

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **IAN RAMSEY SCHOOL**

Stockton-on-Tees

LEA area: Stockton-on-Tees

Unique reference number: 111764

Head teacher: Mr B Winter

Lead inspector: Mr B A Jones

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> May 2004

Inspection number: 258669

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

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**Terms used in this report**

*Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are at Key Stage 3, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools after Year 6. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are at Key Stage 4 of their education. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for pupils of all ages at school. In this voluntary aided Church of England school, religious education was inspected and is reported separately.*

*At the end of Year 9, pupils aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the pupils know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, pupils aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).*

*Inspectors judge the standards reached by pupils by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for pupils of the same age nationally. The pupils' achievements reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational value added over time. In this report, similar schools are defined as those having similar standards at the start of each stage of learning.*

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1257
School address:	Greens Lane Fairfield Stockton-on-Tees
Postcode:	TS18 5AJ
Telephone number:	01642 585205
Fax number:	01642 570488
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Revd A Featherstone
Date of previous inspection:	12 <sup>th</sup> October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a voluntary aided Church of England school. It is a larger than average mixed comprehensive school with 1257 pupils on roll. There are 597 boys and 660 girls. The school is housed on two separate adjacent sites. Pupils are drawn from a variety of backgrounds, but overall are above average in terms of socio-economic status. On entry, the intake varies from year to year, but overall pupils' standards are above average at this stage. The current Year 7's standards are well above average, but the current Year 11's standards were broadly average on entry. There is a larger than average proportion of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English and there are 18 pupils who receive additional funding from the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant. Nearly 10 per cent take up their eligibility for free school meals, which is broadly average. Around 15 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is average and 1.6 per cent have statements of special need, which is below average. The majority of pupils' special needs are specific learning difficulties (dyslexia), moderate learning difficulties or social, emotional or behavioural problems. The school is of a similar size to the time of the previous inspection and is usually oversubscribed.

The school has specialist Language College status. It has been granted the Investor in People Award, a Charter Mark, Sports Mark, Arts Mark and the European Award for language teaching. The school takes part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The school participates in the Excellence in Cities initiative and is involved in community provision.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18462	B. Jones	Lead inspector	
9132	J. Godfrey	Lay inspector	
30690	G. Allison	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT). Geography.
15079	A. Boys	Team inspector	Science. Child development.
22695	R. Cardinal	Team inspector	History.
4689	M. Christian	Team inspector	Art and design.
11508	C. Griffin	Team inspector	English. Drama.
20287	D Harris	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages.
12985	S. Jeffray	Team inspector	Physical education.
15678	J. Radford	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs. English as an additional language (EAL). Citizenship.
2079	T. Slack	Team inspector	Design and technology.
1340	D. Wigley	Team inspector	Music.
2626	M.Thompson	Team inspector	Community languages
8341	W. Wimshurst	Team inspector	Mathematics.

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school.** The school is led well. Teaching and learning are good and pupils are achieving well. The management of the school is satisfactory. The school provides good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is led well by the head teacher and key staff, with good support from the governing body.
- Standards overall are above average. In English, child development and the GCSE courses in information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education, pupils achieve very well and attain well above average standards.
- The provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is good overall and results in good learning. There is a significant amount of very good and excellent teaching, which inspires pupils to achieve their best.
- The formal monitoring of teaching and learning is not undertaken with enough regularity and rigour, to spread the best practice.
- The school's strong Christian ethos enhances personal development and results in positive relationships and very good behaviour in classrooms and around the school.
- The excellent links that have been forged with the local community and the very good links with other schools enhance pupils' learning.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities in sport, foreign languages and the arts enriches pupils' learning.
- Subjects across the curriculum do not make an adequate contribution to developing ICT skills.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 offers insufficient opportunities for pupils to follow vocationally based courses.

The school has shown satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in October 1998. Standards have been maintained at a level above average and pupils achieve well. The response to the issues in the last report has been satisfactory. While the school operates in the spirit of the law in terms of the quality of the assemblies it provides, it does not fully meet the requirements in the provision of a daily act of collective worship.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	B	B	A	B

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

**Achievement is good.** The examination results indicated in the table above show that this group of pupils performed better than those in similar schools. In work seen in the inspection, standards in most subjects are above average at the end of Year 9 and at the end of Year 11. Pupils achieve well in all years, including those pupils with special educational needs, pupils from minority ethnic groupings and those pupils who are gifted and talented. There are no significant differences in the results or achievement of boys and girls. Standards are below average in citizenship and pupils do not achieve as well as they should because insufficient time is devoted to the teaching of citizenship.

**Pupils' personal qualities are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Pupils' attitudes to work are good and their relationships with each

other and staff are very good. Behaviour is very good and exclusions are low. Attendance is above average and punctuality is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good.** As a result, learning is good. Teaching and learning are good in most subjects throughout Years 7 to 11. The positive qualities of good attendance, good attitudes and the very good behaviour that pupils bring to their learning are significant in their good achievement and learning. The teaching of geography and modern foreign languages is satisfactory. Specialist teaching in ICT is good, but other subjects do not make a satisfactory contribution to developing pupils' ICT skills. The school's teaching of citizenship is unsatisfactory.

The curriculum is satisfactory and mostly matches the needs and aspirations of pupils. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to follow vocational courses. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum, particularly in sport, foreign languages, drama and music. Pastoral care in the school is good because attention is given to the care and welfare of pupils. However, there are some health and safety issues that need to be remedied and the school has not yet given enough attention to risk assessment procedures. Pupils receive good, well-informed advice and guidance so that they choose subjects that best meet their choices and fit their needs within the range of courses on offer. The tracking of pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, but the support given by form tutors in providing academic guidance is inadequate. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have realistic targets to help monitor their progress effectively as they work towards GCSE examinations. The school has satisfactory links with parents, very good links with other schools and colleges and excellent links with the local community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership is good and management is satisfactory.** The head teacher provides good leadership. Leadership by other key staff is good, with a very good level of teamwork. The school's approach to special needs has developed well since the last inspection. Overall, governance is good. Governors do a very good job overall in supporting and challenging senior staff, based on a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. However, the school does not comply fully in providing an act of collective worship on a daily basis, although assemblies are of a good standard and meet the criteria for collective worship. The school has not completed fully the process of risk assessment.

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

Comments are based on those pupils and parents who responded to the questionnaires or attended the parents' meeting, supplemented by interviews held during the inspection. Parents are generally supportive of the school. Their children settle well and like school. They are pleased with the high expectations that enable their children to make good progress. Pupils like the school. They believe the teaching is good and teachers' expectations are high. A significant number of pupils state a concern about behaviour and bullying, but most are happy that reported incidents are sorted out satisfactorily.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve the provision for citizenship and ensure that statutory requirements are met in assessing and reporting the subject.
- Ensure that all subjects make a positive contribution to developing pupils' skills in using ICT.
- Widen the opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to study vocational subjects.
- Put in place better arrangements to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in all subjects.

and, to meet statutory requirements, ensure that:

- The school provides a daily act of collective worship.

- Due attention is given to the health and safety issues brought to the attention of the school and to producing risk assessments to cover the school's activities.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils' levels of attainment on joining Year 7 vary from year to year. For example, current Year 7 pupils were well above average on entry, while current Year 11 pupils were average. By the time pupils left Year 11 in 2003, their results overall were above average, reflecting good achievement. Parents are satisfied with the standards the school obtains and pupils, too, express their satisfaction with the quality of education they receive.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Year 9, standards are well above average in English and mathematics and pupils achieve well. In most other subjects pupils achieve well, other than in science, modern foreign languages and geography where achievement is satisfactory.
- In Year 11, pupils achieve well in most subjects and attain above average standards. In modern foreign languages and the non-examined course in physical education, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils achieve very well in English, child development and music and the GCSE courses in ICT and physical education.
- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in citizenship because the subject does not receive enough time.
- Pupils' levels of attendance and their very good behaviour are important factors in their good achievement.
- Pupils achieve well because of their positive response to the good teaching they receive.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34.7 (35.7)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	37.3 (35.3)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	34.7 (33.8)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 255 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

##### *Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003*

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	57 (50)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	97 (97)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	38.0 (36.6)	34.7 (34.8)

*There were 248 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average in English, mathematics and science. These pupils entered Year 7 above average and did not achieve as well as pupils in similar schools. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were well above

average. These pupils achieved well, from a starting point in Year 7 that was average and their achievement through Years 10 and 11 was better than pupils in similar schools. The rates of improvement in Year 9 and Year 11 results were in line with the trends nationally.

2. In work seen in the inspection, by the end of Year 9 standards are above average overall and pupils achieve well. In geography, art and design and physical education standards are average. In French and German, standards are average, but are below average among the few pupils studying Urdu. In science, design and technology, ICT, history and music, standards are above average. In English and mathematics, standards are well above average. Pupils achieve well in most subjects, including English and mathematics. Achievement is satisfactory in science, modern foreign languages and geography. In citizenship, pupils do not achieve as well as they should because insufficient time is given to the subject. Pupils' good achievement reflects an improvement over the results in 2003. In that year, the school's emphasis on improving GCSE results detracted from the performance of Year 9 pupils in their examinations. The school's senior managers have since remedied this by ensuring that targets are set and pursued on the basis of better quality information about pupils' prior attainment. In Year 11, standards are well above average in English, child development, and GCSE ICT and physical education. They are above average in mathematics, science, history and music. Standards are average in modern foreign languages, design and technology, geography and art and design. The core physical education course, taken by all pupils, produces average standards. When account is taken of the prior attainment of pupils taking the various subjects either as options or required courses, pupils achieve well in most subjects. In English, child development, music and the GCSE courses in ICT and physical education, they achieve very well. Only in citizenship is overall achievement unsatisfactory, and this is because pupils do not receive enough time.
3. Pupils who have special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language achieve well because of the good quality of teaching and support that they receive. Well-planned classroom support, carefully adapted tasks and effective literacy and language programmes in small group sessions enable pupils to make good progress towards their individual targets. GCSE results in 2003 showed that pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language gained accreditation in a wide range of subjects. This represents good achievement, and in several cases very good achievement, in relation to their standards on entry to the school. Pupils who are gifted and talented also achieve well. They respond well to carefully targeted teaching that extends and challenges them and to the additional range of activities that exists outside normal lesson times.
4. Standards of literacy are above average. Pupils read fluently and use a range of reading strategies such as skimming and scanning effectively to locate information efficiently. These skills are evident in the effective way pupils use research skills. Pupils throughout the school write extended pieces confidently and communicate their knowledge and understanding clearly. Speaking and listening skills are above average. Pupils' competency in mathematics is above average and enables them to use their numeracy skills effectively in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils attain above average standards in ICT because of the good quality teaching in ICT courses taught. The contribution made by other subjects is unsatisfactory. Pupils use the school computers well for individual work in the learning resource centre/library and benefit from the good extra-curricular provision.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes to work are **good**. Behaviour is **very good** and exclusions are very low. Attendance is above national averages and unauthorised absence is in line with the average. Punctuality is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Overall, the school's ethos is very good, ensuring a good level of commitment to work on the part of pupils and teachers.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are keen to be involved in the range of activities provided.
- Relationships between pupils and with teachers are very good.
- Behaviour is very good and exclusions are very low.
- A high proportion of pupils reported a concern about bullying, but most are happy that reported incidents are dealt with satisfactorily.
- The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' personal development.

