

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **AVELING PARK SCHOOL**

Walthamstow, London

LEA area: London Borough of Waltham Forest

Unique reference number: 103094

Headteacher: Mrs K Terrell

Lead inspector: Mr M Pavey

Dates of inspection: 1 – 3 December 2003

Inspection number: 258555

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 students:	11-16
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	579
School address:	Aveling Park Road Walthamstow
Postcode:	E17 4NR
Telephone number:	020 8527 5794
Fax number:	020 8527 1703
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Miller
Date of previous inspection:	April 2001

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Aveling Park School is a small, mixed community comprehensive school of 579 students aged 11-16, 324 boys and 255 girls. Most students come from the outer London borough of Walthamstow. The school is multi-cultural in population. At present, there are 302 students of white heritage background, 36 mixed, 86 Asian and 136 black. There are 19 students from other backgrounds. The proportion of students speaking English as an additional language (18.2) is high; ten students are at an early stage in learning English. There are 142 students, 25 per cent, on the roll of those with special educational needs (SEN), a figure above the national average; nine of these have statements of SEN. The level of ability on entry to the school is below average. The socio-economic background of the students is generally below average, and student mobility is high.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9779	S Smith	Lay inspector	
2200	J Stirrup	Team inspector	English, Drama, Media studies, English as an additional language
22691	R Woodhouse	Team inspector	Mathematics
6432	Dr M Sewter	Team inspector	Science
10060	D Gutmann	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
2183	Dr P Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology
17522	N Stiles	Team inspector	Modern languages
30695	G Dinan	Team inspector	Art, Personal, social and health education and citizenship
8139	B Johnstone	Team inspector	Music
18912	C Large	Team inspector	Religious education
31252	K Walker	Team inspector	Physical education
10666	P Wheeler	Team inspector	History
33015	R Winter	Team inspector	Geography

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school provides a satisfactory standard of education.** Though results in tests and examinations are below average, the standards of students now in Year 9 are at the nationally expected level and these students are achieving well. Though their attainment is just below average, achievement for older students is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good. Behaviour is satisfactory and attitudes good. Leadership and management are good. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher gives very good, dedicated leadership, very well supported by senior staff.
- Teaching is good and students learn well.
- With good support from the learning support department, the school is a caring, inclusive place.
- Attitudes are good and most students take good advantage of the school's many opportunities.
- Provision for personal development is good, reflecting the good ethos the school now enjoys.
- Assessment data is very good, but in most subjects teachers need to make better use of it.
- Able and less able students often need classroom material better suited for their needs.
- The management of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- Punctuality to classes and at the start of the school day, the use of form time, and reports to parents are unsatisfactory.
- There is no course in religious education for students in Years 10 and 11, so the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are not met.
- The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. The headteacher has introduced considerable improvements in leadership and management, which have already led to much improved behaviour and attitudes, and to better learning among younger students.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
	E	D	D	C

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

**Students' achievement overall is satisfactory** in their progress in lessons and over time, and when compared with the performance of students in similar schools. When students join the school, their attainment is below the expected national level. Results in tests taken at the end of Year 9 are below the national average, but in their lessons and written work students are now largely achieving the levels expected nationally by this stage. The achievement of these students is therefore good. GCSE results and the levels of work seen in Year 11 during the inspection are below average, and the achievement of these students is satisfactory. Results in tests and examinations have been improving over time, in line with results nationally. Not all GCSE results are below average. Above-average results have been achieved in history, art, physical education and the resistant materials element of design and technology.

**Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Levels of racial harmony are high. Students show increasingly positive attitudes to learning. Exclusions have been falling rapidly. Levels of attendance are steadily rising and standards of behaviour are now satisfactory. Too many students arrive late at the start of the day.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is good,** and students learn well. Systems for the analysis of data on students' performance in examinations and tests are very good, but are not used effectively in most departments to help students make the best progress they can. Teachers' marking of work is satisfactory. There has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, though it does not comply with all legal requirements. Care, support and guidance are satisfactory. The school has satisfactory links with parents. It has good links with other schools and colleges, and the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good.** The leadership of the headteacher and senior team is very good. Management of the school's subjects, years and programmes is good. Governance is satisfactory overall. Governors lead the school very well, but have not ensured that legal requirements for the teaching of religious education in Years 10 and 11 and daily worship are met.

## **PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are generally pleased with the school. Most agree that their children make progress at school, that teaching is good and that they get good treatment. They value the ease of access to staff when they have concerns. They are less content with behaviour and the amount of bullying. However, inspectors found that behaviour was satisfactory and that the school had good procedures for dealing with the small amount of bullying which arises. A minority of parents do not feel well informed by the school, and inspectors have found that reports need to be more informative.

Students interviewed were positive about the school, and the questionnaires which they returned are positive also. They think it is a good school to be at, and that teaching and school leadership are good. They have to work hard. About half think that behaviour is not good and that bullying exists.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The school should improve:

- The use of assessment data, to give students better advice on how to improve their work, including the setting of useful targets in the different subjects.
- The use which teachers make of their good schemes of work, so that abler and less able students are given more help on how to improve.
- The management of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
- Punctuality to classes and at the start of the school day, the use of form time, and reports to parents, which are not informative enough at present.

and, to meet statutory requirements, provide:

- A course in religious education in Years 10 and 11 which meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
- A daily act of collective worship for all students.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

When students join the school, their attainment is below the expected national level. Results in tests and examinations are below the national average. However, attainment for students now in Year 9 is at the expected national level and the achievement of these students is good. Attainment for students in Years 10 and 11 is just below average. These students make satisfactory progress over their time in the school, achieving more highly than expected compared with students in similar schools. Results have been improving over time, in line with results nationally.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards seen are higher in Years 7 to 9, when they are generally in line with expected levels, than in Years 10 and 11, when they are just below.
- Overall, students make satisfactory progress over their time in the school. Progress is very good in history, art and citizenship, and good in physical education.
- Boys and girls make equal progress. Those with special educational needs make good progress in specialist lessons.
- GCSE results were above average in 2002 in design and technology (resistant materials), history, art and physical education. In other subjects, results are below average.

### Commentary

1. Though results are generally below the national average, students make satisfactory progress overall. Results have been rising steadily, both in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE, in line with the rising trend of results nationally.
2. When students join the school, their attainment is, overall, below the nationally expected level. Results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were below the national average. Both boys and girls achieved lower results than nationally, girls performing rather better than boys. Students' achievement over their first three years from 1999 to 2002, measured in terms of their results in the tests taken in Year 6 at their previous schools, was satisfactory. Compared with the performance of students in similar schools, entitled to a similar proportion of free school meals, their achievement was good. Results for 2003 largely maintained the position of the previous year, and though official comparisons have not yet been published, calculations suggest that satisfactory progress has been maintained. The attainment of students now in Year 9 is at the level expected nationally, indicating that these students have achieved well.

### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2002*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31 (32.2)	33 (33.3)
mathematics	31.5 (32.5)	34.5 (34.7)
science	29.5 (30.9)	32.9 (33.3)

*There were 117 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. GCSE results for 2002 were below the national average in terms of students' performance in gaining five or more grades A\*-C, though performance in gaining five or more grades A\*-G was close to average. In points scored, boys were noticeably further behind than girls. Students made satisfactory progress over the GCSE course, based on what these students scored in their tests at the end of Year 9. They made good progress compared with students in similar schools. GCSE results fell in 2003, in line with the school's predictions. However, if students attending college courses are removed from the calculation, the school's GCSE results are in

line with those of 2002. Though comparisons with national results have not yet been published for 2003, calculations suggest, as for younger students, that satisfactory progress has been maintained. Government calculations of the value added to students' results over the GCSE course to 2002 give this school a well above average rating.

**Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002**

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	37 (37)	50 (48)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (98)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	93 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	34.9 (33.9)	39.4 (39)

*There were 114 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Students are now making at least satisfactory progress because the headteacher and key staff are determined that all students will get a good education, be well taught and make the progress they are capable of. The senior team has concentrated on training teachers to teach effectively, and helping students to behave well enough to learn positively. This approach is working and all students are now performing capably. Younger students are responding well to the new vigour in leadership, and these students are now making good progress. Those with special educational needs are making good progress in the lower groups taught by specialist teachers, while those with statements are making satisfactory progress, thanks to the support given in individual or group sessions. The two students with statements for hearing impairment are making satisfactory progress. Most students who are gifted or talented, or who are at an early stage of learning English, make satisfactory progress, in line with all other students in the class. Sometimes, though, very good progress is made, as for example in the extra computer lessons for five Year 9 students, who are in line for good GCSE grades in 2004. Two such students gained an A-level last year and nine others gained good GCSEs.
  
5. There are three students who are looked after by local social services. Their progress is closely followed, and is in line with that of other students with special needs. The eight students from traveller backgrounds are not mobile at present, and make progress in line with others in their classes. The school's commitment to the inclusion of all students in the process of education is excellent. Everyone gets an equal chance to make progress, and does so.

6. As the table below makes clear, attainment in subjects seen during the inspection is rather higher than test and examination results would suggest.

