehension of core vocabulary and structures enables them to consolidate and practise new language successfully. Students' oral skills, overall, are less well developed. The study of languages in Years 10 and 11 helps to develop students' wider general knowledge. For example, students in a Year 10 French class effectively practised imperfect verb forms through historical figures, such as Churchill and Martin Luther King, in addition to contemporary celebrities. The lack of a coursework option reduces the opportunities for middle-attaining students to take advantage of topic areas, such as jobs and professions.

Teaching and learning

77. Teachers combine good subject knowledge with a conscientious approach. Lessons are carefully prepared and directed largely in the foreign language, using a good range of methods and resources to respond to different learning needs. All students are encouraged to participate in lessons through questioning and practical involvement. They are managed well and with respect and as a result they cooperate well. Most students are responsive and all make sensible use of pair-work to practise new language. Relationships are further supported by the good encouragement students receive orally, in writing and through the merit system. The development of comprehension and writing skills is well structured, but there is less challenge and expectation in building up their oral skills. The three-part lesson is not used effectively to maximise learning. Homework is infrequent, unchallenging and not adapted to need in Years 7 to 9. Although students' work is regularly marked, it varies in the quality of guidance to help students improve. Target-setting and the tracking of students' performance do not support learning effectively. In all years, students have insufficient opportunity to work with ICT.

Leadership and management

78. Teachers are well qualified and committed and good role models for students. The department functions efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Standards have broadly been maintained despite some changes in staffing since the previous positive inspection report. The weaknesses which were identified in students' oral skills, assessment and planning have not been tackled effectively.

MATHEMATICS

GCSE statistics

A GCSE statistics option commenced in 2003 and is gaining in popularity. The lesson sampled was focused on coursework. It was well planned and taught to a keen and interested group of Year 11 students. They were encouraged to use spreadsheets in their analyses, doing so confidently and skilfully. The standard of work was above average. Students' work was thoroughly marked, with constructive advice given on improvement.

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good knowledge ensures effective lesson planning
- Good leadership is establishing a culture of sharing good practice
- Departmental documentation provides insufficient guidance for inexperienced teachers
- Students lack knowledge of their level of attainment and how to improve it
- Provision for gifted students is good
- Opportunities for students to use ICT are insufficient

Commentary

Examination results

79. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were well below the national average, but improving at an average rate. The proportion reaching the higher levels was in line with that for similar schools. Results were markedly lower than those for English, and slightly below those for

science. Boys and girls performed similarly. Although the GCSE results in 2004 were below the national average, they were better than those for similar schools.

Standards and achievement

80. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is well below average. Standards seen in lessons and in students' written work matched the 2004 results. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, low-attaining students developed from needing to use mirrors to draw reflections of given shapes on squared paper to being able confidently to draw lines of symmetry on a carefully chosen range of increasingly challenging shapes. Students in Years 10 and 11 follow schemes of work more closely matched to their abilities than those in Years 7 to 9, leading to better achievement and improved standards. Good collaboration between teachers and their assistants supports students with special educational needs and as a result they achieve as well as other students. The achievement of gifted students is accelerated through an innovative and stimulating programme, including early entry to the GCSE courses, the use of appropriate problem-solving activities, independent work in lessons, extra-curricular activities and GCE A-level teaching to some Year 11 students.

Teaching and learning

81. Teaching quality ranged from satisfactory to excellent. The National Strategy for improving teaching has resulted in most lessons having an appropriately engaging starter activity and a concluding review of what has been learned. Many lessons move at a good pace and maintain students' attention well. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject and know their students well. In the best lessons, this enables teachers to structure activities so that students' understanding is progressively developed. However, teachers' planning is not fully effective in providing a range of learning experiences for students of all abilities. Extension and support materials are not made available sufficiently. A good example of ICT use was observed in a high-attaining Year 11 class, where the teacher provided an excellent concluding activity using a PowerPoint presentation on four circle geometry theorems, which the students had just encountered, giving very clear visual demonstration. Too few opportunities to enhance learning through the use of ICT are planned, and access to computers is difficult.
82. Working relationships between students and teachers are good. Most teaching is clear; some is very stimulating. Some teachers are particularly skilled at questioning students effectively, leading them to learn well. For example, in a good Year 11 lesson, the teacher's carefully-posed questions gradually drew contributions from an initially diffident class, who ultimately learned to apply Pythagoras' Theorem correctly to a range of problems. Students' performance is not monitored effectively. Target-setting is not used enough. Correction of students' work is thorough but written advice varies in effectiveness. Students lack knowledge of the level at which they are working, because this is rarely stressed either during lessons or in marking. Most are aware that they have a projected level or grade to aim for, but many are unsure what it is and cannot recall any targets that they have been set to raise their attainment.
83. Most teachers place emphasis on the use of correct mathematical language, often listing key words, but students' mis-spellings of mathematical terms often remain uncorrected in exercise books. A range of well-attended extra-curricular sessions has been established, providing support to some who are struggling and extension work for gifted students.