## Commentary

5. Pupils learn well as a result of their good attitudes. They are interested in their work and well motivated to achieve their best. Attitudes are unsatisfactory in only very few lessons where they are related to unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils are very keen to be involved in community activities such as sports matches, charitable fund-raising activities and musical and drama performances. For example, a mixed age group produced an excellent performance for pupils in a neighbouring junior school to raise awareness of bullying issues.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	17	3
Mixed – any other White background	1	0
Black or Black British-Caribbean	4	0

6. Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. Pupils respond very well to staff's high expectations of good behaviour. Discipline is usually fair but there are some inconsistencies between staff in the use of sanctions and rewards that have been noted by pupils. Unsatisfactory behaviour occurs in only a very few lessons, where teachers' expectations of behaviour are low and management of pupils is unsatisfactory. It is often associated with temporary teachers. Exclusions are very low. The 22 fixed term exclusions and three permanent exclusions involved only 13 pupils, mainly white boys. This reflects the gender differences found nationally and the predominantly white intake of the school. There are no significant differences in the attitudes and behaviour of pupils from different groups. Pupils are honest and trustworthy. They take good care of school's property, but much litter is strewn around the grounds at break times. There is some abuse of the toilet facilities, which are unsatisfactory.
7. Relationships across the school are very good and pupils work well together in mixed groups. New pupils in Year 7 appreciate the support they receive from older pupils when they first arrive in school. Older pupils support learning by listening to Year 7 pupils read. However, more than half of pupils are concerned about bad behaviour and bullying in school. The school has good procedures to raise awareness of bullying and the vast majority of parents and pupils are happy that reported incidents are sorted out satisfactorily. No harassment was observed during the inspection, but a few Year 7 pupils reported ongoing difficulties. Relationships between pupils from different ethnic groups are good and reflect the harmonious relationships found in the school.

8. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language usually have good attitudes towards their work. They are fully integrated in classes and most of them behave well. Pupils who benefited from the paired reading programme when they came into the school usually become tutors to younger pupils.
9. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good, and reflects the strong Christian ethos of the school community. Each year group has its own chaplain, including one from the Baptist church. Daily assemblies present powerful spiritual messages, and address pupils at an appropriate level. Members of the 'Youth for Christ' arts group, for example, engaged the full attention of pupils in assemblies during the inspection. The music and drama departments contribute very strongly to the spiritual dimension of the school through performances in the school, in churches in the community, and in Durham Cathedral. Very effective spiritual elements were observed in English, science, food technology, music and drama lessons during the week.
10. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' moral development, and this leads to a very orderly, caring community in which pupils respect each other and the teachers. Pupils use opportunities through the school council to effectively voice their opinions. Each year group takes responsibility for raising money for charity, and large sums are collected. Moral aspects were addressed in geography and physical education lessons during the inspection, and a persuasive presentation on bullying was presented in a feeder school assembly by drama pupils from this school. Members of the school community who run the tuck shop are very conscious of Fair Trade, and this influences what they choose to sell. Pupils have very good social awareness, and understand the responsibilities of living and working in a community. Year 10 pupils, notably, undertake work in local homes for the elderly, and help in feeder primary schools. The same pupils have adopted, and sponsor, a child in another country. Strong social development is fostered through the Language College, and extensive contacts exist with, and visits are made to, other countries. Pupils' cultural development is very good. Within the religious education programme, serious studies are made of Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. Art programmes include a focus on African culture and Twentieth Century pop culture of western civilisation. Within music lessons, pupils study the music of Africa, India and Indonesia, and adopt the features of that music to create compositions of their own.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	6.8
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.6
National data	1.1

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

11. The school continues to maintain above average levels of attendance. Unauthorised absence is in line with national averages. The school is not complacent about its good attendance and successfully strives to improve it year on year. Telephone contact on the first day of absence encourages good attendance. Punctuality is satisfactory, but a few pupils are late to registration both in the mornings and the afternoons and there is some slippage of time between lesson changeovers when there is no break. The good attendance, allied to pupils' positive attitudes, helps to promote the good ethos in the school where hard work and effort are valued. However, a small number of pupils studying child development do not achieve as well as they should because of unsatisfactory attendance. Parents appreciate the need for good attendance and most avoid taking holidays during term time. Registration procedures are good, but the use of registration time to enhance pupils' learning and personal development is variable.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education. The quality of teaching and pastoral care are good. The curriculum and the use of assessment are satisfactory. There are satisfactory links with parents.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching is good and leads to good learning. Pupils' positive approach to learning is a significant factor in their good achievement.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in most subjects and across the full age range.
- There is a significant element of very good and excellent teaching in the school.
- The very good match of teachers to the curriculum capitalises on the teachers' high degree of subject specialist knowledge.
- Learning is good because of the positive qualities pupils bring to their studies seen in good attendance, positive attitudes and their very good behaviour.
- In some subjects, the marking of pupils' work does not give them enough information on how they can improve.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 131 lessons.

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
9 (7)	40 (31)	51 (39)	27 (21)	4 (3)	0	0

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

### Commentary

12. In Years 7 to 9, teaching is good in nearly all subjects. This consistency, along with some excellent teaching, capitalises on pupils' positive attitudes and very good behaviour to ensure that good learning takes place in most lessons. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is also good and uses the pupils' good levels of determination to succeed in their examinations to challenge and stretch them. Teachers' expectations are set suitably high and they demand a great deal. These qualities are appreciated by parents and pupils.
13. There is a significant amount of very good teaching and some teaching that is outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers are adventurous in their approach and use a variety of styles very effectively to engage pupils and to stretch and demand the very best of them. In such lessons, pupils' behaviour is excellent and no time is lost to disciplining pupils because there is a common purpose to the lesson that allows teachers to teach without interruption.
14. Teachers have a good level of subject expertise and they are deployed effectively to ensure that there is a very good match between their expertise and the teaching they undertake. They augment this with a secure knowledge of the examination demands in their subjects. Teachers structure their lessons carefully, basing their preparation on the planning recommended in the Key Stage 3 strategy. They plan lessons effectively and generally set homework in a satisfactory manner to extend the work of the classroom. However, too much marking is cursory or mundane and does not give pupils enough information about how they may improve their work further.

15. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and encourage positive relationships between pupils. The result is a good working atmosphere in nearly all classrooms where achievement is valued and pupils want to learn. Characteristically, pupils work hard and the atmosphere in lessons is one where pupils can be trusted to work independently. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to work in pairs and groups. Only rarely is the behaviour of pupils unsatisfactory, and where teachers do not cope well on such occasions, the learning is unsatisfactory and pupils do not make enough progress in lessons.
16. Most teachers are careful to require pupils to use the technical language of their subject, for example in question and answer sections to lessons. In the best lessons, pupils learn well from each other because they listen carefully. Thus in question and answer activities, pupils will take on the response of another, and add their own contribution.
17. While the teaching of ICT is good by the specialist teachers of the subject, the contribution made by teachers in other subjects is inadequate overall. There are exceptions to this, but the lack of a consistent approach is unsatisfactory. In contrast, the very good learning resource centre/library is used to good effect in encouraging pupils towards a greater independence in their learning. Pupils appreciate the good facility and use it well.
18. A feature that promotes the good learning that takes place is the respect that exists between teachers and their pupils. Most teachers take good account of the needs of all pupils and adapt the work to meet them, especially those with special educational needs, the highest attainers and pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. As a result, these different groups of pupils achieve well, in common with their peers. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language usually learn successfully because teachers know how to match their teaching styles and learning materials effectively to pupils' different requirements. Pupils receiving support in the classroom achieve well. This is because the learning support assistants work closely with subject teachers in the planning and resourcing of the lesson, so they can adapt the tasks to pupils' particular needs and give individual help when necessary. Teachers and support staff know their pupils very well, and the good relationships developed over time have a very positive impact on pupils' achievement. In most subjects, pupils with special educational needs are helped by regular marking, which identifies strengths and weaknesses and gives clear advice on how to improve. Pupils who are new to English benefit from the skilled help of staff from the local multi-lingual education service. The Excellence in Cities initiative has led to more targeted teaching of the highest attaining pupils, and their examination results have improved steadily over the past three years as a result.

### **The quality of assessment of pupils' work**

19. Overall, assessment is satisfactory. The school now collects and collates a large amount of relevant data about pupils' attainment on entry to the school. Year 6 national test results and other data are used to place pupils into groups early in Year 7 and targets are set for pupils for the end of Year 9. These are reviewed at the end of each year. The data is available for teachers on the school's network but teachers are not yet using the data as effectively as they might to plan for individual pupils' needs or to set subject-specific targets for pupils. Not enough opportunity is provided for the involvement of pastoral staff in monitoring pupils' academic progress. For example, form tutors' contribution to reviewing pupils' academic progress is unsatisfactory. Good procedures are in place in many subjects to support pupils' achievement. However, they do not always give pupils enough information about what they must do to improve their work to reach higher levels.

### **The curriculum**

The range of learning opportunities provided by the curriculum is satisfactory. Activities provided for curriculum enrichment are very good. The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is very good. Accommodation and resources are both satisfactory overall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities including sport, foreign languages and the arts which enriches pupils' learning.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities to study different languages.
- Whole-school initiatives to enhance ICT provision are a developing strength, but subjects across the curriculum do not make an adequate contribution to developing ICT skills.
- The provision for special educational needs is good.
- The provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 offers insufficient opportunities for pupils to follow vocationally based courses.

## Commentary

20. The school's status as a church school and its designation as a Language College both have a significant impact on pupils' experiences. Designation as a church school significantly enhances the school's ethos and pupils' spiritual enrichment with, for example, chaplains assigned to year groups and opportunities to celebrate communion. The school does not fully comply with the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship, but school assemblies are regular and of good quality. Pupils' experience of foreign languages is enhanced both by the breadth of opportunities to learn different languages and by the very wide range of opportunities to gain experience of other cultures.
21. The majority of curriculum issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed. The amount of teaching time has been increased. It is now just above recommendations for Years 7 to 9, and just below recommendations for Years 10 and 11. Provision for ICT is better with a core course now in place throughout the curriculum, although provision within subjects is still an area of weakness. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision, including the involvement of governors, are better. Curricular links with feeder schools, provision for special needs, provision for enrichment and timetabling have all improved. Provision for citizenship, introduced since the last inspection, is unsatisfactory.
22. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced with all the subjects of the National Curriculum provided as well as religious education and personal, social and health education. Drama adds further breadth in Year 7 although not in Years 8 and 9. Citizenship is delivered across the curriculum, but provision is not monitored and does not fully meet statutory requirements. All pupils take two modern foreign languages in Year 9 with the majority following a vocational course in one of the two languages taken.
23. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. There is a broad range of opportunities in both languages and science. The great majority of pupils take two languages with the majority of those following a vocational course in one and a smaller proportion taking two full GCSEs. Some pupils take one language and a few study three. Pupils can choose to study three separate sciences or dual award or single award science. Some GCSE courses are taught outside the school day and this enhances choice for some pupils including those who are gifted and talented. Extra classes are provided in some subjects for pupils judged to be underachieving. Opportunities to follow courses that have a vocational emphasis are too limited. This in turn limits opportunities for further progression. College links in this respect are very limited. Arrangements between the school and some work placement providers result in some important lessons being missed. Vocational provision through personal, social and health education and the work experience programme is good. The allocation of time to citizenship is insufficient to meet the requirements of the course followed.