Standards in:	Attainment Years 7 to 9	Attainment Years 10 and 11	Achievement Years 7 to 9	Achievement Years 10 and 11
English	Average	Below average	Good	Satisfactory
Modern languages	Below average	Below average	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Below average	Below average	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Average	Average	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
ICT	Below average	Below average	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Geography	Average	Average	Good	Satisfactory
History	Average	Average	Very good	Very good
Religious education	Average	No evidence	Good	Unsatisfactory
Design and technology	Average	Average	Good	Satisfactory
Art	Above average	Well above average	Very good	Very good
Drama	Average	Below average	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Media studies		Below average		Satisfactory
Music	Below average	Below average	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Physical education	Average	Average	Good	Good
Citizenship	Above average	Above average	Very good	Very good

7. In English, results in tests and examinations are below average. Attainment when students join the school is below average. During their first three years, they achieve well. Their oral skills are average, and younger students attain average levels in reading and writing, despite the fact that many arrive with low reading skills. The reading and writing levels of older students are below average because these students have not benefited from the recent improvement in standards which younger students have enjoyed. The achievement of these students is satisfactory. Across the curriculum, skills of literacy are satisfactory overall, but the lack of a coordinator means that the improvement of literacy is not promoted as vigorously as it might be. This is vital for these students, whose literacy levels are lower than those in other skills.
8. In mathematics, results in tests and examinations are below average. Standards are below average when students join the school. Standards in work seen during the inspection remain below average, but there are signs of improvement at all levels. Achievement is satisfactory in all years. Across the curriculum, there is regular use of mathematics in many subjects. Provision is satisfactory, though again the lack of a policy for developing mathematics across the curriculum means that potential inconsistencies can arise and opportunities for reinforcing students' application of mathematics can be lost.
9. In science, results of national tests at the end of Year 9 have steadily improved and are now close to the national average. Students' achievement is satisfactory over their first three years. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are improving very slowly. In GCSE, the proportion gaining grades A\*-C remains well below average. Students' achievement in lessons is generally satisfactory.
10. In information and communication technology (ICT), standards by the end of Year 9 are below average, reflecting entry standards, but are improving significantly. GNVQ results were well below average in 2003. In lessons and work seen, standards are below average overall, but most students make satisfactory progress by the time they leave school. Able students make

very good progress in the accelerated GCSE course and achieved good results in this at the end of Year 9. Across the curriculum, provision is good in some subjects, notably geography, technology and science. Students are now getting plenty of practice in these areas, but there is more to do to make sure that all other areas of the curriculum make maximum use of ICT.

- Since the last inspection, progress in improving students' attainment and achievement has been satisfactory. Results have improved, progress in relation to comparable schools has increased and the achievement of students in all years is better.

### Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Successfully encouraged by the school, students show increasingly positive attitudes to learning. Exclusions have been falling rapidly. Levels of attendance are steadily rising and standards of behaviour are now satisfactory. Too many students arrive late at the start of the day. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Levels of racial harmony are high.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students get on very well together. Racial harmony is very good and promoted very well.
- Students have an increasingly positive attitude to learning.
- The school gives very positive support for the improvement of behaviour.
- Attendance is improving, thanks to very effective measures by the school.
- Exclusions have been significantly reduced.
- Tutor time is disrupted by the number of students arriving late at the start of the day.

### Commentary

- The high priority given to improving attendance and reducing truancy has resulted in a steady improvement and satisfactory levels overall. The large majority of students attend regularly, although there are still too many who are late at the beginning of the day. This considerably reduces opportunities for form tutors to plan tutor periods effectively and also disrupts assemblies. In Years 10 and 11, there is a small number of disaffected students who rarely attend and this has a significant impact on overall attendance levels. The school works very well with the educational welfare officer, making best use of the time available from this source. Good procedures ensure an accurate record of those present, and identify truancy after registration. Contacting parents on the first morning of unexplained absence means that an increasing number of parents telephone before contact is made with them. The result of these initiatives has been to raise attendance levels this term so far to 92.6 per cent overall, a little higher than the national average for 2002-03.

### Attendance

#### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	11.1	School data	1.7
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

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

- The large majority of students like coming to school and take good advantage of what is offered. They show increasingly positive attitudes to their work and to the opportunities for them to take responsibility. There is an increasing willingness to represent the school in team games and to participate in activities outside lessons. Older students carry out their responsibilities for supporting staff and younger students willingly and with pride.

14. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. There has been a significant improvement in behaviour, which now often means that students can learn well. This is particularly so with younger students and where teachers have been at the school long enough to establish positive relationships. Where teachers show less confidence in classroom management, students are quick to take advantage. Very effective support for students in managing their behaviour, provided in *The Gateway*, the school's learning support unit, has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of permanent exclusions. Leadership of this centre is very good and it is very well managed on a daily basis. It has a calm, positive atmosphere, very good links with the school's heads of year and tutors, and very helpful partnerships with other schools and agencies, for example the national behaviour improvement project. The school's learning mentor plays a significant role in improving the attitudes and behaviour of individuals. Overall, the school's very good provision for the improvement of behaviour is having a positive effect on attitudes throughout the school.

## Exclusions

### *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	258	12	1
White – any other White background	42	3	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	19	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	1	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	13	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	55	5	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	62	10	1
Black or Black British – African	41	5	1
Black or Black British – any other Black background	33	9	0

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

15. The great majority of the exclusions reported above are for a fixed period, and are for boys. The proportion of exclusions from black backgrounds greatly exceeds that from other backgrounds. The school is aware of this situation, which arises from two particular incidents which involved black students; the previous year, the majority of exclusions were of white students. Evidence from the school's records suggests that many excluded students are successfully re-integrated into the school, and no particular differences were seen in the behaviour of different ethnic groups during the inspection. The school monitors the progress of these students closely. It needs to look more closely at how many of these students joined after Year 7. Student mobility is high in this school, with some 50 students both joining and leaving at other than the usual time, during the last twelve months. For the school to maintain and improve behaviour and attitudes in such a varied and transient population is a hugely positive achievement.
16. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Their spiritual development is satisfactory. Thanks to the good ethos created by the staff, students have a firm understanding of right and wrong. They profit greatly from the spiritual insights they receive in lessons, for example in art and citizenship lessons, but the lack of formal religious education for older students reduces the opportunities the school provides.

17. Moral and social development is good. Students are aware of their responsibility for their own actions and so respond well to others, for example by acting as helpful mentors to younger students. Bullying exists, but because the staff are highly effective in discouraging it and providing a strongly positive ethos, helping students to grow in self-esteem, it is becoming rare. There is a good anti-bullying ethos. Students are now less tolerant of bullies and increasingly regard telling staff about any episodes as a moral responsibility. Students' social skills are not always well developed when they start in Year 7, but improve steadily as a result of planned opportunities for discussion, debate and expressing views constructively. Students develop a good understanding of their role in society and the responsibilities of living in a community.
18. Cultural development is good also, with a real strength in relationships between students of all racial backgrounds. The school values inclusion and students respond well to the cultural diversity they experience in the school, usually showing interest in and respect for the views of others. This leads to very positive relationships across the wide range of cultures represented in the school. There is a good range of musical and dramatic events, and visits to places of cultural interest in London. Displays of art around the school are a great cultural encouragement to students, while displays with a powerful multi-cultural message, for example of black women in history, help everyone to feel that their cultures are significant and valued.
19. Since the last inspection, improvement in behaviour, attitudes and ethos has been very good. Improvement in attendance and provision for personal development has been satisfactory. Now that students are attending more regularly, the school needs to entice them to arrive on time.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided is satisfactory. Teaching is good, so that students learn well. Teachers' marking of work is satisfactory. Systems for the analysis of data on students' performance in examinations and tests are very good, but are not used effectively by teachers to help students make the best progress they can. There has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, though it does not comply with requirements for providing a course in religious education for students in Year 10 and 11 and a daily act of collective worship for all students. Care, support and guidance are satisfactory. The school has satisfactory links with parents. It has good links with other schools and colleges, and the community.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching is good and students learn well. Central systems for the analysis of data on tests and examinations are very good, but are not well used by most departments. The quality of teachers' assessment of students' work is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good in most subjects, and never less than satisfactory overall. Over half the lessons seen were at least good.
- Teaching is very good in art and history, and students learn very well in these subjects.
- Students learn well in general, but students in Years 10 and 11 do not learn as readily as younger students.
- The school analyses data from tests and examinations very well, but most departments are not yet making good use of the data they receive, to help students make the best progress possible.

### **Commentary**

20. Teaching is good and students generally learn well. Good teaching is one of the strengths of the school. There is far more good teaching than unsatisfactory. Because teaching is good, students generally learn well. Students in Years 7 to 9 achieve well as a result, and learn better than those in Years 10 and 11, whose achievement is satisfactory. Good teaching and learning come from the positive ethos which the headteacher and senior staff have promoted so successfully, so that students want to learn and teachers are keen to teach and help them forward.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 90 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5 (6%)	19 (21%)	35 (38%)	25 (27%)	6 (7%)	0	1 (1%)

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

The following table summarises the quality of teaching and learning in the different subjects:

Subject	Teaching and learning
English	Good
Modern languages	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good
Science	Satisfactory
ICT	Satisfactory in Years 7-9 Good in Years 10-11
Geography	Good
History	Very good
Religious education	Good in Years 7-9 No evidence in Years 10-11
Design and technology	Good in Years 7-9 Satisfactory in Years 10-11
Art	Very good
Drama	Good
Media studies	Good
Music	Satisfactory
Physical education	Good
SEN	Good

21. From this table, it is clear that teaching and learning are never less than satisfactory, and that they are good in most subjects. They are good in the English and mathematics lessons taught by specialist staff to the lowest sets; also in individual or group tuition for students with statements of special educational need or those who are at an early stage in learning English. Specialist teachers and support assistants provide these students good help in mainstream classes, but there are too few such staff to ensure that these students make good progress at all times.
22. A particular strength in teaching is teachers' knowledge of their subjects and how to teach them. Teachers plan effective lessons, choose good methods and capture the interest of students, so that motivation and behaviour are good and students often make good progress.