Leadership and management

84. The team of teachers and teacher assistants functions effectively and smoothly. Leadership is carefully establishing a culture of involving the whole team in departmental development and furthering good practice, including joint planning and sharing resource ideas. Role models of good teaching are provided and shared. Plans for development are clear and ambitious. Departmental documents do not cover cross-curricular aspects of provision such as literacy, numeracy, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, behaviour management, citizenship or PSHE. Schemes of work do not give sufficient guidance to new or inexperienced teachers.

Mathematics across the curriculum

85. Students' competence in using mathematics in other subjects varies widely, and has not yet been systematically mapped. In modern foreign languages, Year 7 students carry out a range of appropriate calculations, including some relating to clock time. Science provides rich

investigational work, for example exploring dropping of objects, logging the time taken to fall, and drawing graphs to represent different numbers of objects dropped together. Good experience is provided in science on human variation, recording and analysing nominal data, and height, shoe size etc. In Year 7 food technology, students are required to weigh and measure accurately, with good emphasis placed on units used. Year 10 geography students, studying international companies in a developing world, plot accurate graphs, for example displaying the number of various types of factory against gross domestic product for various countries. In some subjects which do not automatically offer opportunities for developing mathematical skills and understanding, such as music, history and English, little or no experience has been developed. Provision in physical education is incidental rather than planned. Overall, although students' competence in mathematics is below average, it does not inhibit their learning in other subjects. An exception is ICT where the quality of coursework suffers because of below-average numeracy skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is improving
- Teaching and assessment are consistent within the department
- Care for students is good and this benefits their learning
- Enrichment activities are very good
- Links with feeder and other local schools are strong and beneficial
- Low attendance limits achievement for some students

Commentary

Examination results

86. Results in the 2004 Year 9 tests were well below average, in line with predictions based on students' prior attainment. GCSE results in double award science have increased dramatically, especially for boys. This was a particularly good result for higher-attaining students. These results are balanced by lower scores for single award science, which were significantly below the standards reached by students in their other subjects. Overall, results are below average, but above expectation based on students' attainment on entry to the school.

Standards and achievement

87. Although results, in 2004, were well below average, standards observed in the school were below average in Year 9. This is because students who attend regularly do well. Teaching methods were consistent and this led to consistency in the standards seen across the different sets. Consistent use of techniques, such as concept mapping, led to good revision in Years 9 and 11. Consistent use of key words in revision led to raised achievement in written work and in tests. The strong emphasis on investigation from Years 7 to 11 led directly to higher achievement at GCSE (from 26 per cent two years ago to 58 per cent gaining grades A* to C in 2004). Personal development is good, with the department's care being rewarded by good relationships and, for the most part, good attitudes to work. Students' achievement overall by the time they take GCSE is good.

Teaching and learning

88. Teachers are attentive to students' needs. Achievement is raised through the revision groups and enrichment activities such as the Easter schools and summer camps. The teaching methods used encourage independent and active learning. By Year 11, students have developed good working habits. All teachers use techniques that lead to active research homework, from processing key words into concept maps, to independence in note taking. Teachers use consistent methods, with good techniques for assessing attainment, conveying information on progress to students and promoting active (and fun) revision. Planning was very thorough and incorporated all necessary aspects, including teaching and learning strategies. Use of ICT was good, both to present information and to receive reports from students. Investigatory work was a particularly strong feature. It was well taught and linked with relevant scientific knowledge and understanding. Coursework results have greatly improved over the past three years.