24. Provision to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is good. Measures to improve site access were informed by an audit, assisted by a wheelchair user. Specific provision has been made to meet the needs of particular groups, for example Urdu is offered as a choice. Some older pupils benefit from 'New Start', a programme of extended work placement designed to support pupils who find difficulty in conforming to school routines. The achievement of different groups of pupils is carefully monitored. The extra classes provided for pupils who are judged to be underachieving have been effective, for example in addressing boys' underachievement in some subjects. Gender setting is used effectively in modern languages and ICT to meet the needs of particular groups. Extra challenge is provided for gifted and talented pupils through the provision of additional GCSE classes and specific activities within the enrichment programme. However, the limited vocational provision limits access and opportunity for some pupils.
25. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils are taught almost entirely in classes with other pupils and benefit from effective grouping arrangements and very good classroom support. Well-planned small group sessions and workshops help pupils to improve their literacy, numeracy and language skills. There is a very good match of support staff to the curriculum. Accommodation and resources for these pupils are good. The reading room is a cheerful and well-equipped area in which pupils feel at home, and good use is made of ICT software for literacy. The school makes good provision for pupils identified as gifted and talented, and has benefited in this respect from funding supplied by the Excellence in Cities initiative. As well as good planning to meet their needs in classrooms, the school provides very good opportunities outside the classroom to stretch and challenge these pupils and to raise their aspirations.
26. Curriculum development is satisfactory. ICT developments at the whole school level are having a growing impact on developing teaching methods and independent learning. A number of initiatives are under way including development of the school website and the use of interactive whiteboards. 'SAM' learning (self-assessment and marking) has been successfully introduced and provides very good opportunities to work independently on line. Over three quarters of pupils in Years 9 and 10 and the great majority of pupils in Year 11 have used the facility. Pupils' hours of use are well above national and local averages. The development of vocational education is piecemeal and lacks an overall strategy for incorporating vocational provision into the curriculum and developing links with other providers. The programme of personal and social education is good.
27. The very good range and quality of enrichment of the formal curriculum are strengths of the school. Study support is very good. Extra classes outside the school day enhance choice, boost achievement and provide extra challenge for gifted and talented pupils. The school has been awarded both Sportsmark and Artsmark. The impact of Language College status is striking. In the past year the very diverse programme has included an extensive visit and exchange programme, an eastern cultures event, languages clubs (for five languages), cross-curricular language days, worship in European languages, and e-mail links with schools in seven countries. The programme includes an extensive range of activities involving other local schools, and activities that involve local business and the community.
28. In sport there is also a very wide range of activities, with recreational and competitive activities equally strong. Just over a half of all girls and just under a half of all boys regularly take part in one activity each week. More than 50 teams represent the school at local, county and national level. Drama and music are both very strong features of enrichment. In drama there are regular major school productions, regular contributions to worship, and a busy programme of theatre visits and visits from drama groups. In music there is regular involvement in worship including both local churches and Durham Cathedral and a very full programme of other activities involving various choral and instrumental groups including concert performances for

a variety of audiences. The church status of the school adds a distinctive quality of spiritual enrichment to the provision overall.

29. Overall, the match of teachers and their subject qualification to the curriculum is very good. The school does not always attract sufficient high quality applicants for posts, and governors and the head teacher have recently had difficulty in recruiting staff for mathematics and German. The match of support staff to the curriculum is very good. Technical staff undertake a valuable role in assisting and supporting the teaching of the curriculum. The secretarial and site management staff make a significant contribution to the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. It has been improved significantly since the previous inspection to include a very good learning resource centre/library and very good accommodation for design and technology. There are still some weaknesses, most strikingly in music and to a lesser degree in modern foreign languages and physical education. Resources are adequate overall. Most departments have enough books and equipment for the requirements of the National Curriculum. Resources are particularly good for teaching child development. Although the ICT department is reasonably well provided for, there are insufficient computers in most other departments to support pupils' learning in ICT, and provision of computer equipment in design and technology is inadequate.

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

The school takes satisfactory care of pupils' welfare, health and safety. Staff provide good pastoral support. The advice and guidance based on effective monitoring are good and have a positive impact on achievement. The school takes very good account of pupils' views and involves them in its work and development through the school council.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff take due care of pupils' safety, but formal risk assessments are incomplete and a number of minor health and safety issues have been brought to the attention of the school.
- Induction arrangements for new pupils are good and ease pupils' transition into the school.
- Pupils find staff supportive, but the role of form tutors in tracking academic progress is underdeveloped.
- Good advice is provided on post-14 and post-16 options in relation to careers.
- High quality support is given to individual pupils with special educational needs.

### **Commentary**

30. Procedures for dealing with pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory overall. First aid procedures are good and there is good support from the school welfare assistant and councillor. There are good procedures to deal with child protection issues. Good heed is paid to pupils' safety in lessons and on visits out of school. It is unsatisfactory that there are no general whole-school risk assessments. A number of minor health and safety issues have been brought to the attention of the school. Internet service provision is safe and secure. Pupils are concerned about the choice of food on offer in the canteen but many of them do not select the healthier option. Biscuits and sweets are the favoured breakfast purchase. There is too little choice for vegetarians. There are currently too few toilets to serve the number of pupils on the south site and they are in an unsatisfactory condition.
31. Pastoral procedures are good and support the needs of individual pupils well. Induction arrangements are good because of the very good links established with local primary schools. As a result, pupils settle well into school. Most pupils find staff approachable for help and advice, especially heads of year and form tutors. With a few exceptions, pupils enjoy good and

supportive relationships with their form tutors. The school chaplains have a high profile in guiding pupils and in promoting spiritual, moral and social development.

32. The school gives very good care, guidance and support to pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language. The systems for identifying and providing support for pupils in need of extra help are very efficient, and individual education plans give clear information on particular needs and targets for improvement. The total commitment of the support staff and the concern they show for the well-being of their pupils are strengths of the school. The department's very good partnership with the local health and area support services enables pupils to benefit promptly from specialist care and support when necessary.
33. The use of registration time is variable, but in most cases enhances pupils' learning and personal development well through the 'theme for the week'. Tutors track pupils' personal development in form time and through planners but do not maintain an overview of academic progress which is only monitored within individual subjects for the bulk of the year. Plans are well advanced to introduce a form of monitoring that will enable staff to have a better oversight of academic progress in relation to personal development. Pupils have a high involvement in on-line assessment that enables them to assess their own learning and has a good impact on achievement. They have a good idea of how well they are doing in relation to national expectations. The learning mentor provides good support for selected pupils and has a good impact on their achievement in Year 11.
34. Form tutors play an important role in supporting personal development through the teaching of personal, social and health education. This provides a comprehensive programme to guide pupils through school choices and prepares them well for life after school. It is well supported by outside visitors. The careers programme is good and supported well by the Connexions service. Pupils in Year 11 do a week of useful work experience, which is enhanced by the school's excellent links with the community.
35. The school takes very good account of pupils' views both informally and through the school council which has an input to the school improvement plan. Most pupils feel that staff listen to them and respect their views. Members of the council were involved in the appointment process for the new head teacher. They have had an impact on many aspects of the school including the refurbishment of toilets, school meals and the content of planners.

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

The school has satisfactory links with parents. There are excellent links with the community and very good links with other schools, colleges and universities.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents like the school and it is usually oversubscribed.
- The use of pupils' planners to communicate with parents is variable.
- Procedures for dealing with parental concerns and complaints are unsatisfactory.
- Parents provide good support for their children's education.
- There are excellent links with the local and wider community to broaden pupils' experiences and enhance learning.
- Very good links with primary schools ease transition to secondary school and support pupils' learning in modern foreign languages well.

### **Commentary**

36. The school has satisfactory links with parents that enable parents to support pupils' education. Views expressed at the parents' meeting were contradictory, but generally supportive. Parents consider this to be a good school, where high expectations enable their children to make good progress. They are pleased with the way their children settle in school. A significant number of parents are concerned about behaviour. This was found to be very good with very few examples of unsatisfactory behaviour, usually related to temporary teachers or low expectations of behaviour.
37. The school provides satisfactory information to parents. The governing body's annual report to parents and the prospectus are informative, but the governors' report omits information on the action plan from the last Ofsted report and on matters arising from the previous meeting. It has no national comparative data for tests at the end of Key Stage 3. The prospectus does not contain a summary of the special educational needs policy nor national comparative data for GCSEs and Key Stage 3 assessment results. The use of pupils' planners to communicate with parents is variable. The best examples are used rigorously by pupils to record homework and are regularly checked by both tutors and parents, who occasionally use them to communicate with each other.
38. The school has an effective partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs, and parents are generally pleased with their children's achievement. Partnerships with parents of pupils with English as an additional language are satisfactory. They are strengthened through the home visits made by members of the local multi-lingual education service.
39. Parents would like more information on how their children are getting on and how they can help their children at home. A significant number of parents are concerned about the use of homework. It is used satisfactorily to reinforce and extend the work in the classroom. The vast majority of parents support their children's learning well at home by providing computers and Internet access. Annual reports are satisfactory. The format is good, but in many instances the targets for improvement are vague and unhelpful. The best examples give targets specific to the subject. It is unsatisfactory that there is no report on citizenship. Attendance at consultation meetings is high. Parents also enjoy sport, music and drama performances.
40. Procedures for dealing with parental concerns and complaints are unsatisfactory. Most parents are comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems, but complaints procedures are not widely published and the school keeps no record of complaints. A high proportion feel the school takes insufficient account of their suggestions and concerns. A significant number of parents feel the school does not adequately seek their views. This is mostly done informally. Parental attendance at governing body annual meetings is very low. A small band of parents support the school association which makes a positive contribution to the social and financial life of the school.
41. Excellent links with the local and wider community enhance pupils' learning and personal development and are a strength of the school. Links forged through Language College status are particularly strong and contribute very positively to pupils' achievement. A wide range of visitors to school and frequent high-quality extra-curricular and residential visits enrich provision. A very good range of useful work experience placements is found locally for pupils in Year 11. The local community makes good use of school facilities. Excellent links with local churches support personal development very well. Pupils have a very good awareness of the responsibilities of living in a community through a community awareness programme within personal, social and health education. They support local and national charities well and they entertain the local elderly at Christmas and Harvest Festival.
42. The school has very good links with other schools and colleges, which are enhanced by its Language College status. Excellent pastoral and very good curriculum links with primary schools raise attainment and improve school development. Staff teach Spanish and the

'Olympic Games' project supports literacy, numeracy, science, modern foreign languages, ICT and geography in primary schools. Management arrangements for the linked provision are very good. Several primary schools regularly use the school's facilities such as the learning resource centre/library and the swimming pool. Year 7 pupils are forging electronic links with Year 6 to ease their transition to the school in September. Transfer mechanisms from primary schools are effective and pupils' familiarity with the site helps them settle very well.

### Example of outstanding practice

*An example of the excellent links the school has forged with primary schools. A weekly Spanish lesson taught to a group of Year 6 pupils by an advanced skills teacher as part of Language College outreach.*

Pupils have been awaiting their weekly session of Spanish with keen anticipation; they are bright-eyed and eager, all ears and raised hands from start to finish. The teacher skilfully warms them up with a quick-fire session eliciting lots of information about themselves, their pets, family, houses etc, establishing success from the outset. Their recall is impressive, as is their pronunciation – some of them sound almost Spanish! They lap up the new words for weather which the teacher presents using a colourful overhead transparency and, with subtle prompting, a few abler pupils use their knowledge of English to deduce the meaning of such expressions as *hace sol*. "Parasol", calls out one boy, "it must be to do with the sun!" Nevertheless, hardly a word of English is used throughout, yet somehow they understand because teacher uses mime, facial expression and other tricks to avoid it. A snappy game of noughts and crosses consolidates the new language enjoyably. The teacher keeps his *piece de resistance* to the end, as a reward for hard work, and tells them that the Spanish children they have recently written to have replied through their teacher to say they are really impressed with their Spanish and are going to reply soon.

