

INSPECTION REPORT

MOORSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

Werrington, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124399

Headteacher: Mrs M Jenkin

Lead inspector: Mrs W Hola

Dates of inspection: 9th – 12th February 2004

Inspection number: 259333

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	721
School address:	Cellarhead Road Werrington Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST9 OHP
Telephone number:	(01782) 297 100
Fax number:	(01782) 297 111
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Holland
Date of previous inspection:	15 th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Moorside School is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 18. Essentially, the school operates as a school for pupils aged 11 to 16. The small number of pupils in the sixth form, 18 males and 28 females, are educated full-time at the Moorlands Sixth Form Centre in Cheadle. The centre is run jointly by Painsley Catholic High School and Cheadle High School, and Moorside School is an associate partner.

The main school has 675 pupils (328 boys and 347 girls). It is smaller than other secondary schools. The school is situated four miles east of Stoke-on-Trent in the Staffordshire moorlands. The catchment area consists of housing developments and small rural communities. The school also draws pupils from Stoke. Pupils come from varied socio-economic backgrounds and, taken as a whole, their circumstances are broadly average. Their attainments on entry are widely varied and are average overall, although attainment on entry for pupils currently in Year 7 is above average.

The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is below the national average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups and the vast majority has a white British heritage. The proportion of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is below average and the proportion with statements of SEN is above average. Most pupils who need support beyond action which can be taken by the school itself have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties or specific or moderate learning difficulties. There are a few who have severe learning difficulties, communication or physical difficulties, are autistic or have another specific difficulty.

The school received the Healthy School Award in 1998, the Careers Quality mark in 1998 and the School Achievement Award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4359	W Hola	Lead inspector	English as an additional language
31758	E Tipper	Lay inspector	
12844	M Saunders	Team inspector	English Drama
22878	G Nolan	Team inspector	Mathematics
16786	S Hodge	Team inspector	Science
14841	M Duffey	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
15312	K Lord	Team inspector	Citizenship Physical education
19530	J Bray	Team inspector	Geography
20716	R Grogan	Team inspector	Religious education
3882	E Needham	Team inspector	History
30128	S Stanley	Team inspector	Music
10340	J Lockett	Team inspector	Design and technology
16042	P Haes	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
20729	J Berry	Team inspector	Special educational needs
12825	N Carr	Team inspector	Psychology in the sixth form

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Moorside School is a good school. Most pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching and learning. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of backgrounds and attainments and reach standards that are currently above national averages overall. Standards have risen significantly in recent years. **The school provides very good value for money.**

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and, with the very effective senior management team and governing body, has brought about the school's enormous improvement in recent years.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They respond very well to high quality teaching and most work hard even on those relatively few occasions when teaching is uninspiring or weak.
- The school sets very high expectations of pupils' behaviour, fosters good relationships very well and deals swiftly and very effectively with all forms of harassment.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good but the provision for pupils with particular gifts or talents, whilst generally satisfactory, is not so well developed.
- Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Support, advice and guidance are very good, although in some cases pupils could be better informed about how to improve their work.
- Accommodation and resources have been improved but still have some important shortcomings that limit pupils' learning and that lead to congestion at lunchtimes.

The school has made **very good improvement** since its last full inspection in February 2000 when it was found to be in need of special measures and also since the shorter inspection in March 2002 when the need for special measures was removed. In relation to the key issues identified in March 2002: middle managers have developed well in their roles; the school has developed a strategy for raising levels of numeracy across the curriculum and devised a policy to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and a reasonable range of opportunities now exists for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning. In addition, there have been significant improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) but the use of ICT in many subjects is still too limited. Staff, parents and pupils comment very positively on the way in which pupils' attitudes, work and behaviour have improved since February 2000.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Moorside School performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	C	B	B	A*
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	C	A	A	

Key: A - well above; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.*

For Year 11, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.

Achievement is good overall. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies greatly and is average as a whole with above average attainment in the current Year 7. Standards across the school are above average overall and pupils achieve well. National test results in 2003 for pupils in Year 9 were average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Pupils' achievements over Years 7 to 9 were lower than average in English and very good in mathematics and science. Achievement in English has improved and is now good. Standards in Years 7 to 9 seen during the inspection were above average. GCSE examination results in 2003 were above average overall and have improved in recent years, at a faster rate than results nationally. Standards seen in Years 10 and 11 during the

inspection were above average. A-level examination results in 2002 were well above average. (All sixth form students took their courses at the Moorlands sixth form centre to which the school is affiliated) Across Years 7 to 11, pupils have good skills in English language and literacy, and also good competence in mathematics and ICT. Students with SEN achieve well because of the very good provision made to support them. Gifted and talented pupils are not identified assiduously and achieve reasonably well overall with examples of both good achievement and underachievement.

Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good overall. Pupils' behaviour is good as are their attitudes to work and towards others in the school. The school has a very clear system for promoting good behaviour supported by parents and respected by pupils. The number of exclusions is very low. Pupils show respect for each other and co-operate well in group activities. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Pupils are offered satisfactory opportunities for spiritual and cultural development, although the school does not provide sufficient opportunities to prepare pupils for citizenship in multicultural Britain. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. Some good strategies exist to promote good attendance but, overall, more can be done to improve it further.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have very good command of their subjects and plan lessons very effectively. Assessment is generally used well to promote good learning. The curriculum is sound, with strengths in science and history. Citizenship is being developed well but provision for it still has shortcomings. Provision for pupils with SEN is very good. A sound range of extra-curricular activities exists. The match of teachers to the curriculum is generally good. The provision of support staff is good and they provide very good service. Accommodation and resources have some shortcomings. The dining hall is far too small. Pupils are very well cared for by the school's pastoral teams. Good links exist with parents and other schools and colleges. Links with the community are sound.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher's leadership is very good and shows a very clear vision for the school. Senior leaders show a very high commitment to inclusion and a concern for the needs of individuals. Governance is very good. Leaders generally provide very good role models for other staff and pupils. Management systems are good. Leadership and management of subject and pastoral areas are mostly good or better.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are supportive of the school. Most state that arrangements for settling pupils into school are good, their children are making good progress and that staff expect pupils to work hard. They also feel comfortable about approaching the school with queries or complaints and feel that staff treat pupils fairly. Some pupils and parents are concerned about instances of bad behaviour and bullying. Pupils' views are mostly very positive. Pupils feel that Moorside is a good school to be at, that they are taught well and expected to do their best. Some pupils say that worthwhile homework is not set regularly and disagree that the school is interested in their views; these views were not expressed to the same extent in discussions with pupils. Inspectors found some good homework but agree that it is not set consistently. Inspectors agree with parents' and pupils' positive views and feel that the school is working very effectively to deal with the few instances of bad behaviour. They feel that the school involves pupils well and seeks, values and acts upon their views.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve, in order to raise standards further, are:

- continue to work at rectifying the few remaining shortcomings in teaching;
- continue to develop teachers' skills in providing pupils with good advice about how to improve their work and how to work and learn independently;
- continue to improve accommodation and resources for learning, particularly in the use of ICT in subjects and to create a more appropriate venue for lunchtimes;
- develop further provision for gifted and talented pupils;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- provide a daily act of collective worship.

THE SIXTH FORM AT MOORSIDE SCHOOL

The sixth form is much smaller than other sixth forms. Moorside sixth form students attend, full-time, the Moorlands Sixth Form Centre in Cheadle. This provision is run jointly by Painsley Catholic High School and Cheadle High School. Moorside School has associate membership.

This inspection undertook only a small scale sampling exercise of the work at Moorlands Sixth Form Centre because the centre was fully inspected less than a year ago in March 2003 as part of the inspection of Painsley Catholic High School.

OVERALL EVALUATION

This inspection confirms the findings of the March 2003 inspection. The paragraph below is taken from the summary written in March 2003. A full commentary on the work of the Moorlands Sixth Form Centre can be obtained from the centre.

The Moorlands Sixth Form Centre meets the needs of all sixth form students very well. **Educational provision is very good and cost effective.** A-level standards are well above average and students achieve results well in line with, and sometimes above, the predictions based on their performance in GCSE examinations. The teaching is very good and some is excellent. It gives students the opportunity and stimulus to take much responsibility for their own learning. The leadership and management of the Moorlands Centre are very good. Clear vision and considered planning for the future development of this already highly successful co-operative venture are matched by a good sense of realism and very effective use of available resources.

The main strengths and weaknesses, as stated in the March 2003 inspection, are:

- Standards on advanced course are well above average.
- The teaching is very good and enables students to achieve well.
- Students are impressively mature and responsible and contribute very well to their progress.
- The curriculum provides students who follow either advanced or intermediate courses with a very good range of choice to meet their needs.
- The leadership has clear vision for the further development of the Moorlands Sixth Form Centre and its rapid expansion is being very well managed.
- Specialist accommodation for science and physical education, and provision for private study and dining are insufficient. The plans approved to provide further specialist accommodation await implementation.
- The system for review of standards and educational provision in subjects taught by teachers from more than one partner school is not rigorous enough to ensure that planning for improvement is fully effective.

Since the inspection in March 2003, accommodation has been improved for science, with the addition of three new laboratories. The centre has made good progress in developing its systems for reviewing standards and educational provision by strengthening departmental self-evaluation with the support of

external advisers or consultants; further developments are planned to ensure a common approach across all departments.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve.

Thirteen subjects were inspected in full in March 2003 and a further two subjects, psychology and general studies, were inspected as part of the inspection of Moorside School in February 2004. The table overleaf is taken from the March 2003 summary and comments on psychology and general studies are appended.