Leadership and management

89. There is a strong spirit of teamwork. Schemes of work are very good. Staffing issues have been a barrier to higher achievement, but the department is now managing these well as classes are receiving good input via the Fullhurst Improvement Zone. Very good enrichment activities are provided. Links with other schools are productive. These make a good contribution to the induction of Year 7 students. The department is strong on self-reflection. However, tracking of achievement does not use all available data enough to compare targets with attainment. Absenteeism is a factor affecting the achievement of some students. The department has reacted to this by adopting coordinated science syllabuses, but it must be recognised that absenteeism gets in the way of continuously assessed courses such as the applied science course, which would otherwise be very suitable for the students. Since the previous inspection, many factors, both positive and negative, remain. Attainment has risen and recruitment difficulties have been largely dealt with, and the school has minimised the impact of serious recruitment difficulties. The use of ICT has improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and much improved planning are raising achievement
- Students have access to a good range of courses in Years 10 and 11, all leading to a nationally recognised award
- Effective leadership continues to bring about improvement
- Activities are not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of the full range of students
- Some equipment is old and unsuitable for current learning needs

Commentary

Examination results

90. In 2004, results in the short course GCSE were well below the national average. In the GNVQ course, almost all students passed.

Standards and achievement

91. Students arrive in Year 7 with ICT competence that is well below average. Some students have experienced a wide range of programs while others have had very little opportunity to use computers. By Year 9, students have benefited from the National Strategy and their ICT competence has improved so that most students can create drop down lists in a spreadsheet and use information to construct and interrogate simple data bases. Students achieve well in Years 10 and 11 and by Year 11, GNVQ students can use a wide range of programs to produce spreadsheets in excel, set up and interrogate more complex data bases, such as for a garage or a video store, and create web sites. In the GCSE short course, students have a similar range of skills but in less depth. Despite a good range of ICT skills, underdeveloped skills in numeracy and literacy continue to be a barrier to greater examination success.

Teaching and learning

92. In Years 7 to 9, students benefit from materials based on the National Strategy but adapted to make work more relevant to the local context. This enables all teachers to teach a systematic programme that covers requirements. In lessons observed, relationships were generally good but teachers sometimes lacked good classroom management skills which limited the quality of the lesson. Teaching was good when Year 8 students were introduced to drop down menus in a lesson that was lively, fast paced and stimulating. The work of students is assessed through end-of-unit tests and the marks are recorded, but students do not receive written feedback on how to improve. Additional teachers and support staff work well together to help students overcome difficulties, but tasks are not sufficiently tailored to students' needs; those with special educational needs and the most experienced and competent users of ICT were given identical tasks. In Years 10 and 11, students are well supported and work well independently. Teaching was consistently good and focused clearly on assessment requirements. In Year 11, students were completing coursework for a variety of ICT courses (full GCSE, short course GCSE and certificate of achievement). Work was appropriate to the individual and the lesson was well managed so that students received individualised support.

Leadership and management

93. All students receive specialist ICT lessons. Substantial improvement has followed the introduction of the National Strategy in Years 7 to 9. All students follow a suitable, accredited course in Years 10 and 11. The poor provision of ICT at the time of the last inspection has been greatly improved. Although recruitment has proved difficult, staffing is now satisfactory and new staff are well trained in the department. Accommodation is satisfactory but the layout of rooms makes whole-class teaching difficult. The number of computers is above the national average, but many are old and inadequate. Whilst there has been good improvement in ICT provision, students have insufficient opportunities to build on these skills through other subjects.

ICT across the curriculum

94. Students' competence in ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The use of data projection by teachers has begun but is still underdeveloped. The English department has recently acquired a set of laptops, but teachers lack confidence in the reliability of the network. Mathematics has no references to ICT in its schemes of work. Other departments, such as modern languages, report that there is insufficient access to computers to do what they need to do in their subjects. In design and technology, students do not use ICT enough in their coursework and this is seriously hampering the progress of all students.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is good.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In 2004, a higher proportion of students achieved the highest grades at GCSE than did so nationally
- The department is well staffed with specialist teachers who work well as a team
- Good relationships between students and teachers benefit learning and achievement
- Students have insufficient opportunities to develop skills of investigation and enquiry

Commentary

Examination results

95. Although there has been a general improvement in the GCSE results with a marked improvement in 2004, the results are still below the national average. The proportion of students achieving grade A* is greater than found nationally.