All pupils are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to study a foreign language in Year 7 and for some this represents a significant step in easing transition into the secondary sector.

42. There are very good links with other secondary schools that support achievement in modern foreign languages and physical education in particular but also enhance spiritual and social development. Pupils attend diocesan events with other church schools and there is a wide range of good quality sporting fixtures with other secondary schools. The very good links with sixth form colleges and further education colleges offer pupils good post-16 choices. Stockton sixth form students mentor Year 10 pupils. College links have not yet been used to enhance pupils' vocational education opportunities or work-related learning. Very good links with universities raise pupils' aspirations. The school makes an effective contribution to the training of teachers.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is led well. The head teacher's good leadership, well supported by governors and a very strong team of senior managers, has ensured the continued improvement and educational direction of this effective school. Management is satisfactory. Overall, governance is good. Governors play an effective part in the school's development, but there are issues of non-compliance in the school's management of risk assessment and in providing a daily act of collective worship.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Through good recruitment and delegation, the head teacher has created a very strong team of senior managers.
- Good short-term planning – the result of widespread consultation with staff and governors – has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school lacks a longer-term strategic plan.
- Subject and pastoral areas are led well. In English, design and technology, ICT, physical education, music and special educational needs, leadership is very good. It is excellent in child development.
- The governing body is very effective at holding the school to account through support of and challenge to the senior management.
- The quality of teaching and learning is not systematically and rigorously monitored and evaluated to capitalise on the best practice that exists.
- The school collects data very efficiently and increasingly is using it to good effect to analyse what it has to do to improve further.
- Target setting is not precise enough and the form tutors' role in monitoring pupils' progress is not developed well enough.

## Commentary

43. The head teacher and his strong team of senior managers share a clear vision for the school. At the heart of this vision is the personal and academic development of pupils within a caring, Christian framework. In this the school is notably successful. Through openness and consultation the school's leaders have ensured that staff and pupils are included and equally valued, respecting their individual needs and ethnic heritage. Beyond the academic curriculum the school offers a very rich menu of activities, which invite and succeed in obtaining strong participation. The status of Language College has allowed the school to establish even stronger links with other schools and the community at large. The school has a tolerant and enabling culture that builds confidence and self-esteem.
44. The deputy and assistant head teachers form a very strong team providing good leadership and whole-hearted support for the head teacher. Roles are clear and well defined, although tasks are not always evenly spread among the team. Senior staff are good role models and have a strong, approachable presence around the school. Good links between them and middle managers are well established and ensure frequent dialogue and good communication. Through these links, and an annual review of examination results and performance, heads of subject areas are held to account for pupils' achievement. Together with very good training and professional development of staff, these measures have led to effective leadership in these middle managers who have become more self-evaluating as a result. Leadership is very good in English, design and technology, ICT, physical education, music and special educational needs. It is excellent in child development.
45. Governance is good overall. Governors take an active role in the leadership of the school and make a positive contribution to the decisions that are taken that help to shape the vision and direction of the school. The regular reporting that takes place ensures that governors have good quality information on which to draw that puts them in a good position to hold the school to account for the standards and quality produced. Governors can and do act as critical friends to the school, both challenging and supporting senior staff very effectively. Governors have not ensured that the school fully meets the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. The school is effective in meeting the spirit of the law in that assemblies are conducted regularly and they are very good and fully meet statutory requirements. It is in the letter of the law that the school does not comply because there is not a daily act of collective worship.

There are some omissions from the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents, and whole-school risk assessments need to be put in place.

46. The process of planning for the short and medium term is clearly defined and very consultative. By the end of it, all interested parties, including parents and pupils as well as staff and governors, have had an opportunity of helping to shape the school's direction. A major participant in this process is the management forum, consisting of senior staff and middle managers, which is a powerhouse of ideas and an effective bridge between different interests on the staff body. The key aim of this planning, mirrored in plans from subject areas, is the raising of pupils' achievement through enhanced teaching and learning. The relatively high proportion of very good and excellent teaching seen during the inspection testifies to the success of these aims. In contrast to this strong short-term planning, however, the school does not have a coherent strategy that takes a long view or articulates its aspirations for the future.
47. The school is managed satisfactorily. There are good systems and strategies in place to guide its progress and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives taken in terms of their impact on raising standards. The school gathers data very efficiently and increasingly is using the data well to analyse its performance and to compare with other like institutions to ensure that standards, costings and the quality of its provision are as high as they should be. As yet, the data is not used effectively to produce targets for pupils that are sufficiently precise to monitor their progress in detail. This is an area where the school has well-formulated planning in place, but the impact has yet to be seen. The place of the form tutors in the academic monitoring of pupils is not established and their contribution in this respect is inadequate.
48. The head teacher and other managers have a good level of awareness of the importance of curricular innovation. Leaders provide good role models for other staff and pupils, and parents and pupils are positive about the manner in which the school is led and managed. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching have taken place mainly through the performance management process, supplemented by some additional monitoring by the senior management team. This has worked with limited success and the quality of teaching is good. The senior managers have identified the need to improve teaching further by identifying and spreading the very good and sometimes excellent practice that exists. However, the school is not yet in a position where heads of department can regularly monitor practice in their departments with sufficient rigour to ensure weaknesses are tackled and best practice is spread.
49. The school leadership successfully promotes equal opportunities and full inclusivity. The school has an equal opportunities policy and policies on dealing with racial discrimination and ensuring racial equality. The special educational needs department is very well led and managed. There is a very clear sense of purpose and a very effective team has been created to cater for pupils with a wide range of needs, including English as an additional language. Statutory requirements in relation to pupils with statements of special educational need are met, and the specific grants are used well for their designated purposes. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in that the number of support staff has been increased and pupils are generally achieving well. Provision for pupils from minority ethnic groups is good. Close analysis of academic information allows the school to make additional provision for those who need it. The progress of pupils is closely monitored to ensure that they achieve according to their ability and those with English as a second language make the same progress as their peers. The provision for pupils who are identified as gifted and talented is a growing strength in the school. As a result, and because this area is well co-ordinated and led, the results of this group of pupils have improved over the past three years and they achieve well.

50. The school has taken a positive approach to performance management and procedures are satisfactory. These are fully implemented and are making a positive impact on the standards of teaching and learning. There are very good and effective procedures in place for supporting the professional development of teachers. Priority is given to the training needs associated with the school improvement plan, departmental plans and those needs identified as a result of performance management reviews. The induction of staff new to the school is excellent. All new staff are invited to a wide-ranging programme of meetings on relevant whole-school topics. In addition, newly qualified teachers receive excellent mentoring, support and guidance within departments and from senior managers. The school is also an excellent provider of initial teacher training.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3866995	Balance from previous year	25178
Total expenditure	3840543	Balance carried forward to the next	51629
Expenditure per pupil	3028.82		

51. Financial planning and management are very good. The principles of best value are applied meticulously. Specific funds are used appropriately; for example, the funding from the Excellence in Cities initiative has been used effectively to raise the achievement of gifted and talented pupils. Planning procedures ensure that educational priorities are costed carefully and there are effective systems in place to ensure that the school consults and compares to gain best value in its spending.

# 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

The provision for English is **good**.

Aspect	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in Years 9 and 11.
- The leadership of the subject is very good and teamwork is very strong.
- Overall, teaching is good and very good in Years 10 and 11.
- The challenge to higher attainers is very good in Years 10 and 11 but not as rigorous in Years 7 to 9.
- The arrangements for using ICT are unsatisfactory.
- Management of the subject is good but some aspects of monitoring teaching and learning require improvement.

#### Commentary

##### Examination results

52. Results in the end of Year 9 national tests in 2003 were above average. They were not as high as in each of the previous three years when results were well above average. However, with the exception of 2003, pupils have done better than expected during the last four years, indicating typically good achievement. In GCSE English, the proportion gaining grades A\*-C was well above average. The overall grade for all pupils was one grade higher than in most schools. Pupils did significantly better than might have been expected. GCSE results were broadly average in drama, above average in literature and well above average in media studies. This is good achievement since these subjects receive less taught time than in most schools.

##### Standards and achievement

53. In the current Years 9 and 11, standards are well above average. Achievement is good in Year 9 and very good in Year 11. Standards in Year 9 have returned to the school's usual level because more pupils reveal in writing and reading the level of skills associated with Level 6 or higher. Typically, pupils write accurately. Their writing is well organised and clearly expressed. They use a good range of effective vocabulary and adapt their style suitably to match the requirements of different types of writing. They read fluently and can identify different layers of meaning and purposes in a text. Nevertheless, the proportion reaching the very highest standards in Year 9 is lower than the proportion reaching the very highest standards in Year 11. Here, the achievement of all pupils benefits from some very challenging teaching and expectations. Coursework in Year 11 shows more pupils, of all attainments, revelling in the

opportunities to respond to demanding texts and rigorous assignments. In both Years 9 and 11 the proportion not reaching expected standards is significantly lower than in most schools. However, despite weaknesses in accuracy, pupils' achievement matches that of other pupils through gains in more assured extended writing. Speaking and listening standards are well above average throughout the school. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good. They benefit from: very effective partnerships between teachers and support staff; well-prepared support materials; and the teachers' successful strategy of ensuring these pupils participate fully in lessons.

### **Teaching and learning**

54. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are very good in Years 10 and 11 where challenge is stronger. Some outstanding lessons were observed, characterised by excellent opportunities for pupils to explore their own responses to texts independently and collaboratively. However, typically in lessons, there was an overuse of questions that limited opportunities for personal responses and open discussion. The teachers' very good subject knowledge helps pupils make significant gains in writing and reading skills and ensures they are well prepared for assessment. High expectations by teachers and encouragement, together with very good teacher-pupil relationships, result in very good attitudes on the part of the pupils. A broad range of learning methods leads to pupils working well, both independently and collaboratively. Marking is very good so pupils are clear about their strengths and weaknesses. Frequent, accurate use of grades and levels ensures pupils know clearly how well they are doing. Very challenging texts, discussions and assignments result in the higher attainers' very good progress in Years 10 and 11. The challenge for these pupils is less rigorous in Years 7 to 9. Lessons are usually fast paced and purposeful. Teachers' high level of competence in teaching media studies leads to good opportunities for the development of numeracy skills. However, the arrangements for the development of ICT skills are unsatisfactory. Teachers and pupils do not have enough access to ICT equipment.

### **Leadership and management**

55. The head and second in department provide very good subject leadership. Consequently the department is a very supportive team sharing a commitment to raising standards further. Departmental management is good with some effective self-evaluation procedures. Achievement during Years 10 and 11 benefits from smaller class sizes. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not systematic. Despite strengths in assessment arrangements, centralised and consistent systems for using data to set targets and to monitor progress are not in place. There has been good progress since the previous inspection. Teachers are deployed much better so shared classes are no longer an issue. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is consistently very effective. Standards are higher. The teachers have worked hard and creatively to improve the appearance of the English rooms.