Curriculum area	Overall judgment about provision, with comment (as stated in March 2003)
Mathematics	Good. Standards are well above average. Good teaching enables students to learn well, although they are not encouraged enough to take responsibility for their own learning.
Biology	Very good. Standards are well above average. Teaching is very good. The planning of lessons is excellent and enables students to achieve well.
Physics	Very good. Students' very positive attitudes help them to achieve well above average standards and make very good progress. Teaching is very good and teachers have excellent knowledge of their subject. Accommodation for physics is inadequate.
Design and technology (product design and textiles)	Very good. Excellent teaching in textiles lessons enthuses and inspires students to achieve impressive standards. In product design, standards are now above average. They are improving from a low base in recent years.
Information and communication technology	Very good. Students achieve highly. Standards are above average and improving. Very good teaching enables students to build very well on the skills and knowledge that they have gained in the main school.
Business	Very good. Students are achieving well as a result of the very good teaching. Results are continuing to improve and standards seen are well above average.
Physical education	Very good. Results are consistently well above average. Very good teaching and students' very positive attitudes enable them to achieve well.
Art	Good. Standards are above average. Teaching and learning are good and students achieve well. Art makes a good contribution to students' cultural development.
Geography	Very good. Students reached impressive standards in the 2002 AS-level examinations. Standards have recently risen considerably and those seen are now well above average because of the very good teaching and management of the subject.
History	Very good. Standards are well above average. Very good teaching and students' excellent attitudes enable them to extend their knowledge very well.
Sociology	Good. Standards improved considerably in the 2002 A-level examination. Students achieve well. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and careful planning enable students to learn well in lessons.
English	Good. Results have been consistently very good until 2002. Current standards are average and subject performance is recovering very well from recent staffing difficulties. Good teaching enables students to learn well in lessons, in both English language and literature.
French	Very good. Standards are well above average because very good teaching meets students' needs very well. Students are enthusiastic and learn very well independently.
General studies (Inspected in 2004)	Very good. Standards are above average. Teaching and learning are very good overall; teachers' expertise is well-matched to the units they teach and students are guided very well in examination techniques.
Psychology (Inspected in 2004)	Good. Standards are average and achievement above average overall. Teaching and learning are good. Complex statistical and analytical knowledge is taught clearly. Stimulus material is carefully chosen.

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports;

poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.

Work was sampled in seven other subjects in March 2003. Teaching was always at least good. Some very good teaching and learning were seen in chemistry, drama, German, music, psychology and travel and tourism. In most lessons, students were achieving above average standards. Standards were well above average in the advanced drama and chemistry courses.

In February 2004, seven subjects were sampled. In these, standards were well above average in drama and ICT and they were in line with or above average elsewhere. Teaching was mostly very good and never less than sound. Students have a very mature approach to their studies. Relationships are very good.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT (comments from March 2003 inspection)

Very good. Teachers provide valuable support and guidance for students whose progress is assessed and monitored very carefully. Clear and realistic targets are set to motivate them. Guidance about careers and higher education is excellent.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM (comments from March 2003 inspection)

Very good. Leadership has clear vision for the further development of the Moorlands Sixth Form Centre. Monitoring and evaluation of academic performance and educational provision are rigorous, but review of the quality of educational provision supplied by all the centre's providers is neither complete nor regular enough to ensure that planning for improvement is fully effective. Students achieve at least as well as they should, and often better. The teaching is very good and some is excellent. Management gives students equal access to the best possible, highly cost-effective choice of learning opportunities.

(Based on the February 2004 inspection) The involvement of Moorside governors in the management of Moorlands sixth form centre has been strengthened since March 2003. Moorside governors undertake some limited evaluations of the cost-effectiveness of buying into provision at Moorlands and this needs to be further developed, although this inspection found no reason for concern in this regard.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM (based on the February 2004 survey)

A very high proportion of students say that teaching is challenging and demanding, that they are helped to study independently and research, that students get on well together and that the centre is well run. A significant minority of students disagrees that there is an adult in the centre who knows them well and that they get well-informed careers advice. Almost half of the students feel that they were not given helpful advice on what to study. Inspectors confirm students' positive views. They feel that Moorside School now provides good advice about what students might study.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

This commentary covers the provision and outcomes for pupils in Years 7 to 11. A commentary on provision and outcomes for students in the sixth form can be seen in the inspection report for Painsley RC High School, produced in March 2003, which comments on the effectiveness of the Moorlands Sixth Form Centre where sixth form students from Moorside attend.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards are above average and achievement is good overall. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies considerably but is broadly average. Standards have risen in recent years, at a faster rate than nationally, because the school has been so successful in improving teaching and learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in national tests in Year 9 have been rising at a faster rate than nationally and are above average.
- GCSE examinations results are above average and they too have risen faster than results nationally.
- Pupils generally achieve well at each stage and in most subjects.
- Pupils have good skills in English language and literacy and their competence in ICT and mathematics is above average.
- The school does not identify clearly pupils who are gifted or talented, nor does it evaluate thoroughly these pupils' achievements.

Commentary

1. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies greatly and is average on the whole with above average attainment in the current Year 7.
2. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have risen at a faster rate than nationally and are now above average overall. The rate of improvement had been, until 2002, most marked in English where standards were below average in 1999 and rose to well above average in 2002; they then dipped to average in 2003 mainly as a result of an unsettled period in the staffing of English. Results in mathematics and science have been maintained at above average levels for the last three years. Results in 2003 were broadly in line with the school's targets. The test results show that pupils' achievements over Years 7 to 9 were good overall, taking account of pupils' attainment on entry to the school; achievements were lower than average in English and very good in mathematics and science. Achievement in English has improved and is now good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.0 (35.6)	33.4 (33.3)
mathematics	37.0 (35.7)	35.4 (34.7)
science	35.5 (34.1)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 138 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Standards in Years 7 to 9 seen during the inspection were very high in history and above average in most other subjects, except geography, design and technology and physical education, where they were average.

4. GCSE examination results in 2003 were above average overall and have also improved in recent years faster than the national rate of improvement. Results in science were significantly above the national average in 2003 but results were below average in geography, German and ICT.

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	56 (54)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	98 (97)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	37.8 (34.7)	36.3 (34.7)

There were 139 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Compared with other subjects that pupils took at GCSE, results were relatively strong in science and French but relatively weak in design and technology, English language and literature, mathematics, geography and ICT.
6. Standards seen in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection were above average overall. As in Years 7 to 9, they were above average in most subjects, except geography, design and technology and physical education, where they were average. They were also average in music and citizenship.
7. Across the school, pupils have good skills in English language and literacy and also above average competence in mathematics and ICT. The school has worked successfully to develop these skills, particularly in literacy, where a concerted effort has been made to nurture pupils' skills, with the aid of nationally provided guidance and with the support and enthusiasm of staff. A similar concerted and successful approach is being taken to promote pupils' numeracy skills and to ensure that the use of these skills too is encouraged across the curriculum. Skills in ICT, whilst good overall, are not being developed as consistently as those in literacy and numeracy, mainly because access to computers is still too limited for routine use in subjects.
8. Achievement is good at all stages overall and in most subjects because good teaching enables pupils to build well on their prior learning. Where achievement is sound rather than good, it is because pupils have had some lack of continuity in teaching, or have been taught, albeit temporarily, by non-specialist teachers, or because teaching does not fully take account of the specific needs of individuals or groups in consolidating learning before taking the next steps.
9. Gender differences in performance do exist and girls generally perform better than boys. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good and is carefully tracked against the pupils' academic targets. Most pupils with SEN attain their targets and some exceed them; only a few fall short of their targets. Pupils who have English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers and achieve well; pupils who are gifted and talented make reasonable progress but their achievements could be better, given greater challenge.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour is good as are their attitudes to work and towards others in the school. Their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and actively promotes an atmosphere where all forms of harassment are discouraged.
- Pupils are enthusiastic in their approach to lessons.
- The school is not doing enough to improve the level of attendance.

Commentary

10. The school has a very clear system for controlling behaviour, supported by parents and respected by pupils. This consists of a combination of rewards and sanctions which actively encourages good behaviour and discourages bad behaviour. As a result, pupils behave well in the majority of lessons and assemblies, and generally move around the school in an orderly fashion. However, they can be rather boisterous at times, especially at lunchtime when they are queuing outside the dining hall, and inside it is often very noisy. The continual reinforcement of the behaviour codes is the main reason for the very low number of exclusions for a school of this size.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	700	22	2
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	4	0	0

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

11. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning in the majority of lessons. They arrive promptly, get down to work quickly, and respond well to teachers' instructions. Where the teaching is particularly stimulating, they respond with enthusiasm and, even when it is less so, they are willing workers and concentrate well. They show respect for each other and co-operate well in group activities. Attitudes are generally very good in mathematics, modern foreign languages and music, and excellent in history where there are high expectations of pupils and teachers create an environment where learning can flourish.
12. Attendance has declined since the last inspection; it was below the national median in 2002-03 and is currently around the level of a typical secondary school. The school constantly seeks to work with pupils with poor attendance, below 80 per cent, in conjunction with their parents. It also seeks to reward those with one hundred per cent attendance with certificates and rewards ranging from money-off vouchers to a mountain bike. Heads of Year are introducing incentives to encourage competition between tutor groups but there is no whole-school scheme to support this. However, whilst those with very low or very high levels of attendance are suitably addressed, others who regularly take occasional days off are insufficiently identified and targeted. There is also a lack of real focus within the school on the importance of attendance or a firm policy for addressing the increasing number of holidays taken during term-time. Whilst a few pupils arrive late in the mornings, this is rarely after the start of the first lesson and does not

seriously disrupt their own and others' education. Most pupils arrive promptly at lessons during the day.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2002-2003

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.4	School data	1.5
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

13. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This was a key issue at the time of the last inspection and has been addressed through the drafting and application of a whole school policy and an audit of learning opportunities in each subject.
14. Pupils are offered satisfactory opportunities for spiritual development. Their introduction to the study of Buddhism includes personal experience of the sitting positions for meditation, for example. Their creative writing and responses to poetry in English go beyond the rational. The programme of school and year group assemblies has been revised to include reflection on festivals from major world religions. Schemes of work in most subjects, however, do not refer to a spiritual dimension.
15. Provision for moral development is good. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond with courtesy and consideration. Pupils discuss with respect for others' feelings such issues as HIV/Aids in science, euthanasia in religious education and post-war reconstruction in history. In English, they explore sensitively father-son relationships and the morality of characters in *Macbeth*.
16. The school provides good opportunities for pupils' social development. Pupils collaborate well in group and paired work and are willing contributors to discussions. There is a strong sense of community within the school and pupils respect their environment. They value the role of the school council in listening to their suggestions. Each year group co-operates well to support a local or national charity and there are good links with the local special school.
17. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. In music, food and textiles, pupils appreciate a wide range of cultural traditions and world literature is well integrated into the English curriculum. Visits to France are arranged for three year groups and the local environment is well used for geography fieldwork. The school does not provide sufficient opportunities to prepare pupils for citizenship in multicultural Britain.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the school community. Most have a positive attitude to learning. They feel respected and respond readily to the encouragement and help offered by staff and other pupils, well exemplified by their good progress with reading in the reading club, where they are paired with Year 10 helpers. Most of those with behaviour problems work well with the members of the SEN department in the generation of their individual education plans and, by attaining their targets, improve their behaviour.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. Assessment systems and strategies are mostly good. The curriculum is sound and includes a reasonable range of enrichment opportunities. Pupils have access to very good advice, support and guidance. The school works very well to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Accommodation and resources for learning have some shortcomings and are unsatisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. The school has been successful in developing teaching in recent years. Pupils expect to work hard and most concentrate well. The **assessment** of pupils' work and progress is generally **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good command of their subjects and most plan lessons very well.
- The level of teachers' expectation and challenge is very high in most lessons, although not quite as high for gifted and talented pupils.
- The school has successfully encouraged teachers to widen their range of teaching methods so that most lessons are interesting and engage pupils well.
- Most pupils work diligently, putting good effort into their work, even when teaching is pedestrian. Their skills of independent learning are sound but could be better.
- Pupils do not always get clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Commentary

19. Most teachers have very good subject knowledge. They plan lessons very well, making good use of the many recent national initiatives that have supported the development of teaching and learning. In just over a quarter of lessons, teaching and learning are of very high quality and pupils learn quickly because their interest is held by the fast pace, vibrant presentations and challenging tasks. In nearly half of the lessons, teaching and learning are good and pupils make good progress because teaching is clear about how to provide the necessary next steps to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Roughly two in ten lessons are sound, with reasonable learning gains but with some minor disruptions, slow pace or uninspiring explanations. In a few lessons, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, mainly because the teachers' subject knowledge is limited when teaching outside their specialism; sometimes it is because the teacher has poor skills in recognising pupils' specific needs and does not match work well to them. These figures represent a considerable improvement since the previous inspection and the improvements to teaching and learning have played an obvious and crucial part in raising standards at this school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 135 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (3%)	32 (24%)	61 (45%)	30 (22%)	7 (5%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)

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

20. The quality of teaching and learning varies slightly across the school; it is slightly better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. Teaching and learning are very good in history because pupils are encouraged very effectively to seek out reasons for events and behaviours in the past and they can relate so well to the situations they study through thought-provoking and engaging teaching. In most other subjects, teaching and learning are good overall. They are sound in geography, design and technology, physical education and citizenship.
21. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in history and German and in Years 8, 9 and 10:
- A Year 8 history lesson on 'what makes a good business' placed high demands on pupils' thinking skills so that they drew on their previous learning about the slave trade and industrial Britain and forged links with economic and industrial understanding in a way that was both immensely enjoyable and satisfying for pupils who relished their learning gains.

- Year 8 and 9 German lessons in which a fast pace of learning through many, varied sharply focused activities enabled pupils to acquire great proficiency in newly acquired grammatical forms – all within an atmosphere of fun and with excellent relationships.
 - A Year 10 history lesson on the peace settlement at the end of World War One enabled pupils to appreciate the complexities of the arrangements because the teachers' explanations were absorbing, meticulously planned and given with great humour and sympathy.
22. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well and consequently make good progress. All pupils entering the school are assessed and those identified as having special educational needs are given individual education plans compiled by the SEN department in conjunction with subject departments, teachers, parents and pupils. These have crisp attainable short-term targets with effective strategies for obtaining them and are regularly reviewed. In addition, all staff have a copy of the very useful special needs handbook and the education plans, which most use to good effect to modulate their approach so that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve well. Where pupils are in sets, those with special educational needs are often grouped into smaller sets where the curriculum can be more easily tailored to their requirements and classroom support can be concentrated.
23. Teaching promotes and develops well pupils' skills in literacy across the subjects. Some good work has similarly been undertaken to develop numeracy skills. The use of ICT across all subjects for teaching and learning is still being developed; its use is generally satisfactory but access to resources is still a limiting factor. Some good use is made of interactive whiteboards in mathematics and modern foreign languages.
24. Teachers have developed reasonably well their understanding of how attainment data can be used to promote pupils' progress. Some good strategies for assessment are in place and these are generally used well. Teachers know what can be expected of pupils, because they are provided with such information and this results in their setting appropriately high standards for most pupils, although those who are gifted and talented are not always provided with sufficient challenge. Marking is mostly good and gives pupils a clear understanding of what they have attained but marking or verbal comments do not routinely indicate how pupils might obtain higher grades or levels. Teachers are rightly considering how best to develop in pupils the skills of independent learning as these skills are only sound when they could be considerably better, given pupil's good attitudes to school and learning. Some good examples exist of pupils having to plan their own work and undertake research but they are generally limited. In subjects such as science and history, pupils are encouraged to pose their own questions to explore and, through such activity, pupils are developing their skills of enquiry.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. Statutory curriculum requirements are met, with the exception of the daily act of collective worship. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and generally meets pupils' needs and ensures progression for learning. Staffing is good overall. Provision of accommodation and resources is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is good overall.
- Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

25. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the statutory requirements in all respects except that a daily act of worship is not provided. The school has been successful in introducing a limited range of vocational courses in childcare, physical education, information systems and

business. There are plans to extend this element with GNVQ courses. A few pupils in Year 10 are disapplied from taking a foreign language and they take a basic skills course that is certificated. The establishment of good links with the feeder primary schools ensures smooth progression into school and continuity of learning, especially in the core subjects.

26. Overall, the provision for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. There is a draft policy for these pupils but the precision with which pupils are identified and extended by challenging tasks is inconsistent across subjects. Their experiences are enhanced through the links with the sixth form centre and a variety of extra-curricular activities.
27. A reasonable range of opportunities exists for the pupils to enrich and extend their learning. Pupils value the chance to follow particular interests outside of lessons. Activities include clubs in science, dance and keyboard. Opportunities are available to participate in sport and also in the arts through the orchestra, the choir, theatre visits and a school production. Visits abroad are arranged to broaden pupils' cultural horizons. In history, besides a wide range of visits and activities, members of the local community come in to the school to recall their experiences during the Second World War, for example.
28. Pupils receive good support for their work outside the classroom. A study skills seminar provided valuable support for learning for some Year 9 pupils, for example. Revision classes are offered for the GCSE examination in English, mathematics, design and technology, and ICT.
29. Overall, there are sufficient teachers with qualifications and experience to meet the needs of the curriculum. Staffing is good in ICT, music and science. There are weaknesses in design and technology, where there is a poor match of expertise to the subjects taught, and in citizenship, where teachers lack experience of the work. In English, the school has found it difficult to fill a long-term vacancy on a permanent basis. There is a good match of support staff to the needs of the curriculum. The number of learning support assistants is very good and they contribute substantially to the progress being made by pupils with special educational needs. Technical support in science is good but there are too few technicians in design and technology.
30. Accommodation is currently unsatisfactory in textiles, modern foreign languages and physical education. There is a need to refurbish these areas, as they are hardly adequate to sustain the curriculum. The dining facility is totally inadequate and provides a negative experience for the pupils.
31. Resources for teaching and learning are unsatisfactory to meet the overall needs of the curriculum. The main shortcoming is that too few opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT to support their learning, particularly in design and technology, mathematics and music. The school library is under stocked with only limited access for pupils and there is a shortage of texts in modern foreign languages and mathematics.
32. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs very well. Many subjects have smaller sets with extra support to accommodate these pupils. The individual education plans are well organised to facilitate the pupils' academic progress. Pupils are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants. Where they are withdrawn for special tuition, this is appropriate and they receive expert tuition from well-qualified helpers. Extra help is provided with reading and mathematics in lunchtime clubs. Many of the dyslexic pupils join the weekly course provided in association with the Dyslexia Institute, which is deservedly popular and effective. The special needs staff are well qualified and very committed; they frequently take courses to enhance what they already do well. The resources available for special educational needs are good and there is a good learning support centre where pupils are always made welcome. However, the access for wheelchair pupils is unsatisfactory, there being no lifts and few ramps.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils. It also provides them with very good support, advice and guidance. It actively seeks to involve its pupils by seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well cared for in a safe and healthy environment.
- The school is very successful in providing personal support, advice and guidance for its pupils, who develop very trusting relationships with adults within the school.
- Pupils' views are sought and valued, and pupils are fully involved in setting their own learning targets.