Standards and achievement

96. The attainment of students when they enter the school in Year 7 is well below the national average. In Year 9, standards are below national expectations and this represents good achievement. In Years 10 and 11, standards are still below national expectations because achievement is reduced by high levels of absence. By Year 9, students have a good knowledge of the location of conditions in different places. They demonstrate a good understanding of tropical cyclones as part of a unit of work on weather and climate.

Teaching and learning

97. In Years 7 to 9, students settle quickly in lessons because of the brisk and purposeful start, and teachers explain the objectives of the lessons well. This is not a regular feature in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have good subject knowledge, high expectations and constantly challenge students to improve. The lessons have a good range of activities, which, together with the good pace of work, maintain students' involvement and interest. Relationships between students and staff are good. ICT is used insufficiently in all years and students have few opportunities to develop skills in geographical enquiry and investigation. The specialist rooms have good displays and provide a positive learning environment. Marking is regular but students have an uncertain understanding of what they need to do to achieve their target grades. There are insufficient opportunities for fieldwork in Years 7 to 9, but provision for this is good in Years 10 and 11.

Leadership and management

98. The leadership has a clear understanding of both the strengths and the areas requiring improvement. These include the attainment of boys in Years 7 to 9 and a review of the schemes of work. Teachers have amongst them a good range of previous experience and they work hard as a team. Although the work of the department is evaluated, insufficient work-sampling is done to ensure consistency across the department. Since the last inspection, the department has successfully introduced suitable strategies to raise standards and to improve the achievement of

higher-attaining students. Progress in developing students' independent learning skills has been more limited.

History

Provision in history is good.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide good advice and guidance on how students can improve the quality of their work
- The very good relationships between teachers and students stimulate learning
- Teachers readily review and develop their work
- Insufficient sampling of students' work takes place to ensure consistency across the department

Commentary

Examination results

99. In 2004, the number of students achieving grades A* to C was below the national average, with relatively few students achieving A* or A grades. The general trend of results is an improving one. Girls did less well than boys in the examinations last year.

Standards and achievement

100. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is well below average. Standards seen in lessons in Year 9 were below average and, in Year 11, were broadly average. As a result, achievement overall is good. Year 9 students write well about the emancipation of slaves in America and life in the trenches during the First World War. In Year 11, students interpret and use a variety of sources of evidence to explain historical events and have a good knowledge of Hitler's Germany and the Civil Rights Movement. Girls are now doing as well as boys and the needs of students with special educational needs are well met. Irregular attendance is a barrier to the achievement of some students.

Teaching and learning

101. Lessons are well planned; they begin with a starter activity to settle the group and are followed by a suitable range of activities. These keep students engaged for the whole lesson. Teachers use a variety of techniques to check that learning has taken place. Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing students' literacy skills through opportunities to read aloud and the use of spelling and vocabulary sheets. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to make the work both relevant and interesting. Relationships are very good and teachers know their students well. In all of the lessons seen, students' attitudes and behaviour were good, although students are generally over-reliant on teachers in their learning. Marking is informative and provides constructive targets for improvement. Students know their target levels. However, they are less certain as to why a piece of work is graded as it is. The display of students' work in specialist classrooms is mostly good with some excellent examples of students' work.

Leadership and management

102. The team of highly committed specialist teachers has a good mix of experience. They work well together. The department uses self-evaluation constructively, constantly reviewing its work and also seeking the views of students. As a result, changes have been made to two units of work, including the module on Jack the Ripper. Work-sampling, to ensure consistency, is not fully developed.

However, the department has collected portfolios of graded work to guide planning and marking, and provides helpful additional revision lessons for students. Schemes of work are informative and well structured. In response to the last inspection, the department now provides more challenging work for the higher-attaining students.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is poor.

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

Leadership	Poor
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have fallen in recent years because the school has been unable to recruit a specialist subject leader
- Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are too low
- Boys dominate discussions often in a thoughtless, unproductive way
- New schemes of work reflect requirements well and are appropriate for the students' needs
- Marking and assessment do not lead to improvement
- One lesson was exceptionally good because students' learning needs were thoroughly understood and basic teaching skills were very effectively used

Commentary

Examination results

103. GCSE results in 2005 were below the national average and have shown a downward trend since 2002.

Standards and achievement

104. In all years, written work contains accurate factual knowledge, with some carefully illustrated work. However, work seldom goes beyond basic definitions, is rarely substantial, and is unsatisfactory overall. Standards of discussion are poor, even in sensitive and important topics such as 'attitudes to death'. Students do not have the knowledge and oral skills to express extended personal views, and this limits their achievement. Written work in Years 10 and 11 is not thorough enough to provide a satisfactory basis for subsequent examination revision. Students' achievement and the thoroughness of work are adversely affected by the high absence rate.