### **English language and literacy across the curriculum**

56. Standards of literacy are above average. Pupils read fluently and use a range of reading strategies such as skimming and scanning effectively to locate information efficiently. A well-structured library skills course for Year 7 pupils leads to them acquiring effective research skills. The book borrowing rate is also high and has increased dramatically during recent years since the arrival of a new co-ordinator for the learning resource centre/library. Pupils throughout the school write extended pieces confidently and communicate their knowledge and understanding clearly. Speaking and listening skills are above average and pupils receive many opportunities to use talk to organise their thinking. Those pupils with weaker language skills receive very effective support. There is an effective paired reading scheme, organised by a classroom assistant, when Year 9 pupils tutor Year 7 pupils.
57. The school has a sound policy for the development of literacy. A new co-ordinator has been appointed to lead initiatives and to evaluate their impact. This is a good strategic appointment aimed to promote consistency of provision. Although there are strengths in subjects such as

history and music in terms of a deliberate approach to the development of literacy skills, opportunities are not consistently addressed in some areas such as mathematics, geography, ICT and physical education.

### Drama

58. Drama was also sampled. Results in GCSE drama, 2003, were broadly average. Pupils have less taught time for GCSE drama than pupils in most schools. Two lessons were observed during the inspection: one excellent and one very good. Year 10 pupils conveyed emotional intensity with great control and conviction. Year 7 pupils worked at a very high standard. They are making excellent progress in the development of technical skills such as voice projection, gesture, characterisation and movement. There is no taught drama in Years 8 and 9, which undermines the opportunity to build on the strong introduction to drama that the pupils receive in Year 7. The subject is very well led and makes a very good contribution to the extra-curricular life of the school.

### Media studies

59. GCSE media studies is taught by members of the English department. No lessons were observed during the inspection. Results in the 2003 GCSE examination were well above the national average. The entry rate is also well above the national average. Achievement is very good given the subject receives less taught time than in most schools.

### Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages (French, German and Spanish) is **satisfactory**.

Aspect	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Much of the teaching in all three languages is good and pupils in Years 7 and 8 are learning well and attaining above average standards as a result.
- Standards of speaking and listening in foreign languages are underdeveloped in Years 9 and 10.
- Pupils benefit greatly from the Language College's very rich provision of extra-curricular activities and its excellent links with local schools and the community.
- The department does not routinely share its best practice through the monitoring and mutual observation of teaching and learning.

### Commentary

60. The modern languages department has suffered in recent years from a high turnover of staff, which until recently had taken its toll on the morale and achievement of many pupils. This came out, for example, in the disappointing results in the past two years' GCSE examinations, especially in German. Up to this point, the improvement since the last inspection was unsatisfactory. This legacy remains in the standards of speaking and listening of many pupils in Years 9 and 10, which are lower than their standards in reading and writing. However, the

department is now much more stable than it was and there are many clear signs of improvement, particularly in the keenness and good achievement of pupils in Years 7 and 8.,

### **Examination results**

61. In 2003 nearly all pupils took examinations in two, and a few in three, foreign languages. GCSE results in French were similar to the national average and pupils did as well as in their other subjects. In German, however, results were below average and many pupils underachieved. Girls did better than boys in both languages and by a greater margin than nationally. Lower attaining pupils achieved well by gaining at least a grade G in their first foreign language.

### **Standards and achievement**

62. In Year 9, standards in the first language are average. Achievement is satisfactory and pupils have made a good start in their second language. Standards of reading and writing are better than they are in speaking and listening. Many pupils in this year lost momentum because of disruptions in staffing and even now many of them have more than one teacher for the same language. Because of this, pupils are more reluctant to speak in the foreign language than to read and write it. The best standards are in Years 7 and 8 where pupils speak with real confidence and fluency, understanding well the French and German used by their teachers. In these years all pupils are achieving well.
63. During the inspection week there were no Year 11 lessons. However, scrutiny of Year 11 coursework reveals that standards of writing in all three languages are above average and promise well for the GCSE results in 2004. This represents an improvement over the results of 2003 and reflects the improvements in staffing. It also reflects satisfactory achievement for this group of pupils when account is taken of their prior attainment. Standards in Year 10 are average overall, though higher attainers produce written work that is well above average. The large majority of pupils are achieving satisfactorily considering that they are nearly all studying two languages either for GCSE or a business language qualification. In Spanish, taken by a small number of pupils as a third language, standards are still below average because pupils have only studied the language for one year. They are making good progress and achieving well. Standards in reading and writing are relatively strong because pupils have good practice in these skills, including through frequent use of ICT. It is in the quality of speaking and listening, however, where weaknesses lie. Too many pupils cannot form full and fluent sentences in the foreign language. Accent and pronunciation are very English-sounding, except in the case of the highest attaining pupils. Pupils do not hear enough of the language spoken so they have difficulty in understanding it. Low attainers and those with learning needs are well motivated in small groups, doing work that is well suited to them.

### **Teaching and learning**

64. Teaching for the most part is good and so is the quality of pupils' learning. It is better in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 9 and 10. At its best, teaching is very good, even excellent, with a fast, demanding pace involving pupils in lots of interesting activities, such as games and role-plays, which help them practise new language. Good use is made of the department's ICT room and the one functioning electronic whiteboard to present new language vividly and stimulate good response. Learning in such lessons is both swift and enjoyable. Teachers have a good command of their languages. However, they do not use the language enough in Years 9 and 10, and give pupils too little opportunity to improve their speaking through repeated practice. They manage pupils' behaviour well and relationships are good. Pupils are mostly well disposed to learning languages because of this. A minority of lower attaining pupils in Years 9 and 10, however, have lost motivation and are underachieving. There is scope for stretching the highest attainers more by giving them harder and more open-ended tasks for homework.

### **Leadership and management**

65. Leadership and management of modern foreign languages are satisfactory and the department has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Much of the

outward-looking work of the Language College, in particular the excellent links it has forged with schools, universities and the local community, testifies to significant skills of management and some very hard work. The teaching of Spanish to pupils in local primary schools, for example, is generating keen enthusiasm for language learning. Pupils benefit enormously from the experience of going abroad, meeting people from overseas and learning a variety of languages. In these respects, and many others, Language College status has brought considerable benefits to the school. In terms of raising pupils' achievement and the standards of language learning, however, the department has not made as much progress since acquiring Language College status. Much energy and time has had to be expended on remedying the effects of staff changes and absences rather than on improving the quality of teaching and learning through monitoring and observation. However, it has found new stability and now has a number of very effective teachers, and is much better placed to improve standards.

### Provision for community languages

Overall, the quality of provision in Urdu is **satisfactory**.

Aspect	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Aspects of teaching, such as teacher's expertise, planning which covers all language skills and good resources, lead to effective learning.
- Learning objectives are too general and do not provide sufficient guidance for pupils about their learning.
- There are good opportunities to learn Urdu, building on pupils' known skills.
- Insufficient use is made of the National Literacy Strategy to enhance learning.

### Commentary

#### Examination results

66. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were below average for the small number of pupils entered, but were in line with predictions based on prior attainment. Their achievement was satisfactory. Over the past few years, results have varied from year to year, due to the ability range of the small numbers of pupils entered. Girls performed better than boys.

#### Standards and achievement

67. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is below average. This represents satisfactory achievement as many pupils have limited knowledge of Urdu on entry to the school and have studied only since the beginning of Year 8. By the end of Year 11, standards are average, based on the evidence of mock GCSE examination papers. Standards are in line with expectations for these pupils and achievement is satisfactory.
68. In all year groups, skills in writing are the weakest due to difficulties with sentence structure, spelling and limited knowledge of grammar. Pupils write passages in the past, present and future and express opinions, such as likes and dislikes. The quality of handwriting develops

steadily throughout school. Reading is slightly below average in Years 8 and 9, although some higher attaining pupils, particularly those who have had prior experience, read fluently and well. Many pupils, however, are hesitant, and need frequent support. By Year 10, all pupils understand the gist of simple texts, whilst the higher attaining pupils produce accurate translations, on subjects like the availability and use of local resources, such as libraries. When meeting new vocabulary, pupils are not familiar with strategies to improve their reading, for example ways of finding out the meaning of new words. Speaking and listening, whilst varied, are average overall. Pupils pick out details, and understand the gist of fairly lengthy spoken texts, for example about farms in Pakistan, but tend to reply in English or with one word responses until encouraged to produce more complex replies.

### Teaching and learning

69. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are good opportunities to learn Urdu, building on pupils' known skills. The teacher uses her very good subject knowledge to plan a variety of activities covering all language skills and produces many of her own resources, as few suitable materials are available commercially. She uses Urdu well for the conduct of the lesson and provides a good role model for pupils to copy. An appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of writing, in order to improve standards, but insufficient use is made of the National Literacy Strategy to enhance learning. Learning objectives for lessons, however, are far too general, so pupils are unable to measure their progress. The range of abilities and prior experience in classes is very wide, and at times, work set provides just enough challenge for the highest attainers, whilst being very challenging for some other pupils. Insufficient attention is given to teaching pupils strategies to improve their reading, for example by guessing meaning from context. Satisfactory use is made of ICT in teaching; for example, pupils have e-mailed work to Pakistan. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes in lessons, but girls work more assiduously than boys.

### Leadership and management

70. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. However, there is a need for closer monitoring and better self-evaluation of the teaching of Urdu, leading to better-targeted staff development.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Aspect	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average at the end of Year 9.
- Teaching is good, which results in good learning.
- Achievement is good because teachers plan well to meet the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Good leadership provides a clear vision for improving standards.
- Computers are not used sufficiently to help pupils' learning.

- Insufficient opportunities are provided to monitor teaching to ensure that there is a focus on improving teaching to match the very best.

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

71. Results in the 2003 Year 9 national tests were above average. In relation to their earlier learning, pupils' achievement was satisfactory. In the Year 11 GCSE examinations, results were well above average. Pupils performed significantly better in mathematics than they did in their other subjects studied; achievement was good.

### **Standards and achievement**

72. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is well above average. This represents good achievement as they entered the school with skills in mathematics that were above average. Most pupils recall their tables confidently in doing calculations mentally. In Year 9, the highest attaining pupils performed calculations accurately when examining patterns in the Fibonacci sequence. The lowest attaining pupils use isometric paper effectively to draw two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional figures. By the end of Year 11, standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good in relation to their earlier attainment, which was lower than the current Year 9. Pupils' data-handling skills have been developed effectively. The GCSE data-handling project showed that pupils understood a variety of techniques to analyse large amounts of data. They explained their choices well using appropriate technical language.

### **Teaching and learning.**

73. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 is good. It is often very good. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to ensure that new skills and concepts are clearly explained. Teachers' questioning usually involves pupils well and provides opportunities for pupils to share ideas and strategies with each other. As a result, pupils make good progress in lessons in their understanding of new skills. Teachers plan well for the needs of all pupils and consequently pupils with special educational needs, as well as those who are gifted and talented, achieve well. The mathematics strand of the government's national initiative in Years 7 to 9 is being implemented well in teachers' planning although the objectives for lessons and key words are not always used well enough as a focus for learning. Access to computers is very limited. They are not used sufficiently to help pupils' learning. Pupils' attainment is assessed regularly and teachers intervene appropriately in pupils' learning in lessons to ensure that pupils' progress is tracked well. Marking, however, does not always provide sufficient information for pupils about what they need to do to improve their work. In addition, homework is not always clearly identified in pupils' books. Teachers generally manage and organise pupils well so that pupils usually behave well, work productively on their tasks and co-operate well with each other when asked to work together. This is encouraged by the good relationships with the teachers and with each other.