Commentary

33. The school has worked very hard since the last full inspection to improve the arrangements for health and safety in the school. Security has benefited greatly from the fencing around the perimeter and from a very effective closed circuit television system. The new arrangements for ensuring parents can collect their children by car, using a separate entrance to buses, are proving effective in ensuring a smooth and safe departure from school. Those walking home use footpaths separated by fencing from the busy traffic on the site and are well supervised by a team of teachers. Similar teams are also on duty before school and at breaktimes during the day. Regular health and safety audits are carried out. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken for all trips outside school and for specific activities in lessons, especially in areas such as science and design and technology. No major health and safety concerns were identified during the inspection. The system for child protection is firmly established with two senior members of staff fully trained in its implementation and all members of staff aware of the procedure for identifying and reporting any concerns.
34. Pupils with special educational needs are very well cared for, guided and supported. The SEN department knows its pupils well and provides a friendly base, where help and advice are always available. Some pupils have learning mentors accredited by the Beth Johnson Foundation. All have access to personal advice and help. Support in lessons is of a high quality, as is that given by visiting tutors. Assessment information is well utilised to provide advice. There are good links with outside agencies, which are well exploited to help pupils with specific difficulties, such as dyslexia and hearing impairment.
35. Heads of year and the individual year tutors get to know their pupils very well as they stay with them throughout their time in the school. The school also benefits from and values the services of two personal advisers from the Connexions Service offering career guidance and counselling. The service works well with the school to provide appropriate advice to pupils on what to do next and also in arranging suitable work experience. Parents are very appreciative of the support, advice and guidance their children receive.
36. Year councils, consisting of representatives from each tutor group, meet every half-term, when they discuss aspects of their school life which concern them. Where possible, the head of year takes steps to implement any proposals or, if they relate to the whole school, they are referred to the school council, which meets every term. There are also occasional surveys of pupils' views on topics such as school uniform and healthy eating. Most pupils are also involved in the setting of their own targets and those with special educational needs are fully involved in their personal reviews. Whilst 80 per cent of pupils in Years 7 to 9 who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire felt the school was interested in their views, this figure drops to 66 per cent in Years 10 and 11. On talking to pupils, these figures seem to reflect the more limited opportunities the pupils feel they have to influence their own education as they get older. Inspectors feel that the school works well to involve pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a good relationship with parents and carers. Its links with the community are satisfactory and they are good with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are provided with a good level of information about the progress made by their children.
- The school needs to involve its parents more in helping to shape the future direction of the school.
- The school has not fully exploited the opportunities offered by the community to broaden its pupils' experiences.
- The school has established links with other schools which clearly benefit the progress of pupils.

Commentary

37. Parents receive regular information on the progress being made by their children. Once a year, they get a full report which includes an assessment of pupils' personal development and an analysis of their strengths and areas for development in each subject. In addition, there are two progress reports a year which record where a pupil is in terms of reaching a target grade in each subject. Where these highlight subjects showing cause for concern, parents are contacted to discuss the situation. In addition to this, there is one formal opportunity for parents to discuss their children's progress with subject teachers. This is a good system appreciated by most parents.
38. The school seeks its parents' views through questionnaires distributed at each parents' evening. This is effective in ensuring a high response, but it means that it takes a year to cover the whole school. Also, while the school does find them useful and makes changes on the strength of them, feedback from these returns is rarely given to parents. Whilst there is clearly a good level of support for the school from parents, there is little opportunity for them to demonstrate this, especially now that the parent-teacher association no longer exists. The fact that one-third of parents answering the pre-inspection questionnaire did not feel their views were sought shows the school has some way to go to fully involve its parents in the life of the school.
39. The police support group, which meets in the school every half-term, chaired by the headteacher, is a particularly good example of a school working with its community. The group comprises representatives from the police, local councils, the clergy and various support agencies. One meeting discussed the problem of anti-social behaviour in the surrounding neighbourhood, for example. However, apart from this, community links are very limited in the impact they have on pupils' learning. The very good relationship with a major industrial company at the time of the last full inspection has ceased and has not been replaced. Valuable contacts have been established with a large number of employers through the Year 11 work experience programme and through the school's Industry Day. However, these have not been developed in terms of providing more sources for subject-specific projects, such as the one Year 9 have in physics linked to a nearby power station. Visitors from the local community are limited in number, although the involvement of members of the Over-50's Club in listening to readers and sharing their life experiences is a good example of the benefits such visits can bring.
40. There are good links with primary schools, which enable a smooth transition and a continuation of the appropriate support. The school has a formal link with two secondary schools to provide for its sixth form students and this link is very effective.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A clear drive for improvement has resulted in the school making very good progress since the last full inspection.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and her very clear vision is shared and supported by all staff.
- Governance is very good.
- Relationships are strong and are based on mutual respect.
- Management processes have many strengths, including those for staff deployment and finance.

Commentary

41. The headteacher drives the school with a very clear sense of direction. She is an outstanding teacher who provides a strong role model to all staff. She is open and welcomes support from her colleagues, and provides opportunities for staff to develop their potential. She has made a strong commitment to developing the administrative team as a means of freeing up teachers to focus on their core business of teaching and learning. The headteacher, with the senior team, are a powerful force for school improvement.
42. Governance is very good overall. The governing body knows the school well and works in very effective partnership with senior managers to improve the school. Governors show themselves capable of taking bold decisions, as in the relocation of the sixth form. The involvement of Moorside governors in the management of Moorlands Sixth Form Centre has been strengthened since March 2003. Moorside governors undertake some limited evaluations of the cost-effectiveness of buying into provision at Moorlands and, although this inspection found no reason for concern at Moorlands, evaluation processes could be further developed.
43. Finances are managed effectively and efficiently and support the school development plan. The plan is a good document but only covers one year. The school has fully recovered from the major shortcomings identified in the 2000 inspection. It has successfully raised standards by achieving very effectively its short-term and sharply focused targets. It has a capacity and determination to improve even further and is ready to start planning for its longer term development.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,025,080	Balance from previous year	15,450
Total expenditure	1,961,525	Balance carried forward to the next	79,005
Expenditure per pupil	2,698		

44. Leadership at the middle management level is good and it is very good in science and history. All departments support the school's vision through their development plans, making a positive contribution to achieving the school's goals. Heads of department are often energetic leaders as well as good teachers who lead by example.
45. Performance management is well organised and carried out effectively. There are clear and appropriate procedures and policies in place. The outcomes are used well to determine training needs and to influence the school development plan. Although budgetary constraints affect the levels of training that can be provided, performance management contributes well to improving

standards in the school.

46. The provision made for professional development is good. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of how training and development opportunities will be used to bring about improvement. Very good attention is given to meeting the personal and career needs of individual staff. The priorities for professional development are very clear and relate well to the key areas for raising standards in the school. The strategies for providing development opportunities for all staff are well considered, and lead to a good blend of outside support and in-school training events being organised. This allows the limited budget available to be used very well. The induction arrangements for new staff are effective, and the one newly qualified teacher has received good support and training. As a result of the previous concerns about the school's effectiveness, there is no involvement at present with initial teacher training.
47. The leadership and management of the special educational needs department are very good indeed, leading to a cohesive and dedicated group who are going forward strongly. Whilst the Governors' Annual Report did not evaluate the effectiveness of the special needs policy, it was closely followed by a newsletter that did so.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Schemes of work are well planned to interest pupils through varied and purposeful activity.
- The department is an effective and collaborative team whose strong subject knowledge serves pupils well.
- The emphasis on developing literacy skills promotes pupils' progress.
- In many lessons, well managed group work develops pupils' ability to discuss, analyse and present information and opinion.
- There is some inconsistency in the detail and precision of teachers' marking and target setting.
- Too few opportunities exist for pupils to develop the skills and disciplines of drama.

Commentary

48. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is average. Standards in 2003 in the end of Year 9 tests were in line with those in schools nationally and with the results in schools in similar contexts. In GCSE examinations in 2003, overall performance was slightly below the national average. Girls do better than average for their gender, particularly in language, but boys do significantly worse. Taking prior attainment into account, the pupils made unsatisfactory progress between Years 7 and 11 because of weaknesses that existed in the past. Progress is now good because educational provision has improved.
49. Standards seen during the inspection (average in Years 7 to 9 and above average in Years 10 and 11) give a better picture than do the 2003 test and examination results. Pupils achieve increasingly well as they go through the school in response to teaching which is generally well planned, lively, and alert to the particular needs of individuals. An insistent focus on developing literacy is another positive element in pupils' overall good achievement. Pupils' writing shows good development in range and assurance over time. This is true for pupils of all abilities. Standards in speaking and listening are sound but less advanced than in reading and writing because many pupils lack confidence.
50. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall and in Years 10 and 11 it is good and sometimes better. Carefully judged teaching is now resulting in good, clear progress. Just occasionally, teaching is unsatisfactory, mainly because pace is slow and tasks do not stretch the able pupils. Learning is also occasionally unsatisfactory, even when teaching is sound, because some pupils have become disengaged as a result of their previous experience of inadequate supply teaching. Much more typical, however, is lively and challenging work, as seen in a lesson on '*An Inspector Calls*', for example, or on Benjamin Zephaniah's '*Wise Old Timer*', or on Danny Abse's '*Imitations*', where pupils of all abilities were appropriately challenged through expertly managed group work, and the very secure subject knowledge and high expectations of their teachers. In these lessons, pupils worked hard, co-operatively and enjoyably to produce work of real quality. Assessment is generally good. Marking is positive and regular, but not all teachers give sufficiently precise targets for improvement. ICT is used regularly to draft and edit written work and is a motivating factor in achieving high standards of presentation. Pupils with SEN achieve well because good teaching meets their needs.

51. The head of department provides good leadership. Schemes of work are detailed and well resourced, so that both teachers and pupils are clear about what is to be learned and how. Texts for study are carefully chosen to make sequential and increasing demands and to take account of the interests of both boys and girls. Encouragement and collaboration lead to commitment and mutual support amongst the English team. The head of department's own work offers a very good model of high expectations and energetic, pupil-centred teaching. Management is satisfactory. The department has yet to develop a more critical edge to self-evaluation in order to embed the best practice in marking, assessment and active learning across the department.
52. Staffing difficulties affected negatively the examination results in 2003. The setting arrangements in Years 7 to 9 are inflexible and do not provide the best opportunities for a significant number of pupils. The opportunities for teaching and learning through drama are very limited. This is regrettable, particularly in the light of the school's focus on encouraging pupils' independent learning and personal confidence. Nevertheless, since the last inspection, strides forward have been made in effective planning, in literacy development, and in the overall quality of teaching. There is now a clear focus on developing the achievement of pupils (particularly boys and the most able) which is having an effect on standards. Improvement since the last inspection has, therefore, been satisfactory overall.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Literacy development is a priority for the school. There is a policy, and the literacy work of departments is audited. Provision in most subjects is good. In English, geography, history, science and modern languages, for example, good support exists for extended writing. In nearly every subject, the influence of the National Strategy for literacy and teaching at Key Stage 3 was clear and beneficial. Because of these arrangements, pupils' standards of literacy are generally good.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high proportion of very good and outstanding teaching leading to good learning and achievement across the years.
- A small amount of unsatisfactory or poor teaching in French results in unsatisfactory learning and achievement for some groups.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour in the classroom is very good.
- The results in French GCSE in 2003 were above the national average.
- The marking of homework is not always accurate or regular.