Teaching and learning

105. Teaching and learning ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory. One lesson observed was outstandingly effective. Information and questions were sensitively paced and targeted, enabling a Year 7 class of low attainment to understand the meaning of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Two learning support staff gave very active help. Students' good responses earned praise and encouragement. The pace of learning was very brisk because deadlines were rigorously adhered to. The lesson significantly benefited students' knowledge and understanding and contributed very well to their skills in literacy and their confidence in learning. Generally, however, teachers' subject knowledge is unsatisfactory and rarely extends beyond the textbook or worksheet in use. Teachers do not enable students to look beyond the factual, to be reflective and to relate religious ideas to their own lives and values. All teaching of religious education is by teachers qualified in other subjects, who lack the guidance of a specialist subject leader. As a result, they have low levels of expectation. Basic classroom techniques are missing, such as hands-up-to-speak. Students are not targeted with questions to ensure good participation by all. Resources, such as religious artefacts,

are readily available, but the range of textbooks to support and stimulate teaching is inadequate. Students' learning is unsatisfactory because teaching methods are usually unstimulating. Boys dominate discussion, and their responses are too often noisy retorts rather than thoughtful views. Question-and-answer sessions are unsuccessful because they are not controlled enough.

Leadership and management

106. Leadership is poor because the school's rigorous efforts to recruit a specialist subject leader have been unsuccessful. Day-to-day organisation is satisfactory. New schemes of work in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory and reflect well the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The GCSE course has been carefully chosen to match the needs of the students. Assessment is poor overall. Marking is regular but unsatisfactory because work is not improved as a result. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory for staffing reasons. At present, religious education makes little contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Technology

Provision in design and technology is satisfactory.

The department offers a design and technology foundation course of graphics and resistant materials in Years 7 to 9. Food technology is taught in years 8 and 9. Textiles is not taught. In Years 10 and 11, GCSE design and technology is available in resistant or graphical materials, and home economics is also offered.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and positive relationships promote enjoyment of the subject in Years 7 to 9
- Students who attend regularly make good progress in Years 7 to 9 in gaining new practical skills.
- Designing and industrial processes are not taught or used sufficiently
- Fewer students are choosing the GCSE option but those who do achieve well
- Poor access to ICT and poor attendance adversely affect achievement in all years
- Homework is not sufficiently used to raise achievement

Commentary

Examination results

107. GCSE results were slightly above average, but the overall entry was low compared to the national statistics. Resistant materials results have improved over time and were better than graphics. Graphics results have sharply declined. Results in home economics were very low.

Standards and achievement

108. Students have well-below-average attainment in Year 7. By Year 9, standards have improved because of the good teaching and positive relationships that promote enjoyment of the subject. Students have above-average standards in practical work where the fit and finish of products is good, but well-below-average designing skills. In some groups, the high numbers of students with special educational needs do not achieve as well as they could because of a lack of additional support. A number of students do not attend lessons regularly in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE classes and this adversely affects achievement. Standards attained in designing and overall progress are not high enough in coursework.

Teaching and learning

109. Lessons in Years 7 to 9 are characterised by good planning, and confident teaching. Because of this, students gain good practical skills and subject knowledge. Food technology is not taught in Year 7. This limits opportunities for students. However, all students have good opportunities to plan and make basic meals in Years 8 and 9. In Years 7 to 9, insufficient attention is given to developing designing skills and industrial practice, and this has a negative effect on those who choose the subject for GCSE. GCSE students suffer from a lack of access to appropriate ICT. This adversely affects the quality of learning. In Year 11, teachers ensure that practical work presents a suitable challenge. Students produce good projects, for example when designing and making children's toys. Teachers encourage students to attend after-school classes, which benefits their learning. Homework is not used sufficiently to extend learning. Marking is inconsistent and GCSE students do not have enough guidance on how to approach the designing coursework. Students are set work of a suitable challenge, but teachers do not provide or use enough examples of inspirational display in the rooms to help raise standards.