Most teachers are good at managing the lesson, so that behaviour is positive. However, not all teachers can manage these students well, particularly in Years 10 and 11. In some lessons, students behaved immaturely and caused whatever negative impact they were able.

23. In the five unsatisfactory lessons seen, teachers' grasp of how to present the subject was unsure, and this led to restive behaviour which distracted the teacher and students from the subject. One lesson was very poor, and in this no learning took place. Most of the unsatisfactory or poor teaching was given by new or temporary teachers, and in most cases the school has been well aware of their weaknesses. These lessons were seen in both younger and older classes. Though classroom behaviour is generally satisfactory, and often good, students can be quick to misbehave if given the chance, and insecure teaching is rapidly exploited.
24. There are no other particular weaknesses in teaching but, in some subjects teachers do not manage to challenge the most able enough or to provide suitable enough material for the lower attainers. Now that teaching has become so much more competent, and behaviour is generally more reliable, teachers can afford to extend the range of the material they provide, so that everyone gets a suitable level of challenge. Homework is generally set well enough and completed satisfactorily, though in some cases the tasks given and preparation for them were inadequate.

### **Assessment**

25. The senior team provides very good analysis of data and makes this readily available to teachers. The results of national tests are carefully collected and helpful forecasts of future performance made. The school also tests its students for their reading ages, and gives them a battery of nationally validated tests. These yield very good data on attainment and enable the school to set clear targets for the performance of the school, subjects and individual students.
26. Overall, the use which subjects and tutors make of this data is unsatisfactory. Though some subjects, for example history and geography, make very good use of assessment data, in most subjects, opportunities are not sufficiently exploited to set work with the right level of challenge for individuals, based on the clear data which departments have received. The quality of marking is very variable. Sometimes, marking can be outstanding, as seen in the work of one teacher of English which contained detailed commentary for each student, with very perceptive ways in which work could be improved and made more enjoyable. Marking of this calibre is the exception, however, and little was seen which really exploited how data from assessment could be used as a powerful tool for improvement.
27. The school has devised a good system for the recording of assessment data in students' diaries, with target grades for their future performance in the different subjects. This enables everyone to be aware of potential. The task for many teachers is now to improve their regular marking, making better use of the assessment data provided, and indicating how students can reach the potential standards the school has set. There is already some very good practice in the school.
28. Since the last inspection, improvement in teaching and learning has been good. Improvement in the central analysis of data on students' achievement and progress has been very good. Improvement in marking and target setting within subjects has been satisfactory, in view of the unsatisfactory position described in the last report.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is satisfactory, with strengths in the opportunities it provides for the many different groups of students in the school. Students get good opportunities for enrichment beyond the normal lessons. Resources for learning are adequate. The curriculum fails to meet statutory requirements in two respects.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provides well for the many different groups of students.
- There is a good range of support for students with special educational needs.
- The curriculum provides well for students' personal, social and health education.
- There is no course in religious education for students in Years 10 and 11.
- The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all students.

## Commentary

29. The range of opportunities within the curriculum is satisfactory overall. For younger students, the school provides the expected range of subjects. For older students, this range is usefully extended by two vocational GNVQ subjects, information and communication technology, and leisure and tourism. The school also prepares students for a range of certificate qualifications, at entry level. These courses, together with media studies and the opportunities for study in college mentioned below, show that the school is taking good advantage of the innovations now possible in the National Curriculum and is developing the curriculum for students aged 14 to 19 well. This curriculum, with the good careers advice provided, prepares students effectively for the next stage of their education, or employment. There are GCSE options in drama and media studies. Two languages, French and German, are available in these years. In many ways, therefore, the curriculum is broad and well suited to a wide range of older students. However, religious education is not taught in Years 10 and 11, so that the school is failing to provide an important and required element of the curriculum. It also fails to provide a daily act of collective worship, though it does promote a thought for the week, which is sometimes considered in tutorial time.
30. The curriculum provides well for the inclusion of a wide range of students, including those with special educational needs. It makes very good provision for its lowest sets in English in Years 9 to 11 and mathematics in Years 7 to 8, with instruction very well matched to their needs. The learning support department provides good tuition for those students with statements, including two who have statements for hearing impairment. However, the department lacks enough teachers to provide sufficient support in mainstream classes. Its curriculum for students with behaviour difficulties is very good. This is provided in *The Gateway*, a well sited and attractive area where students who are not coping with the behaviour requirements of the classroom can receive specialist tuition. Next door, the learning mentor offers good support and counselling to students who have continuing difficulties with behaviour and learning, and has developed access to good alternative courses for some of these students in local colleges. The curriculum for gifted and talented students is satisfactory overall. It is good in the range of extra activities it provides, for example the visits to universities and the excellent accelerated GCSE course in information and communication technology. Provision for these students in the classroom is variable, and satisfactory overall. Some subjects, for example history and science, give a high level of challenge, while in others, including English and mathematics, provision is inconsistent. Provision for students with English as an additional language is satisfactory; there is just enough specialist teaching, but the curriculum of mainstream classes is often not well enough differentiated for them. Though the curriculum is generally well set out in the schemes of work of the various subjects, with attention to the needs of those with special needs or who are gifted and talented, this good provision is seldom translated into lesson plans that take account of the needs and abilities of all.
31. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) of students is very good. The programme is taught by tutors in a weekly lesson which combines these topics with an education in citizenship. It provides very good coverage of all required areas, including anti-drugs and sex education, and makes a good contribution to students' spiritual education. The curriculum is enriched by specialist outside speakers, who make a very good contribution to the students' understanding of a wide range of issues. The elements of citizenship are identified well in the PSHE programme, and reflect the school's wider aims and ethos well.

32. Outside the school day, the school provides a good programme of enrichment. After-school clubs in ICT are a strong feature, with an excellent course for the most able students, leading to a GCSE in Year 9. Monday homework club for Year 11 is popular and very helpful, with much support provided by volunteer teachers. There are visits to France and Germany, while the leisure and tourism class has recently been to Tunisia. Participation in sports and the arts is satisfactory. The English department provides theatre visits, and there is a drama club and an annual production. The music department provides a good range of activities, including an annual musical production. There are visits to museums and art galleries in London. The gardening club looks after a memorial garden, in memory of a student who died recently, with great care. There are many chances to continue learning in the holidays.
33. The curriculum is supported by an adequate range of accommodation and resources. Classrooms are well presented, and teachers have made real efforts to cheer up a rather ordinary building with good displays of students' work. Resources are sufficient, thanks to careful allocation of funds and good management by the heads of department. Considerable progress has been made in the provision of computers, which are constantly in use in the specialist rooms.
34. Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress overall in the development of its curriculum. The strongest developments have been in the improvement in the curriculum for special educational needs and the provision of vocational courses. However, although there is enough information and communications technology for all students, no specific course in religious education is now provided for older students.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school provides a satisfactory standard of care, welfare, health and safety for its students. Its guidance and advice to help students in their work and careers are satisfactory also. Support and guidance are strong and result in steadily improving personal development and growing maturity.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students have positive relationships with their teachers and are glad to confide in them.
- Daily guidance and support are strong, and this has a positive effect on students' outlook, personal development and maturity.
- Classroom support is good, but there is not enough to meet the needs of all students.
- Students usually know how well they are doing in their work, but are less confident about how to improve.

## **Commentary**

35. The care and protection of students is given high priority. There is an effective working relationship with local support services. Procedures for child protection are in line with local guidance and members of staff are aware of their responsibilities. The person with overall responsibility for health and safety has had recent training, and a good start has been made with risk assessments. There are suitable arrangements to deal with first aid emergencies and the administration of prescribed medicines. Arrangements to restrict access only to suitable sites on the internet are effective.
36. Teachers know students well and there are usually high levels of mutual respect. This is less so with temporary teachers. The positive relationships usually ensure students are confident about sharing problems and concerns. There are effective induction arrangements, ensuring students settle happily into Year 7. Support from classroom assistants is good, but the amount of time available is insufficient to meet the needs of all students. Personal support and guidance is planned well through form tutors and the personal, health and social education programme (PHSE). It results in a growing maturity and understanding of responsibilities. There are good arrangements to help students make decisions about courses starting in Years 9 and 11. Good careers guidance plays an important role in this, and the school ensures that students with special education needs are provided with sufficient support to reach practicable decisions. Marking is variable in quality, so that although students usually know how well they are doing, they are less confident about how to improve it.
37. The school has sought the views of students through a survey, and most are confident that members of staff are interested in what they have to say. Students are mature in their views. Senior managers are aware of students' concerns and are seeking to solve them. The newly formed school council is beginning to provide suitable opportunities for students to express views and opinions. The overall opinions of the 62 students who returned the pre-inspection questionnaires were positive. Almost all liked being at the school, and thought that it was well run, they were well taught and had to work hard. Everyone felt trusted to do things on their own. Around half felt that behaviour and bullying were problems. Inspectors found that behaviour was satisfactory and that the school is handling bullying well.
38. Since the last inspection, progress in improving the care and support given to students has been good. In 2001, almost all procedures were ineffective because of staffing problems. The school now enjoys better trained, more permanent staff who are working well together to advance the welfare of its students.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

39. The school has satisfactory links with parents. It has good links with other schools and colleges, and the community. Most parents are pleased with the school's performance. Written reports about their children's progress do not provide enough information to inform parents about how well their children are doing and what needs improvement.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has worked hard to meet parents' concerns, resulting in good parental satisfaction.
- Parents value the ready access they have to staff, for advice and support.
- The range and quality of information for parents has greatly improved.
- Links with the community are developing well, to the benefit of students' learning.
- Progress reports to parents do not provide them with enough information.