Commentary

54. The results in French in 2003 were above the national average and an improvement on those of the previous year. Pupils did better in French than in most of their other subjects. For the boys, French was their best result on average. The GCSE German results in 2003 were significantly below the national average, worse than the results of the year before. Pupils, especially the girls, did significantly worse in German than in most other subjects at GCSE. However, the staffing difficulties behind this decline in German have now been resolved.
55. Standards seen during the inspection are in line with national averages overall. In Year 11, they are above average in both French and German. Most pupils in Years 9 and 11 speak and write well about events in the past, present and future, with accurate use of grammar and a wide range of vocabulary. The recent emphasis on speaking skills is paying dividends, although some older pupils are not as fluent as they might be and their pronunciation can still be weak. In Years 10 and 11, in particular, there are some good pieces of extended writing with interesting phrases

and complex sentence structure. Some younger pupils in Years 7 to 9 are careless in their spelling and grammatical accuracy, which could be corrected by more regular and accurate marking of work.

56. Achievement is good overall. It is good in Years 10 and 11 in French, and in all years in German. In Years 8 and 9, the higher attaining pupils in German make outstanding progress in the very limited number of lessons they have. The very good achievement of most higher attaining pupils in both French and German is linked to the very high quality of teaching and the fact that the pupils are grouped with others of similar ability. Lower attaining pupils also achieve well, reaching very pleasing standards in spoken and written French and German. Pupils' achievement is enhanced by the very good relationships which exist in most groups and by their very positive attitudes to learning, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teaching and learning are overall very good in German, outstanding in Years 8 and 9, and there is some very good teaching in French. The best lessons are planned meticulously with clear objectives for each exercise, a wide variety of activities which keep pupils motivated and engaged, and a very brisk pace, which leads to excellent use of time and very productive learning. The best teachers manage their classes very well and pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are fully integrated. Teachers are very aware of pupils' individual needs. Even within the sets, they make sure pupils are working at their own best levels. The principles of the National Strategy for teaching languages in Years 7 to 9 are included in the detailed lesson plans, with the result that the work of analysing texts and enriching pupils' own language is conducted effectively. Teachers are very aware of the levels of the National Curriculum and grades at GCSE and every pupil knows how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their standards. Some unsatisfactory teaching in French is characterised by inappropriate methods and a poor use of time.
58. The department is managed well, with good professional and personal support from the head of department, who facilitates the sharing of good practice. Most teachers are keen to learn and improve, and the school has been generous in providing professional development. All the issues from the last inspection have been tackled and improvement has been good, with particular success in expanding teaching and learning styles. Further improvement in this area may be hampered by the cramped accommodation and the low level of resourcing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Taking the years 2001-03 together, the performance at the end of Year 9 in the national tests is above average.
- The National Strategy for Years 7 to 9 is being implemented effectively.
- Good leadership of the department is having a positive effect on standards.
- The use of ICT and investigative work is sound overall but needs to be further developed.
- The performance of boys in GCSE examinations is too low.
- More able pupils are not always provided with sufficiently challenging work.

Commentary

59. Pupils' attainment in mathematics on entry to the school is broadly average overall. At the end of Year 9, national test results were above the national average in 2003 when compared with results in all and similar schools. The performance of the pupils over the period 2001 –2003 in the tests was above the national average. This represents good achievement. The girls out-perform the boys in these tests.

60. The GCSE results in 2003 were slightly below the national average for the percentage of pupils gaining grades A*-C and slightly above for the percentage gaining A*-G. This represents satisfactory achievement. The girls out-performed the boys significantly at this level in these examinations. In 2003, pupils did slightly less well in mathematics than in the other subjects they took: this can be attributed to some inconsistencies in staffing. Currently, all the teachers have a qualification to teach the subject but not all are permanent members of the department. The percentage of pupils gaining the top grades needs to be improved as, in 2003, it was lower than could be expected.
61. Current work seen in lessons and in pupils' exercise books shows that standards are above average. The work of the majority of the pupils shows much care and attention; pupils' knowledge is built upon well, resulting in good overall achievement. This was exemplified in a lesson in Year 9 on calculating the gradients of straight lines in which the pupils remained fully involved throughout and by the end of the lesson their knowledge and understanding were much increased. Similar good progress was seen in a Year 10 lesson on centre of enlargement. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Where support assistants and mentors are available for individual pupils, they are deployed effectively. The progress of pupils with SEN is being assisted by well-written individual educational plans (IEPs). Gifted and talented pupils are not readily identified and, although work for the more able is identified in teachers' planning, too little of this extension work is being used in lessons or for homework. Pupils' overall attitudes to mathematics are good. Pupils generally work hard and stay on task.
62. Teaching and learning are good overall, with no unsatisfactory teaching. Mathematics lessons benefit from good planning, good quality explanations and well-judged teacher interventions. Some good use of an interactive white board and overhead transparencies motivates pupils well and ensures a good pace to learning. In Years 7 to 9, the implementation of the National Strategy is having a positive effect. Where teaching and learning are satisfactory, rather than better, this is because teaching does not quite devote enough time to explanation and illustration to ensure that the main points are fully grasped by pupils. Homework is set regularly and well marked with helpful comments.
63. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader is moving this department forward. She has a clear vision of how the subject should be taught. She has established a good team spirit among the other team members, supporting them well, making an effort to monitor and evaluate the work of the department in order to inform future priorities and targets for improvement. A good system for tracking pupils' progress has been introduced, using prior attainment information and target setting. The use of ICT and investigative work to support pupils' learning, whilst sound overall, is still too limited. Accommodation is good and resources are satisfactory, although there are some shortages of textbooks. The school banding arrangements, particularly in Years 10 and 11, are proving to be a barrier to giving appropriate work to a minority of pupils. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good because the National Strategy has been implemented well to improve provision and pupils have a better understanding of their own achievements in mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Pupils' competence in mathematics is good. Policy and guidance on developing pupils' skills in mathematics across the curriculum are now in place. All staff have received training in this aspect of their work. A cross-curriculum group of teachers monitors the implementation of the policy. The head of mathematics is actively examining the schemes of work of other departments to see how they can be even more effective in benefiting pupils. Good work was seen in developing pupils' skills in extracting information from graphs, tables, charts and diagrams in science, design and technology, English, geography, physical education and French. Good work in data handling and making predictions was observed in history, science, English, geography and design and technology. Improvement since the last inspection is good because there is now a co-ordinated and effective approach to this aspect of the curriculum across the school.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership has produced significant improvements since the last inspection.
- Pupils respond very well when teaching provides high levels of challenge.
- Learning is good in lessons as a result of well-planned and organised teaching.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- National test and examination results are above average.
- Better and more frequent opportunities are needed for pupils to work independently and to think more for themselves.

Commentary

65. Standards have risen considerably since the inspection in 1999 and are now above average overall. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were above average and higher than those of the previous year. Standards improved faster than the national trend. The percentage of pupils attaining higher than expected levels was well above average. Girls' attainment was higher than that of boys. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2003 were above average and higher than in 2002. Girls' attainment was much higher than that of boys with many more girls gaining the highest grades. Both boys and girls performed significantly better in science than in their other subjects.
66. Standards seen during the inspection were also above average. Attainment is somewhat higher in Years 10 and 11 where pupils have developed better independent learning skills. This is particularly noticeable in the very good standards of work produced by higher attaining girls, which mirrors recent examination results.
67. Pupils enter the school with average attainment in science. By the end of Year 9, most of them have a good knowledge of scientific concepts and are developing effective investigational skills, although some pupils need to consolidate their understanding more. Achievement is good and similar for boys and girls. Achievement is also good in Years 10 and 11 where most pupils have become proficient in using a range of ideas to understand more complex situations. Many higher attaining girls achieve very well through sustained hard work. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support from teaching assistants and make good progress. Whilst positive efforts are made to encourage gifted and able pupils, as in a well organised 'Super Science' day, this aspect still needs further development.
68. Teaching and learning are good overall. In most lessons, pupils learn well because teachers plan and structure the work effectively. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is generally better than in Years 7-9, since teachers use their subject knowledge more confidently and expectations are higher. Although the National Strategy has begun to improve standards well in Years 7 to 9, pupils are not yet given enough opportunities to think ideas through for themselves and teachers sometimes make too few demands on pupils' understanding; this is characteristic of work both in lessons and at home. Pupils are keen to learn and respond particularly well when teaching offers high levels of challenge and good involvement in the work. These features are less secure in weaker lessons where teachers over-direct the work and give insufficient attention to assessing and developing pupils' learning. As a result, because some pupils are rather reluctant to ask for help, they have too little awareness of how to improve.
69. Leadership is very good. The head of department has established highly effective team working and involves all the staff well when planning changes. He provides a very clear sense of direction and has a firm determination to raise standards further. The development plan is well considered and demonstrates good insight into the subject's current strengths and weaknesses. Management is good, with work being well co-ordinated and resources used effectively. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet sufficiently thorough to allow best

practice to be shared properly. There has been very good improvement since the inspection in 2000. Standards have risen significantly and science is now one of the most successful subjects, having been one of the weakest. Teaching and learning have improved greatly and this has helped to raise overall achievement levels. Pupils with special educational needs now make good progress. Schemes of work have been brought up-to-date and investigational work has improved as a result. However, although accommodation and resources have improved, there are still too few computers in the department and limited data logging equipment; as a result, pupils have insufficient opportunities to use ICT for scientific purposes.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge.
- Pupils with special needs achieve very well.
- Standards of work of pupils taking GCSE in Year 11 are well above average.
- The presentation and organisation of pupils' work in Years 7, 8 and 9 have some shortcomings.
- Resources, whilst sound, need to be improved so that pupils do not always have to share and can learn independently.
- Liaison between the ICT department and other departments, to monitor provision and the progress of pupils, is not sufficiently close.