Leadership and management

110. The committed and dedicated leadership has made significant improvements to accommodation and resources since the last inspection. Staff work well in teams and there is good daily organisation. The department has identified the previous design and technology experiences of students in the earlier stages of education very well through questionnaires. Some of the curricular issues of the last report still remain to be resolved. Data and achievement are not as yet analysed sufficiently to guide planning.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Drama

111. Drama was sampled. It is taught in rotation in Years 7 to 9. Standards were above average in lessons observed; students were attentive and co-operative and there was an insistence on a high level of behaviour. Good teaching enabled Year 9 students of all abilities to perform an improvised scene based on 'King Lear' with confidence. Students worked well together, rehearsing their scene repeatedly in order to improve their performance. In a Year 7 lesson, however, the excessive level of control inhibited the creative process so that students were reluctant to voice opinions and lacked the confidence to improvise dialogue.
112. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are good role models for their students. Projects include opportunities to explore aspects of citizenship such as the plight of refugees and asylum seekers.
113. Lower-attaining students were able to contribute suitably, well supported by the teacher and the students within their group, whilst the gifted and talented used appropriate formal language, gesture, timing and an awareness of stagecraft to reach a high level of attainment.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is good.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good and results in good achievement by students
- Students are offered a wide range of experiences that extends their learning
- Assessment is not used constructively enough to raise standards
- ICT opportunities for students are limited
- Good relationships and interesting teaching benefit students' achievement

Commentary

Examination results

114. GCSE results, in 2004, were well below average.

Standards and achievement

115. Students' standards on entry in Year 7 are well below those expected nationally. They achieve well during Years 7 to 9, so that, by the end of Year 9, standards improve. They make good progress, improving their practical skills in art, ceramics and textiles and they increase their understanding of the work of other artists and cultural traditions. Literacy skills are well developed in students' written evaluations of their own work and the work of other artists. Students in Years 10 and 11 achieve well and continue to develop practical art skills and their knowledge and understanding of the work of different artists. Students undertake good visual research, annotate drawings well, and experiment with different media, relating their ideas well to those of other artists. Some students are not sufficiently organised when preparing their final pieces of assessed work. Students' observational drawing skills are satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, but too little work is based on first-hand experiences. Gifted and talented students' learning experiences are extended by university taster sessions. Students with special educational needs progress well in lessons. ICT is used too little for design and research because of a shortage of resources.

Teaching and learning

116. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives. Teachers are knowledgeable and make the subject interesting and relevant to the students who are keen to learn and display positive attitudes. Teachers use their range of specialisms effectively to provide a wide range of learning opportunities. They demonstrate techniques well and show good examples so that students know what is expected. They have high expectations of students. Relationships are good. Work is helpfully assessed and feedback gives students helpful pointers for improvement. Assessment is not used enough to set target grades and inform students what they have to do to reach them. The department provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Leadership and management

117. The subject leadership has planned good developments. The appropriate current priorities are assessment and target setting. Trips to galleries and museums are planned. Good links have been established with local colleges, where students' work is exhibited. Students from a local special school attend lessons alongside Year 8 students as part of a valuable link that the department has established. The department makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students through its displays around the school and the activities it provides. Since the last inspection, results have remained the same and teaching continues to be good.

Music

Provision in music is satisfactory.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are keen as a result of good relationships
- The lack of continuity in the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 reduces students' achievement
- Listening activities do not meet National Curriculum requirements, which leads to under-developed listening skills
- Inadequate ICT resources prevent its use to support composing
- GCSE results are consistently very high but with a very small cohort

Commentary

Examination results

118. The 2004 GCSE results were very high; all students entered gained a pass at grades A* to C. The number entered was too small for meaningful comparisons with results nationally.

Standards and achievement

119. On entry in Year 7, students' standards in music are below average. Students do not achieve as well as they should in Years 7 to 9 because they learn music in rotation with other arts subjects and this inhibits the methodical development of skills. In Year 9, they work co-operatively in groups to compose but most lack the basic skills to achieve the task. They do not develop a firm understanding of musical technicalities and key terms. Students perform from musical notation but some make mistakes because they are too reliant on letter names. No evidence was seen of listening or singing activities in Years 7 to 9. Standards of performance in Year 10 are broadly average but with some students performing at a very high level, but as a result of the inadequate provision for this group lower down the school, most students' basic skills are under-developed. In Year 11, students taught in lessons after school, compose well-structured pieces that demonstrate a strong sense of individual style. Insufficient ICT resources are available to support the composition work of lower-attaining students or to extend the gifted and talented.