## Commentary

40. Parents are pleased with recent improvements in the school and its provision for their children. Opinions expressed at the pre-inspection meeting were positive, and the 196 questionnaire returns were overall positive also. Most parents agree that their children make progress at school, that teaching is good and that they get good treatment. They value the ease of access to staff when they have concerns. This includes a regular parents' 'surgery' held by the head teacher and a homework help line. A large minority is less content with behaviour and bullying, though inspectors found that behaviour was satisfactory and that the school had good procedures for dealing with the small amount of bullying which arises.
41. Though a minority of parents do not feel well informed by the school, there are good opportunities for parents to meet with staff at key points in their children's time at the school. When the school is considering changes that affect their children, parents are consulted and their views taken into account, for example about the behaviour policy. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents do not provide all the required information. Parents are involved in celebrating their children's achievements and are also encouraged to work with the school where there is cause for concern. The school seeks to keep parents suitably informed about diary dates and school news through newsletters and well planned opportunities to meet staff, for example to discuss their children's coursework and dates for its completion.
42. Despite frequent reports, consultation and communication with parents, annual progress reports do not at present meet the need to provide an evaluation of progress and what their children know, understand and can do, which should lead to suitably expressed targets for achievement in subjects. This reduces opportunities for parents to support their children at home. However, statements of special educational need and annual reviews of these statements are well prepared and documented, with good evidence of close consultation with the home and with specialist agencies when need arises. The preparation made by teachers for consultations, following the issue of reports, shows a good understanding of individual students. The targets which are communicated at this time are sometimes too general to be helpful to parents or students. The number of parents attending consultations is increasing, but there is still a significant minority which does not.
43. The school actively seeks to involve the community in its work and has developed a range of productive links. These have enabled the school to create an effective work experience programme. Visits to museums and galleries, visitors from the community and opportunities for field study add a welcome extra dimension to classroom study. The work of the learning mentor and the liaison worker in the national behaviour improvement project make very helpful links within the community for some of the school's neediest students.
44. There is effective transfer of pastoral and academic information between partner schools during visits made to children in Year 6 and their teachers. This, together with good arrangements for induction, helps students settle well into Year 7. Results of the national tests taken at the end of Year 6 are sometimes slow to arrive. Curriculum links are beginning to develop with primary partners in design and technology. Partnership with other secondary schools is developing well and beginning to have a positive impact on professional development and specialist support. The school ensures that students have good information about opportunities available after the age of 16. Effective links are developing with local education and training providers, for example with the nearby sixth form college and colleges of further education.
45. Since the last inspection, improvement in the effectiveness of its links with parents and the community has been good.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher and senior team is very good. Management of the school's subjects, years and programmes is good. Governance is satisfactory overall. Governors lead the school very well, but have not ensured that legal requirements for the teaching of religious education and daily worship are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides very good, successful leadership.
- Leadership of the senior team is very good and helps heads of subject and years to manage their areas well.
- The commitment of senior staff and teachers to the inclusion of every student in the life of the school is excellent.
- Leaders have created a good ethos, so that students want to learn and make progress.
- The chair of governors leads the governors very well. Governors are well informed about the school.
- Governors have not ensured that the school provides a course of religious education for students in Years 10 and 11 and a daily act of collective worship for all students.

### **Commentary**

46. The headteacher has clear vision and leads the school very well. Appointed just before the last Ofsted inspection, which found the school in a difficult position, she has rescued the school and given it new heart. Staff, parents and governors now have confidence in the school, and students are starting to succeed. There is now a refreshingly 'can do' attitude, ably reinforced by the very well-chosen deputy and assistant heads, who work very closely with the headteacher and make a very effective team. Together, they have focused on improving achievement and have motivated the good teams of heads of department and years to work well together, so that all students can reach higher standards. The school's ethos is now good; thanks to the very good example shown by senior staff, students and staff get on well and there is a positive, friendly atmosphere. As a result, achievement is rising and students are expanding their horizons.
47. The leadership of inclusion is first rate. The headteacher has seen that including every student is the key to a happy and high-achieving school. So the school has set up a very good range of programmes, so that everyone – from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, boys and girls, gifted and talented, those with special educational needs and those who are starting to learn English as a new language – can benefit from the education the school provides. Leadership of the learning support department, which covers almost all these areas, is very good.
48. Strategic planning is very good also. The last Ofsted inspection report rightly gave the school a great range of challenges, and the senior team has kept a very close focus on these key issues. Only recently has it felt it should prepare an independent development plan. This has now been published. It is clearly presented and concentrates well on five well-chosen areas, which together sum up the challenges facing the school and how it might be improved further. These are the further improvement of teaching and learning, attendance and punctuality, self-evaluation, students' behaviour and the curriculum.
49. Governors generally lead the school very well. The chair of governors is very well informed about its work, insists that the school supplies evidence to prove its performance, and takes a very close but supportive interest in its affairs. Committees are well constituted and effective. They cover a wide range of business, and review the work of the school well. They have guided the school out of its difficulties into increasing success. In one respect, however, governors are not providing good leadership. They are responsible for ensuring that statutory requirements are met, but have not done so for all aspects of the curriculum. At present, there is not enough religious education for older students, so that the locally agreed syllabus cannot be taught as fully as it should. Governors have not ensured that all students have a daily act of

collective worship. On balance, therefore, the quality of the governors' work is satisfactory at present, rather than very good.

50. The management of the school's many programmes and areas of work is good overall, and very good in some. The following is a summary of the quality of the provision in subjects overall and of their leadership and management:

Subject	Overall quality of provision	Quality of leadership	Quality of management
English	Good	Good	Good
Modern languages	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Good	Good
Science	Satisfactory	Good	Good
ICT	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory
Geography	Good	Very good	Very good
History	Very good	Very good	Very good
Religious education	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Good	Good	Good
Art and design	Very good	Excellent	Excellent
Drama	Good	Good	Good
Media studies	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Music	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Physical education	Good	Good	Good
SEN	Good	Good	Good
PSHE and citizenship	Very good	Very good	Very good
Literacy across the curriculum	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Numeracy across the curriculum	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
ICT across the curriculum	Satisfactory	Good	Good

51. From the above analysis, it is clear that the overall quality of most subjects is good, as are their leadership and management. The school's main work, its teaching and learning, is dynamically led and efficiently managed. However, leadership and management of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum needs improvement. The learning support department is very well led and managed, particularly in the work of the co-ordinator for special educational needs, *The Gateway* and the work of the learning mentor. Management by the heads of year is good. Their liaison and relationships with tutors and students are good, and their control of the school's behaviour management policies effective. Good management of the year and tutorial system makes a very positive contribution to the improving standards of behaviour and the reduction of bullying and exclusions. Management of the morning tutor period needs improvement. At the moment, time is too often wasted, so the day begins aimlessly when it could be used for such positive activities as collective worship or practice in literacy and numeracy. There are some very good examples of how well time can be used, sometimes next door to the more common, noisy chatter of an under-employed tutor group.
52. The school's evaluation of its own performance is good. The headteacher made a very accurate analysis, in preparation for this inspection, of the school's current performance. The very detailed analyses made by the deputy headteachers of performance and prospects in

tests and examinations have led to an increasingly rigorous examination of data by departments. Further development of the potential of this work is needed, to give students the chance to benefit from all the initial investigations made. In terms of its staffing, the school evaluates performance closely and encourages the professional development of its teachers. The local education authority provides a very generous number of staff training days each year and has greatly helped the school to improve in recent years. The school provides relevant training days and opportunities to attend courses.

53. The management of resources is good. Recruitment and retention of staff are well managed, though the school has had a difficult time in recruiting and retaining staff. In the last two years, 10 teachers have left and 16 have joined, but the school has had to survive with temporary or supply staff for long periods. The position is much better this year so far. Support staff are as well deployed as possible, but numbers are limited for special educational needs and to help those with English as an additional language.
54. Financial management is good. When the present headteacher and bursar arrived, they discovered that the school's finances had not been accurately enough managed, and were therefore obliged to set a deficit budget, to pay off a debit balance. This is now well in hand. The school has made a positive response to the most recent audit report and has largely put right the issues identified for action in the last report. Management of the school's support programmes is good also. Secretarial, catering and premises staff provide a good service, and make an important contribution to the smooth and friendly running of the school.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2370093	Balance from previous year	- 108068
Total expenditure	2352005	Balance carried forward to the next	- 89980
Expenditure per student	4062		

55. Expenditure is relatively high per student, but includes all the special grants the school has received. These are well spent, and the school derives good value for them. The school spends a relatively generous amount on its teachers, conscious that this can be a demanding school to teach in, and that it has to offer a reasonable level of salary to attract and retain staff. The school is aware of the principles of best value and seeks to realise them, for example in getting competitive quotations for work or supplies. It makes good decisions, for example to support the education of students with special educational needs and English as an additional language to a far greater extent than the grants received would allow. Reflecting the improving quality of education now being offered, the school now supplies good value for money.
56. Progress, in the improvement of leadership and management since the last inspection report, has been good.

# 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 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	Good
Management	Good	Good

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in the subject promotes good learning.
- The good use of the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy makes a positive contribution to the raising of standards in Year 7 to 9.
- Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9. Progress is good when set against students' attainment upon entry.
- The poor attendance of a significant minority of students in Years 10 and 11 affects standards at the end of Year 11.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but teachers need to provide students in Years 7 to 9 with effective short-term targets for improvement.