### **Leadership and management**

74. The recently appointed head of department is leading and managing the subject well. In a short time, the strengths and weaknesses have been identified and a clear vision and direction have been provided. Pupils' performance is analysed and evaluated well. Schemes of work have been rewritten to include the new national initiatives, although opportunities for teaching the subject's ICT requirements are not yet clearly identified. The sharing of very good teaching practice is inhibited because teaching is not checked often enough to ensure that all teaching can strive to match the very best. Improvements since the previous inspection have been good; results and standards in Year 9 are higher and all groups of pupils now make at least good progress. Although some improvement has been made in the provision of textbooks the monitoring of teaching has not improved sufficiently.

### Mathematics across the curriculum

75. Pupils' competency in mathematics is above average and numeracy skills are developed well in mathematics lessons. The school has a written policy for developing pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum and teachers have been made aware of the new approaches to the teaching of mathematics. At the moment, however, few subjects are planning well enough to support these skills in lessons. As a result, opportunities are being missed to reinforce and extend pupils' numeracy skills. The provision for checking and supporting teachers' planning is not clearly defined.

### SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Aspect	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, ensuring that pupils achieve well and attain above average standards in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, but some lessons do not stretch higher attaining pupils enough.
- The department is well led and managed, but formal monitoring of the quality of teaching is not rigorous enough to identify and share good practice.
- Routine marking is inconsistent and does not always give pupils enough feedback on their progress.

### Commentary

#### Examination results

76. Results in the 2003 national tests for Year 9 pupils were above average and in line with those in similar schools. The results exceeded the agreed target. Boys achieved slightly better results than girls, when compared to the national difference. The results were a improvement on the 2002 figures. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were above average and comparable to the results that pupils gained in other subjects, except for the biology results, which were lower. The proportion of A\* and A grades was below average on the double award course, but this is to be expected since the highest attaining pupils were entered for the separate science examinations. The overall proportion of pupils gaining a pass at grades A\*-C was above average and in line with similar schools. There was no significant difference in the standards attained by boys and girls.

## **Standards and achievement**

77. Work seen during the inspection shows that above average standards are attained in Years 7 to 9. Most pupils attain the standards that would be expected when compared to their previous results. This represents satisfactory achievement. The majority of pupils have a sound knowledge of previous work they have covered in biology, chemistry and physics. They are able to answer appropriately challenging questions about the topics they have covered and about underlying principles such as cell structure, chemical reactions and energy. Practical work is undertaken regularly and the pupils have a good understanding of fair testing and measures to ensure reliability in results. By the end of Year 11, above average standards are maintained, with many pupils reaching well above average standards. Pupils make good progress in relation to their previous results, achieving well in all aspects of the course. Investigational work in Years 10 and 11 is above average in most aspects, although the pupils' ability to evaluate their work is average.

## **Teaching and learning**

78. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, with some good teaching. It is consistently good in Years 10 and 11, with a greater proportion of very good teaching. In most lessons, teachers make it clear what pupils are expected to learn and they plan appropriate activities to achieve this learning. They summarise well at the end of lessons, checking that the pupils have grasped the key ideas, so that effective learning is promoted. Teachers' questioning is usually good and they often extend learning by using open-ended questions that encourage deeper thinking about science. The pupils have good skills in English and mathematics and as a result they communicate well and handle calculations and graph work confidently. Development of the pupils' ICT skills is satisfactory but the use of data-loggers is mainly limited to one unit in Year 10 and this is an area for improvement. Pupils behave well in response to good teaching and their positive attitudes to work help them to achieve well. In a minority of lessons the pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, although they work noisily, and this reduces the quality of learning. Teachers assess the pupils' progress regularly, using the results to set targets for improvement. This helps the pupils to achieve well. However, the use of homework is inconsistent and marking is not always thorough and constructive enough to help the pupils to improve. Teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and the learning support staff are effective in helping them to achieve well. However, planning does not always give enough consideration to stretching the highest attaining pupils, particularly in mixed ability groups in Years 7 to 9. In some lessons this leads to a slow pace of learning, with pupils' thinking not being challenged enough.

## **Leadership and management**

79. The department is led well and management is good. Priorities for development are clear and appropriate, ensuring that there is a focus on standards and quality. The head of department has a very good understanding of the use of assessment data to monitor progress and set targets for improvement and this has a positive effect on standards and achievement. Formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has been introduced but it is not yet robust enough to eliminate inconsistencies in homework and marking and to share good practice within the department. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have risen and teaching quality has been improved. The use of assessment data has also been improved, along with resources for learning. Accommodation is good on one site but on the other it is drab and outdated and does not provide a good learning environment. Support from the science technicians is good and has a positive impact on learning.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Aspect	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain well above average standards at the end of Year 11.
- Very good teaching leads to very good achievement by the end of Year 11.
- Very good leadership and management have brought about significant improvement in pupils' attainment and achievement.
- Subjects across the curriculum do not make an adequate contribution to developing pupils' ICT skills.

### Commentary

#### Examination results

80. Examination results in 2003 were well above average and some of the best in the school. The proportion of higher grades has significantly improved in recent years.

#### Standards and achievement

81. By the end of Year 9 pupils achieve well. The improved teaching they now have in Year 9 has enhanced their attainment. Most pupils understand how to use spreadsheets to set up formulae for specific purposes. However, only the higher attaining pupils fully grasp how spreadsheets are used to model and predict outcomes. Lower attaining pupils do not always understand the arithmetic involved in setting up formulae. Most pupils use ICT with confidence and are willing to experiment and continue with their work at home. Many test their knowledge by using the good on-line assessment materials provided by the school. Most pupils' written work is clearly expressed and completed with care. Higher attaining pupils show well above average literary skills when evaluating the merits of websites. Standards in Years 7 and 8 are higher, as pupils are benefiting from the effective use of the national strategy for ICT and improved teaching. By the end of Year 11 pupils achieve very well. Pupils work hard and want to succeed because of the high standards expected of them by their teachers. Pupils' project work is often well above average in terms of the depth of content, how they analyse data and the mature ways in which they write and evaluate their work. Gifted and talented pupils show excellent analytical skills in researching and evaluating different data collection methods. Most pupils understand and use databases well to develop systems to assist in the management of a theatre company. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make very good progress. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

#### Teaching and learning

82. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is good and very good in Years 10 to 11. Teachers are enthusiastic and know their subject well. As a result, pupils are motivated and want to learn. Tasks are challenging, especially in Years 10 and 11, as teachers do not supply

answers but encourage pupils to think the problem through before using ICT. Lessons are very well planned with clear learning objectives that are reinforced at the end of the lesson. Activities are clearly explained and structured with suitable extension work for gifted and talented pupils so that pupils are invariably engrossed in their work. Lessons move at a very good pace appropriate for all pupils. Teachers use interactive whiteboards very well for demonstrations and discussion. Teachers and classroom assistants are constantly on the move, checking and supporting pupils. This is especially effective in supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs who are fully included in the lessons. Teachers continuously assess pupils' work and give pointers for improvement, which pupils act upon. Homework is used very well in Years 10 and 11 as an integral part of teaching. Pupils often produce more than is necessary because they enjoy the activities and want to succeed. However, homework is set less frequently in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils' behaviour is very good.

### Leadership and management

83. The department is very well led and managed. This clear direction has enabled significant improvements to be made to pupils' attainment and achievement in a short time. There is a clear sense of purpose, shared by all teachers, that is focused on improving standards. Teachers evaluate their own work and monitor the progress of pupils very effectively. Equipment is maintained well by a skilled technical team. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

84. Pupils' use of ICT in other subjects is unsatisfactory. This was a criticism at the previous inspection. Access to ICT resources for other subjects is very restricted as the number of rooms with computers is limited. As a result, some subjects do not provide the required range of ICT experience for pupils. Nor do they contribute to the wider development of pupils' ICT skills. This applies in particular to mathematics, English, geography and music. Access is also a problem for history and art and design.

85. However, the good resources provided by the school's Language College status has enabled modern foreign languages to make effective use of ICT for research, reinforcing grammar and presenting information. Pupils use the school computers well for individual work in the learning resource centre/library and through the good extra-curricular provision. Teaching in some subjects has been enhanced by the use of interactive display boards.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Aspect	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well because of the good teaching they receive.

- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 work hard and are interested in the subject so they make good progress with their learning.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT to enhance their learning.
- Teaching and learning are not monitored closely enough to ensure a consistency of approach.
- Information about pupils' performance is not used effectively to monitor their progress.

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

86. GCSE results in 2003 were above average and much improved from previous years.

### **Standards and achievement**

87. By the end of Year 9 pupils' attainment is average. The department has encouraged the use of a wider range of teaching methods in Years 7 to 9. However, their use is inconsistent and, as a result, achievement overall is satisfactory. Good fieldwork provision enables pupils to develop skills of collecting and analysing information so they begin to relate geographical theory to actual events and features. Most pupils describe geographical features competently, such as the effects of earthquakes on settlements. Only higher attaining pupils are able to link factors together to explain events, such as why tourism has increased in recent years. Most use graphs well to portray information. Gifted and talented pupils analyse graphs of the patterns of holidays taken by United Kingdom residents thoroughly and accurately. By the end of Year 11 standards are average. This represents good achievement in relation to this group's earlier attainment. In their earlier years, provision in geography was identified by the senior management of the school as being unsatisfactory. Their subsequent interventions have improved teaching and learning. Pupils now achieve well as teachers structure, support and monitor pupils' work effectively. As a result most pupils' fieldwork files are well presented and show good data collection techniques. Higher attaining pupils analyse their findings well and draw valid conclusions. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 work hard and are interested in the subject so they make good progress. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

### **Teaching and learning**

88. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. The best lessons are exciting for the pupils who, because of the enthusiasm of the teachers, are fully involved in their learning. These lessons move at a good pace and involve a variety of activities that maintain pupils' interest. Teachers and pupils use an interactive whiteboard very well in some lessons to illustrate and display information. Pupils are challenged to think for themselves and to find their own answers in the most effective lessons. Other lessons are less productive as there is too much emphasis placed on geographical facts rather than the development of skills. Homework is set regularly and is used well. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils because of the good support they receive from teachers and support assistants. Behaviour is usually managed well. However, a minority of pupils, especially in Years 7 to 9, interrupt the flow of the lessons with irrelevant comments that waste the time of pupils and teachers. There is limited provision to extend the learning of gifted and talented pupils in Years 7 to 9. Although work is marked regularly not enough attention is given to providing specific points that pupils should address to improve their work. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT in lessons to enhance their learning, as access to computers is limited. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 use ICT well individually to present their fieldwork.

### **Leadership and management**

89. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good improvement has been made to teaching in Years 10 and 11 so that standards have improved. The department has well-developed plans to further develop and improve teaching and learning styles for Years 7 to 9. However,

the use of assessment data to review pupils' progress, set targets and intervene effectively is not sufficiently developed, especially in Years 7 to 9. Teaching and learning are not monitored regularly enough to ensure a consistency of approach and to allow teachers to share good practice. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

## History

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

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Good

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils from Years 7 to 11 learn and achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- The development of a wider range of teaching methods together with a change in examination syllabus are having a positive impact on learning and achievement.
- There are inconsistencies in marking that do not give pupils a consistently clear message on how to improve.
- There are not enough opportunities for the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- The curriculum is planned well to provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills.

## Commentary

### Examination results

90. GCSE results in 2003 were above average, reflecting good achievement. Boys' results were better than girls'. These results were an improvement on the previous year and followed a change of syllabus.