Teaching and learning

120. Teaching is enthusiastic. Good demonstrations and explanations help students to understand what is required of them. Relationships are good and students receive much praise and encouragement. Students work well together and support each other in their learning, but lack sufficient opportunities to develop independent learning skills. The lack of continuity of lessons makes it difficult to set targets or to monitor progress. GCSE students are well motivated. Many give up free time to extend their learning. They receive good advice which is clearly targeted at their individual needs. Students work hard and practise purposefully during lessons to improve their standards. Assessment overall is unsatisfactory. In Years 7 to 9, students do not know their National Curriculum levels. GCSE assessments are constructively linked to course requirements and give specific advice to help raise standards.

Leadership and management

121. Staffing problems have prevented the systematic development of the subject, but the current leadership is working purposefully to raise standards. The department is supported by the wider faculty leadership but there is insufficient sharing of good practice as a means of developing

teaching. Individual topics are interesting, but overall students have too few opportunities for listening to and talking about music. The team of instrumental teachers is managed well and makes a significant contribution to the work of the department. This particularly benefits talented students, but the cost of lessons limits the take-up of this opportunity. Extra-curricular opportunities are developing well, such as the steel-band and the musical productions. The main barrier to further improvement is the lack of continuity provided by the current curriculum arrangements in Years 7 to 9. Previous staffing difficulties have prevented standards from reaching the level reported in the previous report.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is good.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11 non-GCSE	Years 10 and 11 GCSE
Standards	Below average	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching is helping all students to learn and achieve well
- Extra-curricular activities give good opportunities for all students to extend their interests and experiences
- Timetabling does not make best use of available facilities
- Evaluations at the end of lessons and assessment do not give enough guidance for improvement

Commentary

Examination results

122. GCSE results in 2004 were average and higher than in 2003. Boys did significantly better than girls with no girl attaining an A* to C result; no student achieved an A* grade.

Standards and achievement

123. Students enter the school in Year 7 with well-below-average skills. Some students' attitudes and behaviour affect standards and achievement. Students' standards are below average in Year 9, but they are achieving well from their starting points. In the GCSE course, standards are average but achievement is hampered by inconsistent attendance in lessons. Students acquire practical skills quickly because they listen well. They do not achieve as well in theory lessons because their literacy skills are not well developed. Standards achieved by talented team players are high and some students perform at regional and national levels.

Teaching and learning

124. Teachers' effective questioning stimulates students' learning. Teachers challenge high-attaining students well, and break down tasks and demonstrate effectively so that lower-attaining students learn well. They developed their ball skills well in rounders and cricket, and pay good attention to working safely. Lessons are usually well planned, with high expectations of behaviour and performance. This leads to good learning. In the best lessons, teachers encourage students to view and analyse one another's work. In a minority of lessons, where planning was inadequate, students' unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes led to well-below-average standards. Assessment and marking do not consistently highlight areas for improvement or relate clearly enough to course criteria. At the end of lessons, teachers review lessons to check on the learning, but specific points for improvement are not always made clearly enough.

Leadership and management

125. Leadership has focused on improving standards. Courses are well chosen to meet students' needs. For example, in Year 10, students are offered GCSE dance to increase their aesthetic awareness. Dance and swimming have been introduced for younger students. The impact of the school sports coordination programme, now well established, is beginning to be felt in local primary schools. Good extra-curricular activities are available for all students, including the physically impaired. Good guidance for teachers is provided in schemes of work, including good assessment procedures. The timetable is unsatisfactory because facilities sometimes lie idle, while, at other times, accommodation is over-stretched. The use of some non-specialist teachers, when different year groups are timetabled simultaneously, limits what can be taught and achieved. Since the previous report standards have improved. An excellent sports hall and a theory room have been built. These are conveniently sited for linking theory and demonstration.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

Provision in applied GCSE business is good.