#### Commentary

57. Students' attainment upon entry to the school in all areas of English is below average, with the significant number of students who have special education needs having well below average skills in English. Results for the national tests in 2002 are below average, though good when compared to schools with a similar intake. However, evidence during the inspection confirms students achieving well over their time in Years 7 to 9, so that most are now achieving the nationally expected level by the time they are 14.
58. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Poor attendance by a number of students decreases their understanding of GCSE texts and the quality of their coursework files. Standards in GCSE at the end of Year 11 are below average.
59. The majority of students display satisfactory oral skills, though not all students are good listeners. A number of students are less confident in their ability to talk within more formal and structured oral activities. Speaking and listening skills at ages 14 and 16 are average overall.
60. Most students display satisfactory reading skills by the time they are 14, though some students do not always grasp the nature of what they are reading and so are less secure in their skills of reading for understanding. Critical reading skills are well taught in Years 10 and 11, though a number of students find it difficult to apply them to the challenging poetry, novels and plays they read as part of their GCSE studies. A number of students read only at a surface level and find it difficult to read for sub-text, inference and meaning. Overall standards in reading at 16 are below average.

61. Students improve the basic skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation during Years 7 to 9 and apply them to an interesting range of writing activities, so that standards in written work by the time students are 14 are average. A number of more able students in Years 10 and 11 can write a strong personal response to the questions asked of them, and support well-reasoned arguments through evidence from the texts and well-selected quotation. In contrast, a number of students find it hard to write at any length. Their written work displays a satisfactory understanding of character and story, but fails to address specific issues, ideas and concepts in the questions they are asked. Overall standards in written work at 16 are below average.
62. The overall quality of teaching is good, and some very good teaching was seen. Lessons are well planned, organised and managed, and teachers use the Key Stage 3 National Literacy Strategy well to raise standards in Years 7 to 9.
63. Leadership and management in the subject are good. The department is committed to raising standards in the subject. Teachers have a satisfactory range of assessment procedures, though these need to be used in a constructive manner to provide students in Years 7 to 9 with short-term targets for improvement.
64. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the last inspection and progress in improving the subject is satisfactory.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

65. Provision for the development of literacy across the curriculum is **satisfactory**.
66. At present, there is no one responsible for the development of literacy across the curriculum. The appointment of a new co-ordinator would provide a good opportunity to audit and monitor its current use. Despite this, staff are aware of the need to promote literacy in their classes. It is expected that all departments refer to this area of work in their handbooks and planning. All teachers have been involved in a whole day training course on this area of the curriculum. This was some time ago, since when there have been several changes in staffing.
67. Key words are on display in most classes, with some teachers providing students with a satisfactory range of writing frames to support their learning. Much written work is somewhat brief in a number of subjects, often being limited to note-taking. Literacy skills are particularly well developed and used in history and geography, with chances for students to write in an extended manner. Though provision is satisfactory, the school needs to promote literacy vigorously in all areas, because the lowest scores in tests taken on entry are in literacy, and improvement in these skills is a key to higher attainment in general. The English and learning support departments are making a good contribution to the development of literacy. For example, teaching of the lowest sets in English is relentlessly focused on the improvement of basic skills, and achieves its purpose. Students with statements of special educational need are given good support in literacy, while those at an early stage in learning English are well taught, as far as resources permit.

## Modern foreign languages: French and German

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

	<b>Years 7 to 9</b>	<b>Years 10 and 11</b>
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' excellent linguistic knowledge enables them to present language of high quality to students.
- Carefully planned lessons ensure students experience the four language skills, speaking and listening, reading and writing.
- Good displays of students' work create a foreign language environment and show how their work is valued.
- Many students are passive learners and lack motivation to succeed in language learning.
- Teachers do not always manage to control poor attitudes and behaviour adequately.
- The number choosing languages in Years 10 and 11 is very small.

### Commentary

68. Students in Year 7 learn French. Higher-attaining students continue with French and study German in Years 8 and 9. Teachers' assessments of students' work at the end of Year 9 suggest that the overall level of attainment is below average in relation to nationally expected levels. The most recently reported results are lower than those for 2002. Girls' results are higher than boys' and this reflects the picture nationally.
69. The attainment of students with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English is broadly comparable to that of all students. In 2003, attainment of both boys and girls in modern languages was the lowest of all the core and foundation subjects. GCSE grades A\*-C results in 2003 were well below national averages in French and below national averages in German. Boys attained more highly than girls in French, contrary to the national trend. French was one of the lowest-attaining departments in 2003. Long-term staffing problems have contributed to these low standards. Numbers of students entered for German were so small as to make detailed national comparisons statistically unsound.
70. Standards of work seen during the inspection are generally below average across the school. Students find speaking and writing the two most difficult skills; they are more confident in listening and reading. In lessons, attainment is mostly satisfactory, but attainment over time could be improved by more thorough learning and more rigorous completion of tasks. The great majority of students achieve satisfactorily in lessons and a few students achieve well in individual lessons.
71. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. However, management of students' behaviour was unsatisfactory in one lesson in Years 7 to 9: this led to unsatisfactory learning and inadequate progress in language development during the lesson. Teachers' meticulous lesson planning and their extremely confident use of the languages they teach are strengths and provide a secure base for teaching. Where teaching is good, students develop a good understanding of the grammar and construction of the foreign language and apply their knowledge effectively.

72. Leadership of the department is satisfactory and management is sound. Schemes of work are now in place, a development plan has been created, teaching and marking are monitored, and teachers are now fully qualified. Resources are satisfactory. The languages area contains good displays of students' work. Although there has not yet been an improvement in standards at the end of Years 9 and 11, the resolution of the long-running staffing difficulties, and other systems introduced since the last inspection, have created a firm basis for progress. Further improvement in assessment and greater use of information and communication technology would further enhance prospects. Visits to France and Germany are a positive feature of the department and its work.
73. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection. There is a new sense of purpose and the quality of teaching has improved.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	Good
Management	Good	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management of the department lead to good teamwork.
- Good teaching is developing students' confidence in mathematics.
- There is good use of data to monitor students' achievements.
- Too many classes do not have the same teacher for all their lessons, making continuity difficult.
- There is no co-ordination of mathematics across the curriculum in order to ensure consistency in methods.

### Commentary

74. Results in national tests in Year 9 are below average overall. However, they are improving and approaching national figures. Students do as well as expected, based on standards on entry to the school. Girls outperform boys, but boys' results are improving, particularly in the proportion gaining higher grades. Results in 2003 were below those in English, but better than in science.
75. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, results were below average. Overall performance was largely as expected, and girls did better than boys. Students did better in mathematics than in most of their other subjects. In 2003, fewer students gained the higher grades, particularly girls; results overall were well below average. The improving trend in Year 9 indicates that standards in Year 11 are set to rise.
76. In work seen during the inspection, standards remained below average, but there are signs of improvement at all levels. Achievement is satisfactory overall. At the beginning of Year 7, standards are below average, and students are taught in mixed ability groups. In a Year 7 lesson on probability, the teacher ensured that all students were provided with work at the correct level, including those with special educational needs. As a result, all students worked positively, and achievements were very good. In lessons when tasks are not matched to students' need, behaviour and achievement are unsatisfactory. Furthermore, many classes do not have the same teacher for all lessons, making continuity difficult. From Year 8 onwards, students are placed in sets by attainment, but there is still a wide range of aptitude and attitude

in each class; planning of appropriate work remains a priority. In general, there are insufficient support assistants to provide help for students who have difficulty.

77. On balance, teaching is good across the school. Lesson content is well planned. In Years 7 to 9, there are effective lesson 'starters' to increase students' confidence with number. There is a clear expectation that students should work hard to improve their standards, but teachers are occasionally too dominating, with insufficient opportunity for students to use their initiative. There is insufficient use of apparatus, or of computers, to increase interest and widen students' strategies for learning. Homework is regularly set, consolidating work done in class, but rarely extends the higher-attaining students. The department makes a satisfactory, but inconsistent, contribution to the development of students' literacy skills. Key words are often used well in lesson summaries. Good practice in a Year 9 lesson required students to explain in writing the difference between a prism and a pyramid.
78. Curriculum leadership and management of the department are good. The scheme of work is detailed, supporting teachers' planning; teamwork is good. Priorities for development are clear. Assessment data is effectively used to monitor the work of the department, and is beginning to have a positive effect on provision. However, few students can quote their personal targets, or know how to improve.
79. Since the last inspection, there has been satisfactory progress overall. Teaching has improved, raising standards in Years 7 to 9. This has yet to affect results in Year 11. There has been unsatisfactory progress towards a whole school policy for mathematics skills, and in the use of computers in lessons.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

80. Provision for the development of mathematics across the curriculum is **satisfactory**. There is regular use of 'starter' sessions in mathematics lessons in Years 7 to 9 for the recall and consolidation of mathematical skills. This is beginning to increase students' confidence, and also their enjoyment of mathematics. In the best lessons, teachers use these sessions to identify individual strengths and weaknesses, and to plan follow-up work. Lessons in Years 10 and 11 do not as yet include starters, and overall standards of numeracy remain below average.
81. There is no whole school policy for the development of numeracy skills. This is clearly unsatisfactory, and remains a priority for the school and the mathematics department. Without a policy, there is the potential for inconsistencies in applying mathematics, for instance in the use of formulae, of terminology, and graphs. This can cause difficulties for students, particularly where standards are average or below.
82. There is regular use of mathematics in many subjects. In media studies, for instance, students analyse graphs using computers, and in art they learn the importance of perspective and patterns, including rotational symmetry. Science teachers use formulae for calculations, as well as graphs, percentages, and ratio. The analysis of data and graphs is less well developed in ICT. Departments therefore make a satisfactory contribution to the development of students' mathematical skills, but the lack of a consistent policy limits their impact.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good	Good
Management	Good	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some very good and outstanding practice.
- Standards are steadily improving at both key stages, and especially at the end of Year 9 where they are above the average for similar schools.
- Leadership and management are good, and teaching and learning are improved.
- The analysis of assessment data and its use are not yet sufficiently developed.
- Science investigation is not well developed in Years 7 to 9.
- There are insufficient extra-curricular activities and ICT is not used enough by students.