Commentary

70. Year 7 pupils entered the school in 2003 with above average ability in ICT. The standards of pupils entering in previous years have been below average. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are well above average and these standards are confirmed by inspection evidence.
71. Examination results in 2003 were well below average for those pupils taking the full GCSE course and very low for those taking the short course. Girls performed better than boys in both courses but their results were still below average. Very few pupils achieved the highest grades. Results in 2003 were affected adversely by staffing difficulties. Current pupils are benefiting from more stable staffing and from the enthusiasm and subject knowledge of staff. This improvement in provision has led to higher standards and current standards seen in Years 10 and 11 are well above average standards in Years 10-11 for those taking the full GCSE course. Standards for those taking the short GCSE course are average overall.
72. The achievement of pupils in all years, whilst varied, is good overall. Achievement is broadly similar for girls and boys. Pupils with special needs achieve very well, working in smaller class sizes with extra support and teaching which carefully addresses and meets their needs. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They listen well and respond positively to challenging work. Their work benefits from their good literacy skills. The achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 taking the GCSE full course is very good and for those taking the short course it is good.
73. Teaching and learning are good overall. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are motivated and supported well by teaching which is focused closely upon examination requirements. Pupils' work is accurately assessed and teachers provide extra support for those pupils who need it. In Years 7 to 9, teachers follow the recommended syllabus and plan thoroughly to set challenging work across all strands of ICT, including control technology. Very good use is made in all classes of technology to ensure pupils' attention. In lessons, teachers assess pupils' understanding well and effectively respond to pupils' needs by changing plans when necessary to improve learning. In some lessons, pupils have to share computers and, while this is not currently affecting their learning, it is limiting their ability to work independently. The presentation and storage of pupils'

work also need to be improved so that teachers can more effectively assess learning and monitor progress.

74. Leadership and management are good. After a period of staffing instability, qualified and enthusiastic staff are now in post. There is a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the department and a determination to set high standards and improve results. There has been a good improvement in the provision of ICT since the last inspection. More time has been allocated to the subject in Years 7, 8 and 9. All pupils have access to an accredited course in Years 10 and 11. Resources and staffing have also improved.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. Pupils' competence in ICT is generally good. There has been an improvement in the use of ICT across the curriculum since the last inspection; it is satisfactory overall but varies from subject to subject. In mathematics and modern languages, good use is made of newly acquired interactive whiteboards. ICT is used effectively for project work and research in history and geography. Resources remain a problem for science, music, and design and technology, where progress in the use of ICT remains more limited, as it does in art. The use of ICT suites is currently audited but the overall management of the use of ICT across the curriculum has some shortcomings: there is too little monitoring of pupils' access to and use of ICT in subjects because liaison over this between departments is not sufficiently close.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department does not make clear to pupils its expectations and strategies for raising standards.
- The pace of teaching is sometimes not sufficiently challenging to raise the achievement of all pupils.
- Gifted and able pupils do not do enough independent work which allows them to think for themselves.
- Pupils respond enthusiastically to opportunities for group work and behave well.
- Management of the department has improved well since the last inspection.
- SEN pupils achieve well when they are given targeted and individual support.

Commentary

76. In 2003, assessments in Year 9 showed that pupils, as a whole, reached standards that would be expected for their age. A higher percentage of girls than boys reached above average standards. At GCSE in 2003, the percentage of pupils getting both A*-C and A*-G grades was below average. Twice as many girls as boys obtained grades A*-C and boys' results in geography were the lowest in the school. The 2003 results were lower than those in 2001 and 2002, when they were in line with the national average, although coursework grades improved.
77. Based on current work, standards are generally average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils use technical vocabulary well and have a good understanding of the processes that shape the earth's surface, for example. They know how planning decisions may adversely affect man's environment and can analyse accurately the differences between more and less developed countries. They have good map skills. Boys achieve as well as girls in class, but only when the pace of activities is sufficiently challenging. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. They produce good extended writing but are not given enough opportunities for

personal research or to evaluate their work critically; teaching does not explain sufficiently clearly to pupils that such research and evaluation are crucial to raising standards. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when supported by learning assistants or by being placed in smaller sets.

78. Teaching overall is satisfactory, with some good teaching in Years 7 to 9. In all years, pupils benefit from teachers who have good subject knowledge and who plan well-structured lessons with varied activities and resources. Pupils are interested in the subject, work well in groups and are often prepared to exceed the expectations and pace of learning set by their teachers. In the best lessons, work is matched to the learning styles of all pupils and includes practical activities as well as worksheet-based writing. Supplementary questions are used to challenge pupils beyond the straightforward answer. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, it is because pupils become bored by tasks which last too long. Homework is well used to extend learning and assessment is sound in setting annual targets for improvement. Tracking of progress does not yet lead to modification of planning and teaching. Pupils develop good literacy skills through the constant reinforcement of key words and the many opportunities for discussion. Good teaching of numeracy skills results in the accurate use of graphs and statistics. The use of ICT and Internet research is not yet integrated into all units of work. Pupils' skilled extraction of evidence from worldwide case studies contributes to their good cultural development.
79. Leadership of the department is satisfactory. Staff work well as a team but do not have sufficiently clear vision, enthusiasm and drive to give geography a high profile in the school. Management of the department is satisfactory and has improved well since the last inspection. Routine management is efficient, detailed schemes of work are in place, and both textbooks and resources have been modernised.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well taught so that their learning is of very high quality.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to their studies in history.
- Leadership and management are of very high quality.
- Teachers lead and manage learning very well resulting in pupils' good overall achievement.
- Teachers show their pupils what it means to be a very good historian.
- There are no areas of weakness and many indications that standards are rising.

Commentary

80. When pupils enter the school in Year 7, their standards in history are generally in line with the national average. Pupils currently in Year 9 have progressed to above average standards of work, both written and in class activities. This good achievement in history is made by both girls and boys from the whole range of abilities. Much class work in Years 7 to 9 demonstrates well above average standards of thinking and writing and well above average historical skills and understanding. This is strongly supported by the very high quality of teaching and learning. In a Year 7 lesson on Elizabeth 1, for example, written work included very thoughtful explanations about why she was successful, linking many events in her life and work. Very high standards were seen in a Year 8 lesson which linked, in an outstanding way, business planning with the history of business and industrial development in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
81. In 2003, GCSE examination results were in line with national averages for the percentages of pupils obtaining both grades A* to C and grades A* to G. Current class work and course work are above average in quality with strengths in organising thinking. These judgements apply to both boys and girls of all abilities. As a result of co-operative learning and highly motivating teaching,

pupils in Years 10 and 11 learn thoughtfully about life in Nazi Germany, for example. In a Year 10 lesson on the peace settlement at the end of the First World War, all pupils were able to reach at least average standards. Some pupils, including those with SEN, were helped to achieve these standards by careful and effective collaboration between the classroom assistant and the teacher.

82. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and never less than good. In over two thirds of lessons, teaching and learning are very good or excellent. Teachers have excellent knowledge of subject matter and of how pupils learn. They plan time and learning very effectively. Teachers set and achieve very high standards of work and concentration, for themselves and their pupils. They expect, as do pupils, excellent standards of behaviour. All pupils matter in history; all are valued as individuals. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work in class and over a longer time is very good. This helps pupils to know about and to reach higher learning targets. Pupils have excellent attitudes to the subject and their learning.
83. The very high quality of leadership and of management in history is another key factor in pupils achieving high standards and developing a real love of the subject. There is excellent vision by teachers as to what they are helping pupils to achieve. Much thinking has gone into planning what pupils learn. This very good feature ensures that lessons strongly support learning and motivation. All history teachers are very good role models for pupils. Since the last inspection, history has made good progress: standards are rising; the curriculum has been developed; and the teaching rooms used have been much improved with carpeting, better furniture and equipment. There are no real weaknesses in history, although greater use could be made of ICT to enable pupils to achieve even better.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Stimulating teaching is promoting good learning, using a wide variety of resources and placing an emphasis on pupil activity.
- All pupils are entered for GCSE in Year 11 and are achieving above average results.
- Effective management of the curriculum and assessment procedures are raising standards.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to extend their writing in the subject.

Commentary

84. Results at GCSE were above the national average, on both the full and short courses, in 2003. This was the first year that the school had entered all pupils for an examination in the subject and the results equalled the school's overall average at GCSE. Girls performed much better than boys.
85. Standards seen during the inspection were above average. By Year 9, most pupils are able to compare similarities and differences in ceremonies marking important stages of life in different religions. Higher attainers are already developing the skills they will need at GCSE, in their evaluation of the reasons for having a church wedding, for example. Lower attainers are weaker at recalling details of the marriage ceremony and in supporting their own views on marriage. Pupils show a maturity of approach in class discussion of moral issues such as those surrounding abortion and euthanasia, appreciating religious and secular views of the debate and forming their own opinions. The standard of pupils' written work is average, as pupils have not had enough practice at finding out information for themselves and writing in more detail on the issues being studied.
86. All pupils in Year 11 study the GCSE short course. They have already taken one of their examination papers and achieved above average results. They are continuing to make good

progress on the course and maintain their high standard of work. Most pupils display positive attitudes to the subject, keeping a good record of their studies. The gap between boys and girls is less pronounced than in previous years and even narrower in Year 10. Most pupils are developing good examination techniques, mainly through revision programmes, rather than homework practice of questions as the course progresses. In lessons, they show good understanding of the symbolism surrounding church artefacts and their importance in worship.