	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students make good progress in relation to their abilities and achieve well
- Specialist teachers combine well their academic and business backgrounds and this benefits students' learning
- Teaching builds well on the subject's real world context
- The applied GCSE course offers a very good broadening of the Year 10 and 11 curriculum
- Girls are reluctant to ask questions in class

Commentary

Examination results

126. In 2004, results in the applied GCSE business course were average.

Standards and achievement

127. Standards seen during the inspection were in line with course expectations. Students produce extended coursework on business topics making good use of real business organisations, for example investigating the human resource structures of the local police force. Students show a good understanding of business concepts, but their work suffers from insufficiently developed literacy skills.

Teaching and learning:

128. Teaching is consistently stimulating and enthusiastic, stemming from the expert subject knowledge, which combines academic understanding with real life business experience. Productive relationships lead to good progress in lessons. The real world is well used as a basis for learning. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, a brief introduction from the teacher set up a seminar-style lesson. Two employees from a major supermarket were 'grilled' by students with well-planned questions. Good answers from the business representatives effectively related business concepts to the context of the store. It was explained that the store has low prices but so does the competition and so this business tries to make its unique selling point the level of customer service. It was also explained that the store makes no money on its petrol sales because it is a loss leader to attract people to do their shopping there. Students all took notes on the answers and the lesson

was very effective, although girls were reluctant to ask questions. In a Year 11 lesson, clear teaching systematically built up students' understanding of profit and loss accounts. Students were supported well in their individual work. Students' work is marked well so that they are clear about how they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

Leadership and management

129. The teacher responsible is developing the resources to take account of the wide ability of students so that AS texts are available for the higher-attaining. The well-constructed course focuses students on the real world of business and makes a valuable contribution to vocational education. Good links have been established with public and private sector organisations including a local newsagent, a major supermarket and the local police force. There has been experimentation with 'enterprise' taster mornings for Year 9. Various ICT packages have been used to help students to do coursework and assist those with poor literacy skills. ICT is effectively used to record and develop assessment. The applied GCSE has been successfully introduced since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is satisfactory.

	Years 7, 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable	

Main strength and weakness

- Teachers are committed to developing PSHE and contribute to a developing programme
- Provision for citizenship is not monitored or assessed because there is currently no co-ordinator

Commentary

Examination results

130. An examination course in citizenship has not yet been completed.

Standards and achievement

131. Students enter the school in Year 7 with below average understanding of the concepts of citizenship. By Year 9, they have gained a satisfactory insight into being a citizen through the PSHE programme. Students in Year 11 have a good grasp of the meaning and responsibilities of citizenship. They have a satisfactory understanding, for example, of the law and the role of Parliament, the legal rights of workers and tax issues. They understand the moral and legal implications of exclusion from school. Students understand election processes through the organisation of the school council. Council members understand the role they have in representing students' views. School assemblies help students understand some relevant issues in citizenship.

Teaching and learning

132. Teachers use a good range of methods, including role play, group work and debate. A cross-curricular approach is evident in some schemes of work. In Years 10 and 11, well-planned teaching enabled students to improve their skills in interpreting information, and preparing arguments to support or reject a variety of opinions. Students took this seriously and demonstrated good learning. In Years 7 to 9, the use of role-play in drama enabled students to understand the plight of refugees. In an English lesson, students learned effectively about the importance of teamwork through group activities, using the story of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. The science curriculum is planned

to teach environmental issues. Students learn about issues of democracy through assemblies, and the thought for the day offers satisfactory opportunities to consider varied roles in society. Form tutors accept their responsibility for teaching PSHE and contribute well to sex and drugs education and healthy eating, as well as helping students learn about resolving conflict fairly.

Leadership and management

133. The initial process of establishing citizenship education was well led. As a result of staffing changes, the school does not now have a coordinator, and monitoring of citizenship in all curriculum areas does not occur. Some subjects do not include citizenship in their planning. These include modern languages, religious education and geography. PSHE and the WRAP programme are well led. Reports to parents include citizenship as part of the form tutor comment, but assessment details are not clear. The new assessment programme in Year 7 is helping students to understand their achievements. The introduction of the GCSE in religious education and citizenship is a central part of the assessment process in Years 10 and 11.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Students' achievement	4
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	5
Attendance	6
Attitudes	5
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	5
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well students learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets students' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Students' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for students	3
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	4
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	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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