### Commentary

83. The results of national tests at the end of Year 9 have steadily improved and are now approaching the national average. Results in 2002 were the best over the past five years. This represents satisfactory achievement for many students over their first three years in the school, including students with special educational needs. In comparison with schools that have students with similar prior attainment, results are above the average at level 5 and in line with the average at level 6 and above. For example, able students in Year 9 demonstrate good understanding of the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol on fitness and health, and talk about their work with enthusiasm and confidence. Generally, girls do better than boys, however, in comparison with other core subjects, students do less well in science than they do in English and mathematics.
84. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are improving very slowly. All students do double science at GCSE. Though the proportion gaining A\*-E grades is in line with the national average in 2003, the proportion gaining grades of A\*-C remains well below average. There is no consistent pattern of difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Achievement in work seen is generally satisfactory for most students, and some show increasing responsibility and maturity. Students make satisfactory progress overall in Years 10 and 11.
85. The quality of teaching and learning is now satisfactory overall, with some very good and excellent practice. The recent use of starter activities and the display of lesson objectives are strong features of most lessons. Teachers have very good specialist knowledge. Thorough and detailed planning by most, together with focused questioning, helps students to do well and they often respond with enthusiasm. However, homework and the marking of students' work are varied and unsatisfactory for some students.
86. The leadership and management of science are good. The recently appointed head of department leads well and gives his team sensitive support. Assessment strategies are now developing well and recent documentation, such as the department handbook and development plans, are well written and helpful. Accommodation and resources have recently been enhanced, courses revised and rewritten, and a better range of teaching strategies introduced. However, students do not make enough use of information and communication technology and

extra-curricular activities are limited. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching are not well developed. The curriculum in the lower school still lacks opportunities for problem-solving and inquiry, and the excitement of discovery. Students' work of good quality is prominently displayed. Information about how well students are doing is rigorously collected, and data is now recorded electronically and will be more easily accessible. Until now, little use has been made of the outcomes of assessment to improve teaching and learning.

87. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory, with particular improvements in the leadership of the subject and the organisation of the curriculum. Over the past three years, there have been major changes in staffing, with a very negative impact on the learning of students. There is now a growing interest in science and a much more positive attitude to the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

	<b>Years 7 to 9</b>	<b>Years 10 and 11</b>
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Good	Good
Management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Overall standards are below average, but improving.
- Some teaching is good, particularly on the GNVQ course.
- Some tasks are not well matched to students' abilities in Years 7 and 8.
- The subject is well led, but management is proving difficult.

### **Commentary**

88. Standards by the end of Year 9 are below average, reflecting entry standards. They are improving significantly. In 2003, teachers reported students' standards by the end of Year 9 as in line with the national average, but not all strands of the National Curriculum were sufficiently covered due to shortages of lesson time and equipment. A new ICT room, opened recently, is giving students more opportunities to practise ICT skills in other subjects.
89. Year 11 students on the GNVQ foundation and intermediate option course gained grades well below the national average in 2003, largely because lesson time was inadequate and achievement was unsatisfactory. Less than a half of Year 10 and 11 students have timetabled ICT (GNVQ) lessons.
90. In lessons and work seen, standards are below average overall, but most students make satisfactory progress by the time they leave school. Higher-attaining Year 7 students' attractive, animated slides met the expected national level. By the end of Year 9, most students have a good basic grasp of word processing, measurement and control. Few use spreadsheets and databases enough. Year 9 students have too little lesson time to finish tasks, although three quarters have home computers. They achieve less than students in similar schools.
91. Over half of Year 10 and 11 GNVQ students' work is below the merit borderline, but their achievement is satisfactory in the inadequate lesson time. Their information sheets about

Egypt integrated text and graphics well, and higher-attaining students used spreadsheets well to analyse sports day results.

92. Teaching was satisfactory overall, and good in Years 10 and 11, where GNVQ teachers are subject specialists. Students, including some with special educational needs, learn new routines satisfactorily. In Years 7, 8 and 9, teachers are beginning to use new Key Stage 3 Strategy materials quite well but, with lessons for only half of each term, Year 9 students do not make as much progress as they should. Homework was sometimes set for students in Years 7 to 9, but marking was inconsistent. GNVQ students' work was well marked, with students given useful targets for improving work. Most students showed good attitudes, and treated equipment safely.
93. The school has significantly increased the number of computers to reach national average levels, through recent funding. The co-ordinator leads the subject well, but far too much of his time is devoted to technical support. After teething problems, the new GNVQ course in Years 10 and 11 is proving more successful. Gifted and talented Year 9 students are making excellent progress in the course they attend at a local college where they gain high GCSE grades.
94. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Areas to develop are to increase timetabled ICT lessons in Year 9, and improve provision in other subjects.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

95. Provision for the development of information and communication technology across the curriculum is **satisfactory**.
96. Recent improvements in the provision of information and communication technology (ICT) across subjects are helping students in Years 10 and 11 largely to receive their entitlement to ICT. Some subjects, like technology and geography, make regular use of ICT to fully meet programmes of study, but most subjects do not yet plan regular use of ICT for students. However, good practice was seen in GNVQ, mathematics, geography, technology and science. Increasingly, students use computers at school to research the internet, safely and securely. Many enthusiastically use computer rooms at school during the lunch break and after school. Staff are starting to use their lap-tops to record students' progress, and some use projection equipment well. Planned improvements following recent training are under way. Some subjects, such as art and music, have too few available computers.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Very good	Very good
Management	Very good	Very good

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well due to good teaching and thoroughly prepared lessons.
- Comments written on students' work are thorough and inform students clearly of the standard achieved and if necessary how they can improve.
- Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has a very good vision of how to improve standards.
- There is a need to identify and communicate with students the citizenship elements within the geography curriculum.

## Commentary

97. Attainment recorded by teachers at the end of Year 9 is above the national average level, for both boys and girls. Standards in GCSE in 2003 have improved and, though they remain below the national average level, are now above the school average. Standards in the GCSE leisure and tourism course were in line with the national average and above the school average in 2003.
98. Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9. Thanks to good teaching and thoroughly prepared lessons, they work well and are keen to improve. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, where students respond well to good teaching, but do not have the advantage of high enough achievement in the subject in their younger years, and are disadvantaged by erratic attendance by some students. Materials prepared for lower-attaining students help them to cope. However, there is insufficient support for students with special educational needs. Higher-attaining students benefit from being given more demanding tasks. Students concentrate well because good lesson planning results in a wide variety of tasks to keep their interest. High standards of behaviour are expected from the outset of a lesson. Students' work is well presented and there are few signs of unfinished work. Where this occurs, the teacher draws the students' attention to it.
99. Teaching is good. Students are well challenged and so learn well. Teachers introduce lessons clearly, enabling students to understand what is expected of them. They use imagination and well prepared, appropriate resources. Lessons are conducted with good pace, engaging the vast majority of students well. Teachers inform students why work is of a particular standard and how it could be improved. Teachers provide good fieldwork opportunities, with visits locally, while in Year 10 there is a visit based in the Swanage area which helps to bring the theme of tourism alive. As a result of such opportunities, students work hard to produce coursework of a high standard.
100. The head of department has introduced some major improvements, for example in methods of assessing students' work, ensuring that the data collected on students' progress is used to improve practice in the department. He has focused on the structure of lessons to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning improves, and has introduced GCSE revision workshops and improved resources such as text books. He has broadened the curriculum to include the leisure and tourism GCSE, which is more suitable for some students.
101. Since the last inspection, improvement in the subject has been very good. Virtually all aspects were unsatisfactory then, but are now managed very well, with improving standards.

## History

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **very good**.

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good
Leadership	Very good	Very good
Management	Very good	Very good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because of very good teaching and learning.
- The very good teaching, matched to individual needs, provides a consistent challenge so that students learn very well.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good and have provided stability, allowing very good improvement since the last inspection.
- Assessment is done very well: students know how well they are doing and how to improve their work.
- There is insufficient in-class support for students with special educational needs and this prevents them from doing as well as they could.
- A minority of students fail to hand in or complete their homework, making it harder for them to make as much progress as their peers.

### Commentary

102. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were well below national averages. Girls did much better than boys and the gap between the attainment of boys and girls was wider than nationally. Results at GCSE in 2002 were well above average compared to those in all schools, both in terms of grades A\*-C and average points scores. Standards declined considerably in 2003, but both groups were small. Results vary with the make-up of the group, but indicate at least satisfactory achievement overall. Interest in history has been growing and option numbers are increasing, an improvement since the last inspection when there had been no history GCSE groups for several years.
103. Students arrive at the school with few skills in history and an attainment level below average. Achievement by most students in Years 7 to 9 is very good and standards reach nationally expected levels by Year 9. However, students with special educational needs and a minority with English as an additional language, could do better if they were given additional in-class support. The good progress they make is due entirely to very good support from their teachers. Students have good factual knowledge and some understanding of the topics studied. They can research using a variety of sources, including the internet, and are beginning to evaluate evidence.
104. Standards in the current Year 11 are also in line with nationally expected levels, though those students who regularly attend exceed these levels; their achievement is very good in terms of capability and their previous levels of attainment.
105. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are very well planned, having a clear structure; learning objectives are shared with students. Relationships in the classroom are excellent and underpin teachers' very good management of behaviour. Students respond well to the stimulating, consistently challenging teaching. Activities and demands are matched sensitively to students' needs. Both lower and higher-attaining students are supported well.