87. Pupils are achieving well in the subject at all levels across the school, helped by good target setting in all years and constructive comments on work that show them how they can improve. Teachers conduct their lessons at a brisk pace, making maximum use of lesson time to advance pupils' learning and maintaining the appropriate challenge for pupils in the different sets. The new course in Year 10 and arrangements whereby pupils alternate between the two teachers each half term have been well received and are effectively raising boys' achievement in particular. Most Year 11 pupils are capitalising on their success in the examination they sat in Year 10 but some pupils have not had their target grades revised for Year 11, so their aspirations are lower than could be expected.
88. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good on the GCSE course, which is wholly taught by specialists. The atmosphere in lessons is most conducive to learning, based on constructive relationships and a sense of purpose gained from having lesson objectives clearly explained at the outset. Teachers make very good use of a range of resources and activities to engage pupils in learning. For example, in Year 7, lessons on Buddhism, involving artefacts, music and simulation, gave pupils a stimulating insight into Buddhist meditation. A variety of discussion techniques are employed most effectively, ensuring that preliminary exercises provide pupils with the factual basis for informed discussion. Regular assessment at the end of each half-term unit of work is maintaining high standards. Teachers encourage the use of ICT on assignments but its planned use in class is restricted by problems of access to computers.
89. The teachers are excellent role models for the subject, raising its status in the eyes of their pupils. The new head of department is providing good leadership, identifying areas for development, such as boys' achievement, and revising the curriculum and mode of delivery to improve their performance. The introduction of shared levels of attainment in RE is improving the accuracy of assessment in Years 7 to 9, providing useful information that, once computerised, will enhance the existing system for monitoring pupils' progress and setting appropriate targets. The subject is well managed and resourced, although there is a shortage of textbooks for the new course in Year 10. Departmental documentation has been thoroughly revised and updated and provides clear guidance for teachers. Much has improved since the previous inspection, when insufficient time was devoted to the subject in Years 10 and 11. Now, statutory requirements for the subject are being met in full and standards have risen from below to above average in Year 11. Almost all the teaching is now done by two specialists, whose enthusiasm and teamwork are taking the subject forward successfully.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in food studies, childcare and graphics is good and sometimes very good.
- Lessons are mostly very well planned with all resources and equipment to hand.
- Very good relationships exist with pupils and these encourage learning.
- Unsatisfactory progress is made in some resistant materials and textiles courses.
- There is a lack of ICT facilities and too little use of the ICT facilities that are in place.
- The textiles room is in a poor condition and also has inadequate resources and storage.

- The match between the skills of some teachers and the demands of the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

90. By Year 9, pupils' overall attainment is in line with standards nationally. Above average standards are reached in food studies and satisfactory standards are reached in most of the other areas of technology studied. However, areas of the curriculum, such as electronics, structures, mechanisms and control technology, are not studied deeply enough, mainly due to the lack of ICT resources. Drawing skills, especially in three dimensions, are not taught sufficiently well and this means that pupils' abilities to show the development of their designs do not keep pace with their growth in knowledge and ideas.
91. By Year 11, standards are above average in food studies, childcare and graphics. In these areas, practical skills are well developed and course work is carefully and thoroughly done. In some resistant materials lessons, the quality of work seen had not improved sufficiently over time and both the standard of design and the quality of pupils' products were poor. There is a lack of ICT computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture (CAD/CAM) facilities and this impedes both the design and the production of proper working drawings and outcomes. In textiles, the lack of resources, especially modern sewing machines, limits pupils' progress. For example, pupils engage in hand-sewing tasks, taking hours to do, when a better job could be made, in a few seconds, on an 'over-locker' machine. There are significant differences in the performance of boys and girls only partly due to the gender imbalance within food studies and resistant material groups. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers, although in no lessons seen was there any support teaching for these pupils. Gifted and talented pupils are known to the teachers and given extra tasks, usually for homework, but they did not stand out from their peers, as might be expected, in terms of the standards they achieve.
92. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Two teachers were absent during the inspection but their pupils' work was looked at with a non-specialist teacher in charge. Good and very good teaching exists in all years, especially in food studies, graphics and childcare. Very good planning is a strength. In the best lessons, some excellent worksheets are used which challenge pupils of all abilities; resources and equipment are readily available and learning moves on briskly; teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and pupils' work is marked well, showing pupils the levels they have reached; pupils are taught how to evaluate their work and are given targets. Relationships are very good and this contributes to both teaching and learning. Where teaching is less good, pupils' skills, techniques and knowledge are not always developed smoothly and carefully. For example, practical tasks are done using inappropriate materials or tools, and tasks lack challenge; some initial ideas are not developed properly into a full working drawing. Such lack of experience and challenge is having a negative effect on standards. Some good quality technical support exists but this is insufficient overall.
93. The leadership of the department is satisfactory and the management of it good. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good. The quality of teaching has improved; the department has been brought much closer together to work as a team; technology rooms have been upgraded; and new GCSE courses in textiles and graphics have been introduced and a very good assessment scheme initiated. The textile course has not progressed as well as it should; pupils are not enthusiastic about textiles and the room and the adjacent storeroom are dismal and need upgrading. There is a lack of basic textile equipment and learning aids, which would encourage motivation and stimulate ideas.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Art and design was sampled. Teaching and learning are good and include strengths in evaluation because pupils understand what constitutes high quality work. GCSE results in 2003 were in line with the national average, based on the percentage of pupils obtaining grades A*-C, and art had the highest average points of all subjects in that year.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the department is achieving significant improvements.
- The range and extent of instrumental teaching are very good.
- Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour.
- Uptake for GCSE music has increased significantly.
- Assessment procedures do not sufficiently inform pupils of their own learning.
- Computer resources for music are unsatisfactory, as at the time of the last inspection.

Commentary

94. Teacher assessments for Year 9 indicate that standards are above average, but the evidence from the inspection is that, overall, pupils perform in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement in relation to the below average standards on entry. Achievement at GCSE level is satisfactory. In 2003, entry numbers were too small to compare with national averages. However, all eight entrants reached the grades expected of them. Numbers opting for the course have increased significantly.
95. In Year 7, pupils work confidently in question and answer sessions, but are sometimes reluctant to perform. They work creatively in pairs but some lack experience in recording their ideas in notation or graphic form. Progress from Year 7 to Year 9 is curtailed by the lack of suitable computer resources. Pupils in Year 9 are beginning to achieve control and refinement in the handling of ideas so as to produce compositions that are more focused on the effect or structure intended. They enjoy the challenge of improvisation – though in some instances work is not as productive as it should be. Year 9 pupils generally enjoy their lessons and the opportunities to use keyboards. They are disappointed that there are not more computers attached to keyboards. Listening and appraising skills are average; pupils develop a limited musical vocabulary with which to describe the music they hear. The high take up of instrumental tuition is helping to raise standards overall in playing and performing.
96. The standards of teaching and learning are good overall. Positive pupil-teacher relationships are a notable feature in lessons and the response of most pupils to the subject is good. Behaviour is orderly and well controlled. Lessons are thoughtfully planned and learning is effectively reviewed, but the subject knowledge and practical skills of pupils are not as well developed as they could be because pupils do not have targets for improvement.
97. The provision for instrumental tuition is a strength of the department's work. The number of pupils involved is well above average for the size of the school and a wide range of instruments is available. This provision underpins the out-of-class ensemble playing, which is an increasingly important part of the corporate life of the school.
98. Leadership in the department is good because the head of department is a good role model and has a real sense of vision and forward drive. Management is satisfactory. Care has been taken to

adopt a GCSE examination that suits the population of the school. The department is aware of the need to have an ongoing overview of pupils' performance and a focus on areas for improvement. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection in teaching, curriculum planning, assessment and the uptake of GCSE music. Music is a successful department. The school production is a very good opportunity for pupils to show their talent and to share it with the community. This is also true of the music concerts held during the year.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning is rigorous, linked to wider school issues and with clearly identified targets for pupils with special educational needs.
- Standards are rising.
- Pupils engage willingly and persevere well.
- Assessment processes that identify pupils' attainment are established, but assessment for learning, so that pupils know clearly how to improve, is not yet developed well in practical work and in GCSE written work.
- Teaching does not always develop the basic skills necessary for pupils to make secure progress, neither does it routinely extend the more able pupils by providing greater challenge.

Commentary

99. Standards are average overall. In GCSE written examinations, girls do better than boys but boys do better in the practical aspects of the course. GCSE results in 2003 were in line with the national average and are gradually improving. The department has a clear target to raise standards at all levels and is doing this through extended tasks that develop pupils' skills in responding to examination questions. Pupils' health and fitness in all years are good, but their skills in evaluating performance and making their own decisions about how to work independently or in groups are generally weak and need developing further, especially in the case of the pupils taking the GCSE examination course.
100. Pupils' achievement is mostly satisfactory with some good achievement, especially where teaching develops skills steadily, giving the pupils time to improve, with clear guidance on how to make progress and with appropriate pupil groupings that are fit for purpose. Pupils rise to challenges when set, engage well in the activities and work productively. Pupils with SEN achieve well. They are specifically identified in planning and well supported by staff. Different outcomes are identified for different groups of pupils but the tasks set do not usually provide extension activities or challenge for the more able. Participation rates are good and pupils have good sports kit. Pupils generally enjoy the lessons.
101. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, kit, participation and are sensitive to the needs of the less able. Lessons are well planned, with good pace. They are resourced well. Teaching emphasises the correct use of terminology. Relationships are good and pupils are willing, dutiful and respectful. Where teaching is good, it is animated, displaying good subject knowledge, and guides pupils through carefully stepped and timed tasks to consolidate learning. Summative assessment processes are secure but pupils are not always given sufficient guidance about what they need to do to improve.
102. Leadership is good and management is confident and secure. The head of department has developed a good 'esprit de corps'. She is a good teacher and role model. The departmental plan is seated in reality, with clear areas for development which mirror the whole school aims. Pupils' achievement is also fostered in a wide range of extra-curricular activities supported through additional funding and which include a good range of competitive fixtures. Staff give willingly of

their time for lunchtime and after-school activities that encourage participation and develop motivation. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The development of pupils' evaluation still needs attention and pupils need to be given more opportunities to observe others and to judge performance against clear criteria so that they know how to improve.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

103. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is delivered via a rotation arrangement incorporating citizenship, personal relationships, sex and relationship education, drugs education and citizenship under the title of 'passport' taught across the school during the same period each week. It is taught by discrete teams of teachers, led by a Head of Year, who have opted to teach a particular aspect. Lessons sampled during the inspection in Years 7 to 10 show that teaching is generally satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils generally engage well in these lessons. Progress in developing pupils' understanding of the issues raised is sound but opportunities are often missed to promote pupils' key skills, primarily in literacy and communication. Some members of staff state that they value the multi-agency training provided by the LEA.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is still in the early stages of developing citizenship, although the essential statutory requirements are met.
- A whole-school audit has identified clearly the planned learning opportunities for citizenship across subjects.
- Assessment processes have not yet been developed sufficiently well.
- Staff have not yet had enough professional development for them to feel entirely confident about teaching the subject.
- Pupils are mostly unaware of how citizenship is being taught and how it fits together with their personal and social development.