### Standards and achievement

91. By the end of Year 9 standards are above average. This represents good achievement as pupils enter the school with skills in history that are average. Pupils of all abilities develop skills as historians. For example, in their study of King John they make appropriate comparisons of different interpretations of his character. When discussing a mining disaster, gifted and talented pupils use the principle of morality very well to argue against blaming the miners themselves for the disaster. Other pupils with special educational needs give a well-reasoned opinion on its cause. By the end of Year 11, standards are also above average and this also represents good achievement for these pupils. They develop a good understanding of change over time in their study of medicine and health. Investigation skills also develop well. Pupils examine the site of a priory for evidence of the monks' way of life. They display good awareness of the limitations of evidence in providing absolute proof. They keep detailed records of their investigation to enable them to produce an equally detailed response in drafting coursework. Applying their knowledge to answer their teachers' direct questions is a relatively weaker area except for higher attainers.

## Teaching and learning

92. Teaching is good and this results in good learning and achievement because of the emphasis on developing skills. Younger pupils learn to make comparisons over time, for example through a study of medieval and modern crime and punishment. In Year 9 they conduct a detailed investigation into changes in twentieth century warfare, effectively using a variety of sources including the Internet. Activities in class, including 'mind maps', encourage pupils to develop thinking skills by asking questions and making links. These approaches prepare pupils well for the GCSE course where they are required to study change over time and use investigation skills in fieldwork. Pupils are effectively taught to write in different forms including eyewitness accounts, parliamentary reports and letters, although there is a lack of consistency in strategies used to develop literacy skills. Weaknesses in applying knowledge to questions are not consistently addressed. Sequences of lessons are planned so that pupils can make connections between them. They respond positively because they are given challenging work with clear objectives. Preparation for fieldwork activities is thorough with GCSE pupils having an early opportunity to produce a coursework draft on completion of their investigation. Support staff are very effective in both challenging and encouraging pupils because they are well prepared and fully involved in learning tasks, including, in one example, giving part of the lesson introduction. Assessment procedures are thorough in regularly monitoring progress although the marking of work does not provide a consistently clear message on how to improve.

### Leadership and management

93. There is good leadership, which results in good collaboration and teamwork in developing the subject. Appropriate priorities are clearly identified and action taken, including a change in examination syllabus and the development of a greater variety of teaching and learning strategies. Management is satisfactory. The curriculum is planned well to give pupils a broad range of learning opportunities. There are inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work and in methods to develop literacy skills. At the whole-school level, arrangements do not provide enough opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. Important subject priorities are not identified within faculty planning. Improvement from the last inspection is good, with improvements in the standard of teaching, examination results and the use of ICT.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

Aspect	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Above average standards are attained on the GCSE textiles and graphic products courses.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject, which contribute to their good achievement in all years.
- Teaching in all years is good and often better, and enables the pupils to learn effectively.
- The head of department gives very good leadership and effectively manages her team.
- The attainment of boys is below average, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

- Insufficient attention is given to setting individual pupils precise subject targets for improvement or to reviewing and revising them as projects develop.

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

94. In 2003, pupils gained results in their GCSE examinations that were in line with the average at the higher A\*-C grades. The results in graphic products and textiles were above average; in systems and control in line with the average; below average in food; and well below in resistant materials. Overall, these results were slightly above those of 2002.

### **Standards and achievement**

95. In the work seen in Year 9, standards are above average, in line with recent teacher assessments. Achievement is good and in some areas of the subject it is very good, as the pupils' starting point in Year 7 is below average. The standards of the girls are slightly above those of the boys. Making and constructional skills are more highly developed than design and graphical skills for many pupils. In general, the girls have better developed design skills than the boys. Higher attaining pupils have a more secure grasp of subject knowledge and vocabulary. Insufficient use is made of ICT to support the learning, and the facilities for computer-aided design and manufacture need to be increased if pupils' technological skills are to be fully developed. The teachers use challenging projects and tasks in a variety of materials that make increasing demands on pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. As a consequence, all pupils make good progress from a below average starting point in terms of experience and attainment.
96. Overall, the Year 11 work seen during the inspection is average. At this stage, pupils are on course to replicate the results achieved last year at GCSE, with graphic products and textiles again achieving above average results. Achievement is good against their prior attainment. The standards attained by the girls are higher than most of the boys on all GCSE courses. The girls' design skills are better developed than the boys', especially the boys at the middle to lower levels of attainment. The girls' work shows more rigorous analysis of their research when developing their designs. The strength of the boys' work continues to be their practical making skills. Very good behaviour, high levels of concentration and the very positive attitudes of the pupils add to the effect of good and better teaching, and ensure that achievement is good.

### **Teaching and learning**

97. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are often very good in all years. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan a range of stimulating projects and tasks that challenge the pupils and this leads to good achievement and progress. Lessons are very well planned with clear learning objectives. However, teachers do not always share their objectives with the pupils at the start of lessons or review the progress made at the end. Where this occurs, lessons lack the sharp focus generally found. The teachers use a variety of methods to involve the pupils with the learning, and questioning, explanations and demonstrations are particularly effective in developing pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Resources of good quality are provided to support the learning. In all lessons, teachers give high levels of individual support and well-informed feedback, which encourage the pupils and raise their level of motivation. There was a loss of pace in the learning in some lessons where the teachers did not set time deadlines for the completion of class work tasks.

### **Leadership and management**

98. The leadership of the department is very good and its affairs are well managed. The departmental improvement plan has appropriate priorities linked to raising attainment further. The assessment system is good and target setting is in place for all pupils in all years.

However, the targets set for the pupils do not always focus sharply enough on subject improvement. Also, targets are not reviewed and revised as the work develops through each project so that opportunities are missed to increase the rate of pupils' progress and achievement. The curriculum is good and has the breadth to meet the aspirations of the pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards in Years 7 to 9 have improved. Accommodation is now very good; ICT provision is improved, although still in need of further development, and there are no shared classes and non-specialist teaching.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

### Art and design

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **good**.

Aspect	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good, with strengths in lesson preparation, securing good learning and good attitudes to work.
- The department has made good progress since the last report by tackling the identified weaknesses.
- Pupils' achievement is good, as most pupils enter school relatively unskilled in art and design.
- The system for assessment is good, but day-to-day marking does not indicate clearly how pupils should improve their work.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to visit galleries and museums and are unused to seeing works of art other than in books and on the Internet.
- There are no facilities for ceramics or photography so the department cannot extend the curriculum to cater for pupils who wish to take other aspects of GCSE art and design.

### Commentary

#### Examination results

99. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were average. Results have fluctuated over the past few years but are usually near or above the national average. More girls attempt art and attain higher grades.

#### Standards and achievement

100. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is average and this demonstrates good achievement as most of them enter school with few skills and little knowledge of art, artists or art history. They build up skills and knowledge well from Year 7 onwards. Achievement is very good for the gifted and talented pupils who begin GCSE in Year 9 and attend after-school sessions. In work seen, drawing skills are best performed when pupils draw what they see rather than what they imagine as they depict shape, tone and texture more accurately. Pupils mix colours carefully and apply paint using an appropriate range of brushes. Some of the lower attaining pupils find paint blending and shading difficult, and have more success with pastels. Sketchbook work

needs attention. Pupils do not use their sketchbooks to record what they admire and tend to use them solely for homework, missing chances to practise drawing and collecting useful examples. There are too few opportunities for pupils to amass skills in printmaking, printing and using clay and modelling media. Pupils recognise works of people from different lands and cultures, and are used to finding out about real artists. They are skilled in observation, describing paintings critically and using artists' techniques to influence their own works. With a limited range of computer equipment, pupils often use the Internet for research and to word-process their findings.

101. By the end of Year 11, standards on the whole are average. This represents good achievement when account is taken of the pupils' prior attainment. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Most put the knowledge gained in the early years in school to good effect. Pupils, who have made deliberate choices to take GCSE art and design, work hard to demonstrate skill in drawing and painting and undertake a good amount of research on topics before committing to final pieces. Their preparation pieces are well thought out and form good bases for practical work. Studying the work of real artists is having a beneficial effect on much of the GCSE work, as pupils gain knowledge of art skills and history and understanding of composition. Most pupils have good amounts of work in portfolios and sketchbook work is good. Pupils understand the value of practice pieces and trying different effects, which lift their overall standards. However, a few pupils who take art and design as a second choice subject do not work as hard as others do and do not produce the volume of work required.

### Teaching and learning

102. The quality of teaching is good and brings about good learning. Pupils are made welcome in the studios and relationships are strong. As a direct result, behaviour is good, so there is maximum time in lessons for work without disruptions. The art and design teachers are good practitioners and enthusiastic about their subject and they inspire the pupils. Teachers make sure that the topics are challenging and interesting; they select and use high quality resources to show pupils the techniques employed by real artists and how to analyse their own and the work of others. Lessons are skilfully planned to include instruction, appraisal of ongoing practical work and question and answer sessions to clear up problems and encourage pupils to share their successes. Homework is set regularly and extends the class work appropriately. Marking is done, but is too often simply congratulatory and lacks comments to inform pupils where and how they should improve their work. Teachers carefully establish displays of artwork in the studios to raise pupils' cultural awareness and self-esteem and show other pupils what is achievable.

### Leadership and management

103. The department is led well and management is good. The teachers work well as a team, sharing ideas and good practice. The development plan is appropriate and includes clear intentions to raise standards. Pupils' progress records are kept but results are not fully analysed to compare boys' and girls' attainment or the performance of pupils from different ethnic minorities. Progress has been good since the last inspection, as the teachers have worked hard to tackle the identified weaknesses. There is now greater challenge in the work, the gifted and talented pupils can begin GCSE in Year 9, pupils do more research and development, sketchbook work is better, pupils make greater overall progress, the quality of teaching is higher, and assessment has improved.

### Music

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

Aspect	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average

Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good teaching leads to very good learning where pupils' levels of achievement increase as they move through the school.
- Very good leadership has established a very good department that contributes positively to the Christian ethos of the school.
- Accommodation continues to be unsatisfactory, and the department has insufficient technology resources to enable pupils to develop fully their composition skills.

### Commentary

#### Examination results

104. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, results were above average, with eight of the 17 candidates gaining A\* or A grades. Ten of these pupils started the course with limited practical standards of performance, and achieved very well. The trend has been for results to be overall above average, with boys and girls achieving equally.

#### Standards and achievement

105. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is above average. A number of individual pupils enter Year 7 with very good musical skills, but they are the exception. Achievement across Years 7 to 9 is good overall and students who enter the school with a more developed musical background achieve very well. Comprehensive, developmental schemes of work, together with very good teaching, contribute to good achievement. Year 7 pupils are currently composing highly effective trumpet fanfares with drone backgrounds. Year 8 pupils are writing jigs in compound time. Year 9 pupils have a very good knowledge of instruments, of melody writing, of major and minor chord formation and of ethnic music. Pupils with special needs achieve as well as the others, though their rate of progress is often a little slower. Talented pupils are fully extended through more challenging tasks in practical work. Year 10 and 11 pupils achieve very well due to very good teaching and to their own excellent attitudes, which make the most of the quality of teaching they receive. Their standards are above average. The composition work is of a high order, and almost all pupils have at least good standards of practical ability.