Marking and assessment are very thorough, so that students know how well they are doing and how to improve their work.

106. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The teacher responsible for history has been in post for less than two years and teaches all but two of the history classes. She has brought stability to the department, raised standards and achievement, and engendered a genuine interest in history. Students are offered a number of opportunities to take part in history visits and can attend after school history support classes to help with coursework.
107. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. However, three issues raised at the last inspection – homework, attendance and SEN support – still remain to be resolved.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	No evidence
Achievement	Good	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	No evidence
Leadership	Good	No evidence
Management	Satisfactory	No evidence

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9 because of good teaching.
- Students in Years 7 to 9 have positive attitudes and want to learn.
- The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual development of students.
- The achievement of students in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory because of the lack of time given to religious education.
- Students have insufficient experience of information communication technology (ICT) and local faith communities.

## Commentary

108. There is no religious education course undertaken in Years 10 and 11. Teacher assessments of Year 9 in 2003, indicates overall standards at below nationally expected levels, with no clear pattern of difference between groups of students.
109. It was not possible to judge standards in Years 10 and 11 because students do not continue with religious education beyond Year 9. Achievement is therefore unsatisfactory. Students have opportunities to consider moral and social issues in other subjects, but lack of a specific religious education lesson leads to an underdeveloped understanding of religious perspectives on life.
110. Standards seen in Years 7 to 9 are now average. Students enter school below average and make good progress. This indicates good achievement for all students. Students are confident in expressing their own ideas. They understand how religion affects lifestyle and respect the beliefs of others. Their ability to evaluate and question religious beliefs is less well developed.
111. Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are consistently good, sometimes better. The new teacher in post has very good subject knowledge and an infectious enthusiasm for the subject. Students are motivated to learn. They behave well because lessons are briskly paced, with an interesting range of activities. Teachers have not yet devised appropriate tasks to measure

students' achievement. Students are not clear about the next stages in their learning. There are too few opportunities for students to use ICT, or to encounter religion first-hand through visits and visitors.

112. Leadership in Years 7 to 9 is good. Key staff are committed to improvement, are clear about what needs to be done and are working closely with linked schools. The department has very good potential. Management is satisfactory and will be good once assessment procedures are developed.

113. Religious education has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Every aspect has improved well except for the current lack of a course in Years 10 and 11.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good	Good
Management	Good	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of students in Years 7 to 9 is good.
- Students' attitudes are good.
- The quality of teaching and standards in Year 10 and 11 are very variable.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is insufficient and unsatisfactory overall.

### Commentary

114. Standards at entry are variable and below the national average overall. Standards in the lessons seen improved progressively from Year 7 to Year 9. By the time students reach the end of Year 9, standards are broadly average. Procedures for assessing and monitoring students' progress are good, but overestimate attainment. Students with special educational needs (SEN) are integrated well in lessons and progress satisfactory with extra help from teachers. Individual assignments enable gifted and talented students to progress well and in keeping with their ability. Achievement is good.

115. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is good overall. Teachers have secure knowledge of the subject and plan lessons well. They control students effectively. Teachers have good relationships with students and give effective help and advice in practical activities. In the best lessons, teachers give good demonstrations of the work and ask students questions to improve their motivation. Making skills are insufficiently developed in resistant materials.

116. Nine out of ten students take the subject in Years 10 and 11. In 2003, there was considerable variation in the examination results in the four GCSE courses – caused mainly by changes in staff. The results were well above the national average in resistant materials, broadly in line in graphic products and well below in food technology, and systems and control. Overall, the results were below the national average with less than four out of ten students obtaining A\*-C grades. Standards and achievement in the lessons seen were satisfactory overall.

117. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 is very variable, but satisfactory overall. Teachers' expectations in food technology, and systems and control, do not always encourage students to produce their best coursework. In less effective lessons, teachers fail to maintain the interest of students and allow them to go off task. Sometimes, students are required to copy notes for long periods, thus lowering pace. Students produce good work in graphic products. ICT is insufficiently used to present work, research topics and analyse results.
118. Leadership is good. The head of the department and his three colleagues are keen to improve standards. The department is run well on a day-by-day basis. Changes since the last inspection are satisfactory. Students' progress has been maintained. Students' attitudes and procedures for assessment remain good. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are more variable.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

### Art

Provision in art is **very good**.

	<b>Years 7 to 9</b>	<b>Years 10 and 11</b>
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good
Leadership	Excellent	Excellent
Management	Excellent	Excellent

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures that students achieve very well.
- The head of department fosters excellent relationships and teamwork, resulting in harmonious and productive working practices.
- Good assessment information is shared with students so that they know what they need to do to improve.
- The technician makes a very positive contribution to students' learning.
- Cultural diversity is very well celebrated.
- There is no computer access in the department.
- The quality of sketchbooks provided by the school is poor.

### Commentary

119. In the Year 9 National Curriculum tests the majority of students reach above average standards, confirming the standards seen in the inspection. This represents very good achievement as many students enter Year 7 with a disparity of previous experiences in handling clay, paints and other materials.
120. Standards by the end of Year 11 are well above average. GCSE results 2003 show a slight drop from those obtained in 2002. The school is well aware of the reasons, and effective strategies are in place to achieve the new ambitious but achievable targets for 2004. These results are very high compared with other subjects in the school.
121. By the end of Year 9, students develop good capability with a range of media such as graded graphite pencils, pen and ink, paints and pastels. Students develop very good printmaking skills and analyse their own work critically in relation to that of other artists, from different times and cultures. They use good levels of specialist subject vocabulary.

122. By the end of Year 11, students take more responsibility, organise ideas and work independently. They receive good levels of oral feedback and written comments on an ongoing basis, as well as at the end of units of coursework. This helps them to know what they need to do in order to improve. They build successfully on earlier printmaking skills. Many overlay complex layers of line, colour, shapes and patterns, to achieve rich and exciting imagery. Unfortunately, sketchbooks supplied by the school are of insufficient strength and quality to support the range of media needed to meet both the National Curriculum and examination requirements. This prevents students from achieving their best presentation skills. Most students develop sound ICT skills when researching artists and art movements, using the internet. They scan images electronically, modify and print them as a starting point for their own work. They have to do this in their own time because there is no ICT access in the department.
123. The quality of teaching is very good. In two of the lessons seen it was excellent. Teachers plan exciting activities, which fully engage students' interest. They also set firm ground rules for acceptable behaviour and this combination ensures that attitudes and behaviour are very good. Teachers spend much time outside lessons, preparing excellent arrangements of cultural artefacts and unusual objects for still-life groups, such as bicycles, model sailing ships, African masks, car engines and life-size skeletons. This stimulates students' curiosity and focuses attention. Teachers are excellent role models. Demonstration is used regularly as part of their teaching repertoire. They show very high levels of subject knowledge and practical skills, which students recognise, respect and admire. The subject technician is very well briefed and makes a very good contribution to students' learning.
124. Subject leadership and management are excellent and represent the driving force in the department. Teachers work effectively as a team. Excellent, harmonious relationships and a warm, welcoming ethos ensure that all students feel valued. Since the last inspection, very good improvements have been made overall, including new schemes of work and sharper assessment procedures.

#### Example of outstanding practice

##### **A Year 8 art lesson, using optical devices for accurate drawings, which illustrates how art can benefit from the applications of historical technology.**

This was a really enthralling lesson. These things helped:

- Excellent relationships between teacher and students,
- The teacher's first rate knowledge, rare story-telling ability and huge enthusiasm for the subject, and
- The remarkable way the teacher included students of many faiths in learning about ecclesiastical art.

The outstanding feature, though, was the way that 'old technology' could be harnessed to enlighten the history of art and make telling comparisons with the new technologies of today. The teacher caught everyone's interest by describing the cut-throat competition for commissions among Renaissance artists and how they made use of the latest inventions in mathematics and science to steal a march on their rivals. He had made a pinhole camera for each student, fitted with half-inch squares, for students to look through and to draw what they saw onto one-inch squared paper. They were amazed at how accurately they could draw, and delighted to have learnt an ancient 'trick of the trade'. When the teacher revealed a real *camera obscura* which he had built in a cupboard, their enthusiasm for further experiments next week knew no bounds.

## Drama

Provision in drama is **good**.

	<b>Years 7 to 9</b>	<b>Years 10 and 11</b>
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	Good

Management

Good

Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- The curriculum is imaginative and challenging.
- Drama makes a good contribution to students' personal development.
- Students would benefit from the chance to consider the rehearsal techniques of respected directors and practitioners.

### Commentary

125. Students develop a range of drama skills and techniques over time, with the result that standards at the end of Year 9 are line with those expected nationally. This satisfactory progress continues in Years 10 and 11 as students increase their knowledge of drama techniques and use them within increasingly demanding activities. Standards in the most recent GCSE examinations in 2003 were below the national average.
126. Standards of work seen during the inspection were in line with nationally expected levels. Standards in Year 9 reached these levels, seen for example in the work of Year 9 students as they explored short extracts from plays. They enhanced their ability to convey character through the use of movement, gesture, facial expression and the use of voice to denote status and social background.
127. Standards continue at this level in Years 10 and 11. For example, students in Year 10 were adding to their drama strategies as they devised their own dramas on the theme of old age. A number of students in Year 11 produced work of a good quality as they explored the impact of 'Jack the Ripper' on the inhabitants of London's East End. Although older students use a satisfactory range of techniques, they would benefit from the chance to explore the rehearsal techniques of influential directors and practitioners.
128. The overall quality of teaching is good, with some very good and excellent teaching being observed. The teacher who takes most lessons is very secure in her subject knowledge and provides students with a challenging and imaginative range of activities. The final part of lessons is used very well to give students the chance to evaluate their own and other's efforts and to share and celebrate what they have achieved.
129. Leadership and management in the subject are good. The drama co-ordinator has created a good range of documentation, including good schemes of work, and these give good support for teaching and learning. Students are given the chance to take part in a drama club, annual productions and visits to theatres, in order to widen their understanding of drama and theatre. With its emphasis on the need to work together and the chance to explore moral issues and plays from around the world, the subject makes a positive contribution to students' personal, social, moral and cultural development.
130. Although standards have fluctuated from year to year, overall the subject has made good improvement since the last inspection.