Commentary

104. During the inspection, citizenship was observed in Year 11 only. Standards seen in these lessons were broadly satisfactory but inconsistent. Some pupils demonstrate the ability to debate issues, to engage in discussion and to give clearly reasoned views. Most pupils, however, find it difficult to justify a particular view with convincing arguments or discuss the relative merits of differing views.

105. Pupils lack an awareness of how citizenship is taught. They are willing to engage in the planned activities but lack an understanding of the wider issues and how to make links to previous learning. Some pupils lack communication and group work skills to engage in debates, such as those on stereotypes. The school and year councils contribute to the school's provision for citizenship but pupils need to understand more precisely what the councils demonstrate in relation to the subject.

106. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, the teacher has a depth of knowledge of the topic and the ability to extend pupils' learning through careful and sensitive questioning, for example. Some teachers lack confidence in leading group discussions and in setting 'ground rules' for work that often requires pupils to express their views on very personal matters. Sometimes, teaching follows slavishly the lesson plan and is over-reliant on the prepared worksheets, showing some nervousness; on these occasions, the pupils' behaviour deteriorates.

107. Leadership has some shortcomings because of inexperience. Senior managers provided good support and the school as a whole has embraced wholeheartedly the potential of this subject area to enable pupils to become more responsible and develop their independence. However, a policy for citizenship has yet to be articulated separately from that for PSHE. Whilst it is apparent how citizenship sits within and alongside the school's work on PSHE, there is an absence of clarity about how the citizenship programme itself will be monitored. The school is in the process of designing an evaluation strategy that involves both staff and pupils.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

Students from Moorside School attend the Moorlands Sixth Form Centre full-time. The centre was inspected in March 2003 as part of the inspection of Painsley Catholic High School. There were 48 Moorside students at Moorlands in 2002 and all took GCE AS or A-level courses.

As part of the inspection of Moorside School, two courses (psychology and general studies) were inspected at the Moorlands Sixth Form Centre and are reported on in detail because they had not been covered in March 2003. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to confirming the overall picture, as given in the March 2003 report, of teaching and learning in the centre. Work was sampled in English, business studies, drama, history, information and communication technology, physics and sociology.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002. For AS-level, a total figure is given as, with 10 candidates in all, subject comparisons with national figures are not possible. Subject information is given for A-level where candidate numbers are sufficiently high to make national comparisons possible.

Level 3 GCE AS-level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Total – all subjects	10	90.0	86.0	30.0	33.6	37.0	34.8

Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Chemistry	5	80.0	94.0	0.0	45.9	48.0	81.1
English / English language	10	100.0	98.3	10.0	36.5	72.0	80.1
General studies	13	100.0	90.1	23.1	29.1	78.5	69.3
Geography	5	100.0	97.1	80.0	40.5	104.0	80.9
History	12	100.0	97.1	33.3	41.0	83.3	81.2
Mathematics	6	100.0	93.3	33.3	52.2	76.7	84.7
Physics	7	83.3	95.4	28.6	42.8	53.3	79.1
Sociology	6	100.0	95.4	0.0	39.6	56.4	73.2

HUMANITIES

Psychology

Provision in psychology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching by specialist teachers engages students' interest and contributes to their good achievement.
- Clear and good schemes of work support students' progress.
- Students enjoy their studies and attend well.
- Assessment informs students well of their progress and standards.
- Access to electronic research is limited in classrooms.
- Insufficient background reading is undertaken by students to raise the quality of their writing and to foster intellectual skills.

Commentary

108. Students in Year 12 taking psychology are faced with a new subject. They start their work with a wide range of GCSE performance and, on balance, their standards on entry to the course are average.
109. AS and A-level examination results, over four years up to and including 2002, have been in line with those nationally. Females gain higher grades than most males. Recent results show some improvement although the number of higher grades obtained in 2003 was lower than in previous years.
110. Standards in the current Year 12 are moving to above average. Female pupils, who form the majority, are achieving higher standards because they work harder. In Year 13, standards are currently above average and the results for 2004 are predicted to show a considerable improvement in standards. Achievement is good and many students attain standards that are above what could be expected given their GCSE grades. Students are taught to think like scientists and to use the appropriate medical terminology in their writing, for example. The higher attaining students work hard and become confident learners. Many middle and lower attaining students struggle with their writing; they receive good support with this necessary skill.
111. Teaching and learning are good. Some very good teaching was observed. The teachers' subject knowledge is good. The presentation of complex medical research into human behaviour is clear. A variety of methods are used and these are imaginative and encourage students' concentration and involvement. The weakness is in students' independence: with the exception of the more able students, most learners are happy to be the passive recipients of excellent handouts. Teachers are sometimes doing more than necessary to inform pupils of the details of relevant psychological research, rather than requiring students to make some individual effort to engage in personal discovery. Limited access to computers in the classroom impedes some aspects of learning in terms of research. Assessments of students' work are accurate. Teachers' comments are sharp and helpful on all scripts. Teachers are honest about pupils' competence and achievements.
112. Leadership and management are very good and the focus is on student achievement. Psychology is firmly established in the sixth form and its popularity is on the rise. High standards are set by staff and good support is provided for students to make them achievable. Good strategic and operational planning combine to promote the psychology department's aspirations and objectives. The strong sense of purpose creates and develops the team and motivates staff and pupils. The head of subject makes effective use of performance data and acts on findings to work on bringing about improvement in students' achievement. Students' performance is

monitored carefully. Targets are set and, though they are not always achieved, they serve as benchmarks of what is required to succeed. The subject is making good progress over time.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

General studies

Provision in general studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are well matched to the course units they deliver and provide very good learning experiences for the students.
- Teaching includes the good use of a wide range of stimulating resources that enrich learning and make it enjoyable.
- Lessons include very good opportunities for students to develop key skills such as communication and working in groups and these contribute to overall good achievement.
- Assessment processes are good and linked closely to examination requirements.
- Students' generally very good oral contributions in class are not always reflected in their writing; a few students do not contribute greatly in class.

Commentary

113. Results in the 2002 A-level examinations were above average with males obtaining higher results than females. The 2002 results were a considerable improvement on those in previous years. Standards seen in both Years 12 and 13 are currently above average: students show a good understanding of topics such as debt, the use of mobile phones, how various advertising techniques are used to manipulate people's desires and the reasons for unemployment. Students are able to discuss ideas well and communicate them clearly orally. They listen well to each other. Most are also able to explain their arguments and points well in written form but some find this difficult without guidance, which they do indeed receive. Groups of students work well together to give presentations of ideas and in role-play. Students have very good attitudes and achieve well, both in terms of the knowledge they gain about the general studies examination topics and also in relation to the development of their key skills; these key skills serve them well in their other studies.
114. Teaching and learning are very good. The general studies course is taught in modules taken by different teachers whose expertise matches the module requirements. Students benefit from such a richness of subject knowledge and also from the guidance provided by their 'anchor' tutor who monitors the progress of his or her own group. Teaching methods are very good because a wide range of techniques and resources are employed to engage students and prompt them into often animated discussion. Teachers have very good questioning skills and most ensure that all students contribute fully in class. Students learn to present and justify their arguments well. Their folders are a rich resource and demonstrate clearly how much material teachers have prepared and the positive responses students make. Marking is good and students are given very clear advice about what constitutes high quality work and what needs to be done to attain top grades.
115. Leadership and management are very good. Very effective teaching teams have been created with a clear sense of purpose. Self-evaluation is good but not quite as firmly established as that in other subjects where regular formal reviews take place. All students are very clear about the course structure, how the module rotations operate and what they are expected to achieve. The general studies course contributes very effectively to students' overall personal development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	2	3
How inclusive the school is		2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	0	2
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	0	2
Overall standards achieved		3
Pupils' achievement	0	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		3
Attendance	0	4
Attitudes	2	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
The quality of education provided by the school		3
The quality of teaching	2	3
How well pupils learn	2	3
The quality of assessment	0	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	0	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		4
Accommodation and resources	0	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	0	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	0	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	0	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	0	3
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	0	2
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	0	3
The effectiveness of management	2	3

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

The February 2004 inspection of Moorside School undertook a small-scale sampling exercise of Moorlands Sixth Form Centre, where the small number of Moorside sixth form pupils attends. This was because the centre was inspected less than a year ago in March 2003, as part of the inspection of Painsley Catholic High School. The

sampling work enabled inspectors to form judgements only on some of the aspects in the table above. Where insufficient evidence was available, a zero has been entered. A full commentary on the work of the Moorlands Sixth Form Centre is available from the centre.