#### Teaching and learning

106. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have very high expectations, and will only accept pupils' best work. When using keyboards, for example, pupils are expected to use the correct fingering. The detailed planning of lessons is excellent. Lessons are finely balanced between theoretical and practical work, and are taken at a fast pace. New concepts are taught very clearly, and skills are constantly revisited. Appropriate tasks are set for pupils of varying intellectual and musical ability. Practical lessons always include a sharing of performance, which demonstrates the achievement made and encourages the pupils to improve. Ongoing assessment of work is a feature of every lesson. Pupils have very good, and often excellent, attitudes to music in the school, as reflected in the take-up by boys and girls on the GCSE courses, and through the extra-curricular activities.

#### Leadership and management

107. The department is led and managed very well. Programmes of study are comprehensive. Links with feeder schools are underdeveloped. Members of the department do not have

information about musical experiences pupils have had prior to Year 7, and they are not always aware of the number of pupils who have studied instruments in their primary schools, but who have given up these studies on transfer to this school. Accommodation continues to be unsatisfactory, despite having been criticised in the last two inspection reports. Technology resources are inadequate, particularly affecting composition work in Years 10 and 11. Extra-curricular provision is very good. Ensembles are of a high quality and there are many opportunities on offer. The department contributes in a very positive way to the school's overall Christian ethos through its musical contribution to the life of the school. Despite accommodation problems, overall improvement since the last inspection has been good, with many initiatives having been introduced and consolidated since that time to ensure that pupils' achievement has improved.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Aspect	Year 9	Year 11 (Core course)	Year 11 (Examination course)
Standards	Average	Average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in the GCSE course as a result of very good teaching.
- Very good leadership provides a clear vision for the subject.
- A very good enrichment and extra-curricular programme gives opportunities for all pupils, particularly the gifted and talented, to excel in school and beyond.
- There is not enough monitoring and development of teaching to ensure consistent best practice is identified and shared.
- Standards in tennis are well below average, and girls are underachieving in this activity.

## Commentary

### Examination results

108. The 2003 GCSE examination results were well above average. Pupils gained a very high proportion of A\* and A grades. Well above average results in this examination have been gained, consistently, for the last ten years.

### Standards and achievement

109. Work seen during the inspection showed that standards by the end of Year 9 are average. This reflects good achievement in relation to pupils' starting point on entering the school. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in athletics; boys also achieve well in cricket. Standards in girls' cricket are below average, but they are achieving well in the early stages of their course. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are very well integrated, achieving as well as other pupils.

110. It was only possible to see Year 10 classes in the non-examination course in Years 10 and 11. Standards in athletics remain average, reflecting satisfactory achievement. Boys and girls show a sound understanding of the principles of sprinting which they can apply effectively, in

practice. Standards in tennis are well below average, and girls are underachieving in this activity. This can be accounted for by the minimal amount of time devoted to the game, and curriculum organisation that hinders continuity in learning. GCSE pupils attain above average standards in practical coursework. They show a very good knowledge and understanding of theoretical aspects, and pupils of all abilities achieve very well in their coursework. Standards in extra-curricular sport are high, reflected in pupils' successes at district, county and sometimes national level in a range of sports.

### **Teaching and learning**

111. Teaching and learning are good overall. On the GCSE course, they are very good and pupils achieve very well. In the non-examination course taken by all pupils, the teaching is good, but constrained by the curriculum so that pupils' achievement is satisfactory rather than good in Years 10 and 11. The lack of a sports hall constrains the curriculum and restricts pupils' opportunities to achieve high standards in some activities. There are many strengths, not least the very good organisation and management of pupils, and the high expectations of staff. Very good standards of participation, dress and behaviour are the norm in lessons. Most pupils have good, often very good, attitudes to the subject, reflected in their significant involvement in extra-curricular activities. Knowledgeable, enthusiastic and well-planned teaching motivates pupils, and demands a brisk pace of activity. The best learning occurs when pupils are rigorously challenged to improve their performance, as seen in a javelin lesson, and made to think deeply by probing questioning in GCSE theory lessons. Where teaching is good rather than very good, it lacks this strong focus on quality and improvement, and pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to do even better. There is insufficient planning for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Marking is good, but further work is required to improve practical assessment, as teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were inaccurate because they were too harsh.

### **Leadership and management**

112. Very good leadership, supported by a strong team, provides clear vision and direction for the subject. There is a vibrant ethos of active participation generating consistently high standards in the GCSE examination. There is an extensive enrichment and extra-curricular programme that is regularly supported by over half the school population. The department has begun a self-evaluation programme and has identified, effectively, areas for improvement, such as the non-examination curriculum in Years 10 and 11. Although monitoring of the subject's performance is effective, there is not enough monitoring and development of teaching to ensure consistent best practice. Leadership and developments in the use of ICT to enhance learning are impressive. The school is close to achieving the aim of the national strategy for 75 per cent of pupils to have two hours a week of quality physical education. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Standards and the quality of teaching have been maintained, and the department has addressed, successfully, most of the issues raised.

## VOCATIONAL COURSES

### Child development

Provision in child development is **very good**.

Aspect	Year 11
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent leadership of the subject has ensured that the course is very well planned to meet the pupils' needs, leading to standards that are well above average.
- Pupils achieve very well because they have very good attitudes to their work and receive consistently very good teaching.
- Teachers provide very good support for pupils' learning and monitor their progress very well.
- A small number of pupils underachieve because of their poor attendance.

### Commentary

#### Examination results

113. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were well above average and compared well to the results that pupils gained in other subjects. The results were lower than those of 2002, but continued a pattern of well above average results that has been established over the last five years. All the pupils on the course were girls, so gender comparisons are not applicable.

#### Standards and achievement

114. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in Year 10 and very well by the end of Year 11. The very well structured course allows them to make very good progress in all aspects of the subject. Very good achievement is also promoted as a result of skilful support from teachers, who monitor the pupils' progress very effectively throughout the course. The large majority of pupils achieve GCSE results that are above the standards that would be expected on the basis of their earlier work. There is a small number of pupils whose irregular attendance leads to their underachieving.

#### Teaching and learning

115. The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good, with some excellent teaching seen during the inspection. The course is very well planned and lessons are effectively matched to the wide range of pupils' needs, building well on earlier work. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and explain the work very well, enabling the pupils to learn effectively. Skilful questioning is used to check progress in lessons, although this is sometimes not taken to enough depth to stretch the highest attaining pupils. However, a good level of challenge is provided through projects that allow all pupils to use research skills to study aspects of the course in more depth. For example, in one lesson seen during the inspection, Year 10 pupils worked diligently to prepare presentations on additives in food, using their ICT and communication skills well to tackle different aspects of the topic. All the pupils produced creditable work, with the highest attainers delivering an interesting, informative and humorous

presentation that showed a very good understanding of the subject matter. In another excellent lesson, the pupils used a variety of resources, including computers in the learning resource centre/library, to complete work on evaluating foods for toddlers. Excellent planning and management of the lesson, coupled with the pupils' very good attitudes to work, enabled them achieve very well. The consistently very good teaching is a major factor in ensuring that pupils achieve very well.

### Leadership and management

116. Excellent leadership and very good management of the course have ensured that this subject is a strength of the school. Development priorities are clearly focused on raising standards and quality by meeting pupils' needs effectively. This has produced a very well planned and successful course that is attracting increasingly large numbers of pupils. Assessment results are analysed well and targets for improvement are set for all pupils. Provision is further enhanced by access to very good resources and by the very good academic support for pupils. The subject was not reported at the last inspection so it is not possible to comment on progress since then. However, well above average standards have been maintained for a number of years, the subject has grown in popularity and the course has been refined to produce the current level of very good provision.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education was sampled.

### Personal, social and health education

117. The school has good arrangements for the teaching of personal, social and health education. It is taught by form tutors who are given appropriate training as necessary. Teaching was sampled in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. Teaching and learning are good overall and there is a significant amount of very good teaching. Personal, social and health education is effective in increasing pupils' knowledge and awareness of health and personal safety, and includes valuable contributions from visiting specialists. In one Year 7 lesson, pupils were examining a range of dilemmas associated with growing up. Others were learning how to wash their hands effectively as part of the personal hygiene module. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils were effectively developing their own rules for human rights related to the classroom situation. Year 9 pupils were learning about health and safety and accident prevention in school. Year 10 pupils, in preparing application forms for work experience, learned that care must be taken to present a good application if they are to be chosen for their preferred placement.

### Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Aspect	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Insufficient evidence	Below average
Achievement	Insufficient evidence	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	N/A

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Statutory requirements for the assessment and reporting of pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 are not being met.
- Good involvement in school and community-based activities by pupils of all ages enables them to show the responsible attitudes associated with good citizenship.
- The amount of time given to the subject in Year 10 is insufficient for the requirements of the GCSE short course.
- The quality and delivery of the programmes of study in citizenship are inconsistent across the subjects of the curriculum in Year 7 to 9.

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

No examinations have yet been taken in the subject.

### **Standards and achievement**

118. Citizenship is taught by other subjects of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9, rather than as a separate subject. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards or pupils' achievement at the end of Year 9 because there were few references by teachers to citizenship in the lessons observed and no written work was available for inspection. No assessments of pupils' attainment have been recorded and this is unsatisfactory because it does not meet statutory requirements. In Year 10, where all pupils are following a short course leading to an examination at GCSE, standards are below average. This is because there is not enough time available for pupils to cover the course thoroughly, so they are not adequately prepared for the examination. The curriculum is unsatisfactory. The quality of written work reflects the constraints of limited time. Many of the assignments are covered in a superficial way, and several have been left unfinished. Pupils are not achieving as well as they should, and only about half the year group are entered for the examination.
119. The positive element in the provision for citizenship is the range of opportunities available for pupils of all ages and abilities to show responsibility, and boys and girls alike enjoy taking an active part in school and community-based activities. For example, pupils remove litter from the adjacent valley and have organised the collection of white paper for recycling. In drama presentations they help primary school pupils to understand the unhappiness caused by various forms of bullying, and they represent the school in musical and sports events. Pupils become members of the school council and raise considerable sums of money for local and national charities. They become aware of the importance of international communication through trips abroad and cultural exchanges organised by the school as part of the Language College responsibilities.
120. The contribution by subjects of the curriculum to the knowledge and understanding of citizenship is inconsistent in terms of both quality and teaching. Although most programmes of study identify where aspects of citizenship might be explored, there is limited evidence of explicit reference to citizenship in lessons across the year groups. Connections are made in English and in the GCSE course in physical education when pupils look at media influence on the formation of public opinion, but there are few firm links elsewhere.

### **Teaching and learning**

121. The school's teaching provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. The quality of teaching and learning in the examination classes is satisfactory overall, but the constraints of the curriculum make provision unsatisfactory. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject and there are good relationships in the classroom. Lesson

materials are drawn from an appropriate range of sources, and teachers' pleasant but firm approach encourages pupils to contribute to discussions in a controlled and organised way. Pupils are made aware of ways in which they can improve their work through teachers' evaluative comments. Displays are used effectively to stimulate ideas and present different points of view. However, on occasion there are lapses in pupils' concentration and outbreaks of irrelevant chat because the pace of the lesson becomes too slow. Overall, standards are below average in citizenship and pupils do not achieve as well as they should because insufficient time is devoted to the teaching of citizenship.

### **Leadership and management**

122. The quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory. This is because there is no clear vision or sense of purpose for the subject at senior management level. The shortcomings in the provision are a direct result of this weakness. The GCSE course has been introduced and resourced efficiently by subject staff, but the time allocation is inadequate. Statutory requirements for assessment and reporting in Year 9 have not been met, and the provision in Years 7 to 9 has not been monitored for quality and consistency of delivery.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the head teacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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