### Media Studies

Provision for media studies is **satisfactory**.

#### Years 10 and 11

Standards

Below average

Achievement

Satisfactory

Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching promotes good learning in the subject.
- The good use of resources extends learning.
- Students need to develop critical writing skills, in order to evaluate their own practical activities better.
- More access to computer and technical equipment would increase the choice of activity.

### **Commentary**

131. Media studies is taught as a GCSE course. Although most students make satisfactory progress, standards in GCSE are below average and have declined in recent years. For a number of years, the subject was taught by non-specialists, and this no doubt has been a prime cause of below average standards. However, standards seen during the inspection were also below average.
132. Whilst more able students create good practical work with real flair and imagination, others produce work of limited appeal and originality, when bearing in mind the target audience for their advertisements, magazines and newspapers. Students' ability to evaluate their own practical efforts is much influenced by their literacy and critical skills, with many students focusing on describing the process of creation, rather than evaluating their efforts and their impact on the target audience.
133. Teaching is good, with the sole teacher of the subject providing students with a good range of practical activities. Lessons are well planned and organised, and resources are well used to promote students' technical skills. Learning in the two lessons seen was not as competent as the teaching. A number of students took a passive approach. Such attitudes did not help other students, and need to be challenged at all times.
134. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has introduced an appropriate range of documentation, and this supports teaching and learning well. The subject now benefits from a qualified specialist who is very secure in her knowledge. Although the department uses its available technical resources well, better access to computer and other facilities would enhance the course. There are few opportunities for students to broaden their understanding through visits to commercial media establishments.
135. Media studies were not reported on in the last report. It is not possible to make a judgement on improvement since the last inspection.

## Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good	Good
Management	Good	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good leadership and management.
- There is good provision for extra-curricular activities and musical productions.
- Standards in Years 9 and 11 are below average.

### Commentary

136. No students took the GCSE examination in 2002 and 2003. There is a good take-up for this course in the current Years 10 and 11.
137. Inspection evidence shows that standards are below average by Years 9 and 11. Many students enter school with variable musical experiences. However, the achievement of students is satisfactory. Students with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and other groups of students make satisfactory progress. This is due to the individual support they receive from the teacher. More musically able students make good progress, both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities.
138. By Year 9, some students show confidence in playing keyboards and understand simple musical notation. They identify different instrumental sounds and understand the off-beat rhythms in reggae music. A few students, however, show limited keyboard skills and find difficulty in accurately locating the notes. Although students understand some musical terms, they do not always make reference to these when answering questions.
139. By Year 11, some students demonstrate skills in both instrumental and vocal performance. They compose short pieces and use music technology to devise and refine their ideas. They recognise key features in extracts of music and show a knowledge of different musical styles. There are a few students, though, who have a limited musical background and weak literacy skills. They find difficulty in answering written questions about music.
140. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is secure class management and organisation, and as a result students are well behaved. Effective planning enables students to be involved in a range of activities, which increase their confidence as performers. Very occasionally, however, insufficient focus is given to the teaching of specific musical skills. The provision for developing students' literacy and numeracy skills and for students to use music technology is satisfactory. The department is in the process of increasing the number of computers.
141. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has done much to raise the profile of the subject within the school. GCSE courses are now offered and there is an increase in extra-curricular and instrumental provision. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Students have been involved in musical productions and *Calamity Jane* is planned for next year. These performances have been well received by audiences.

142. Improvement since the last inspection is good. There has been an improvement in standards by Year 9, a GCSE course has been established, and the quality of teaching is now satisfactory.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Average	Average (GCSE above average)
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	Good
Management	Good	Good

### Main Strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good, and some is very good.
- The leadership and management of physical education are good.
- The ethos for learning is good.
- Attitudes of students are almost always very good.
- The department has been successful in raising standards in examinations.
- Marking needs to inform students clearly how they are doing and how to improve.
- Activities for non-participants need to be provided.

### Commentary

143. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 show standards in line with nationally expected levels. Since the last inspection, GCSE results have improved and were above the national average for grades A\*-C this year. There are no differences in the attainment of any group of students.

144. Standards seen during the inspection confirm the assessments made by teachers, although a greater number of students than identified at the end of Year 9 are now working beyond the level achieved at that stage. Achievement is good, based on students' levels of attainment on entry to the school. The standards of older students working in their core physical education programme, based on evidence seen in theory lessons and GCSE, remain above average. There is no difference in the progress of any group of students.

145. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Where teaching is very good, learning is very good. In the best lessons teachers set high expectations, have very good subject knowledge and use a variety of helpful approaches, as seen in dance lessons in Years 7 and 8. When teachers are supporting students with individual needs, planning and evaluating by students is a feature of their work. Students are actively involved in lessons and often help other students by their understanding of skills and team play. Where learning is satisfactory, the teaching is less dynamic and does not allow students to plan to improve in the short term. The marking of written work does not provide students with enough information on how they are doing and how to improve.

146. The provision for extra-curricular sport in the school is satisfactory. The school is working to develop a range of opportunities for all students and will benefit from the National School Sports Co-ordinator programme.

147. The quality of leadership and management is good. There is a clear vision for the subject and ways to improve it have been identified. The Head of Department leads by example, especially

in teaching, and has the support of hard working staff who are highly motivated. Students know what progress they are making in the medium and long term.

148. There is a good ethos and students enjoy coming to physical education because teachers put them at the centre of the lessons. Opportunities for information and communication technology are now planned and are used well in Year 10 and 11. Accommodation on site is satisfactory. The school benefits from the use of a range of local authority facilities. The head of department is aware that schemes of work need to identify learning for individuals. The school needs to plan for a minimum of two hours physical education and sport for all students by 2006. There has been good progress since the last inspection.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social, health and citizenship education is **very good**.

	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Leadership	Very good	Very good
Management	Very good	Very good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching programmes are well matched to students' needs, which focuses their attention and interest.
- The subject celebrates cultural diversity, which enables students to understand their rights and responsibilities as good citizens.
- Well-designed displays have a powerful impact on learning.
- Very good leadership skills ensure the subject has been effectively introduced into the curriculum.
- Citizenship has been well audited to establish appropriate coverage in other subjects.

### Commentary

149. The programme for personal, social and health education is very good and is well matched to students' needs. It is well organised and taught by form tutors, supported by heads of year. It provides very good coverage of all required areas, including anti-drugs and sex education. The curriculum is enriched by specialist outside speakers, who make a very good contribution to the students' understanding of a wide range of issues.
150. Insufficient lessons were seen to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. Evidence has been collated on the basis of analysis of schemes of work and subject policies, discussions with the subject co-ordinator and with students. Further evidence was gathered from the many displays around the school and folders of students' work.
151. PSHE and citizenship are not taught as an examination subject, rather they are seen by the school as an important vehicle for students to learn the skills and understanding, which will enable them to take their place in society as good citizens.
152. The elements of citizenship are well identified in the PSHE programme. They reflect the wider aims of the school and its ethos. PSHE is taught as a separate subject in all year groups. Essential elements of citizenship are identified separately as modular units, within the schemes of work and through other subjects. Students are taught by form tutors who are supported by heads of year. The development of skills of enquiry and communication is evident in work in

students' folders. Students use a variety of methods to research and record issues, such as the internet, topic webs, flow charts, notes and short essays.

153. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The newly established co-ordinator, who has other responsibilities in school, has worked hard to conduct the necessary audit of all curriculum subjects, relate to outside agencies and to provide some briefing to teachers. A useful innovation is the clearly identified, laminated card 'statements', which act as reminders in classrooms and corridors, of issues connected with citizenship arising in other subjects.
154. Attractive and informative displays of very good quality are a feature of the school. For example, students in Years 8 and 9 history have researched the lives of prominent black people, who gained eminence through their personal integrity and brave deeds. Such heroes as Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Mary McLeod Bethune and Rosa Parkes, were identified and celebrated. Very good displays by the geography department help to raise awareness surrounding globalisation. These displays present ideas graphically and attract students' attention.
155. In the past year, the school has embarked on a lively programme of visits from outside groups and organisations, such as the police, fire service and drugs awareness agencies. Specially produced, challenging and realistic video materials, showing the consequences of unlawful, juvenile behaviour, by a young offender, speaking from his prison cell, helped to make learning more realistic and less academic. Memorable practical workshops, provided by the prison service, also enabled students to relate to harsh regimes in penal institutions and served as a reminder that good citizenship, and abiding by the rules, is not just for others.
156. Students in Year 11 appreciate the hard work of their teachers and representatives of industry, commerce and business for preparing them for work by organising mock job interviews. They have now completed their personal CVs and most say that they feel more confident about making successful applications in the near future. Student year representatives have been elected to the recently re-formed School Council, which is designed to give them insights into how democratic systems function.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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