

INSPECTION REPORT

SADDLEWORTH SCHOOL

Oldham

LEA area: Oldham

Unique reference number: 105736

Headteacher: Mrs Patricia Cornish

Lead inspector: Ross Maden

Dates of inspection: 7 – 10 February 2005

Inspection number: 268448

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 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1,284
School address:	High Street Uppermill Oldham Lancashire
Postcode:	OL3 6BU
Telephone number:	01457 872072
Fax number:	01457 870190
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Caroline Hickling
Date of previous inspection:	15 March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Saddleworth School is a larger than average sized comprehensive school with 1,284 pupils on roll. There are 131 pupils with special educational needs, which is below the national average. The percentage of students with Statements of Special Educational Needs is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is very low and only one pupil is at the early stage of learning English. Only six per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. The socio-economic data for the wards the schools serves show that the majority of pupils to live in advantaged areas. Overall the attainment on entry to the school is above the national average. There is a low mobility of pupils, with only 18 pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of admission. A high proportion of pupils stays on into full-time education when they leave the school at the age of 16. The school is a specialist language college and is part of the local Excellence in Cities programme. In 2001 and 2002, the school gained the Schools Achievement Award. The school gained the ECO bronze award in 2004. The school has a thriving Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and is involved in Young Enterprise. In 2005 the school became part of the 'Weston Spirit Initiative' and is a Key Stage 2 Pathfinder in modern languages. The school is very popular with parents and is over-subscribed.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2793	Ross Maden	Lead inspector	
9214	Janet Garland	Lay inspector	
23550	Marie Blewitt	Team inspector	English as an additional language Modern foreign languages
25743	Peter Butler	Team inspector	Science
22849	Ron Catlow	Team inspector	Citizenship History
3843	Graham Cooper	Team inspector	Design and technology
19026	Brian Downes	Team inspector	Special educational needs Geography
19135	Derek Ebbage	Team inspector	Mathematics
33711	Michael Hird	Team inspector	Physical education
31135	Rachel Hobson	Team inspector	English
30518	Mike Johnson	Team inspector	Art and design
15051	Lynne Kauffman	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
30818	Martin Pope	Team inspector	Religious education
31701	Graeme Rudland	Team inspector	Music

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with several outstanding features. Pupils make good progress across most subjects in relation to their prior attainment. Standards are well above national averages and have improved since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are good. The leadership and management of the school are good. The effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is good. Many parents are supportive of the school. Most pupils, but not all, have positive attitudes towards their learning. The provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is very good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very good results at GCSE as a result of good teaching.
- Pupils reach standards well above average in English, art and design, physical education and modern foreign languages.
- There is a very good response from pupils to the wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership for raising standards within the school.
- The school is very inclusive and there is very good support for vulnerable pupils.
- The multi-media resource centre is well used by pupils and contributes effectively to raising standards.
- The requirements of the agreed syllabus for religious education are not being met.
- There are insufficient ICT resources to enable all subjects to use ICT to support pupils' learning.
- Accommodation is inadequate to meet the needs of pupils.

There have been significant improvements in the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 since the last inspection. There has been a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A*-C. In 1999, 48 per cent pupils reached this standard and in 2004 this increased to 70 per cent. There have also been improvements in the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE A*-G grades and one A*-G. Many of the key issues identified in the last inspection report have been responded to effectively and are no longer weaknesses. However, there has been insufficient progress in improving the quality of accommodation and this still remains a weakness. There have been improvements in the efforts to provide a daily act of collective worship but the school is still failing to meet these requirements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Standards of pupils' work seen in the inspection are well above average in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. **Pupils achieve well throughout their time in the school**, given their attainment when they enter the school. Most pupils make good progress because they have positive attitudes to learning, are well behaved and well taught. Language and literacy skills are very good. Their competence in mathematics is very good and competence in ICT is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of good support. The additional provision for gifted and talented pupils is very good.

Pupils attain well-above-average standards in English and mathematics in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 – in science, standards are above. In relation to their prior attainment at the end of Year 9, pupils' results at GCSE are well-above-average for those gaining five GCSE

grades A*-C and for those gaining five GCSE grades A*-G. The results for design and technology, art and design and geography were significantly stronger than the results pupils gained in other subjects. Results in ICT were below the national average.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, although a minority of pupils have a less positive attitude to their environment and peers. The school's work with disaffected and vulnerable pupils has beneficial results. Attendance and punctuality are good, overall, although some pupils arrive late to lessons. **Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although good**, is hampered by a weakness in religious education. There is variability in the provision of collective worship in tutor time; it does not meet statutory requirements.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The curriculum provides all pupils with a good range of learning opportunities. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and resources are satisfactory. Care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Support, advice and guidance are very good, based on strong teams of Year heads working together and close liaison with the successful learning base. The degree of involvement of pupils in the life of the school is good. The school creates a good partnership with parents and has very good links with other schools and colleges and with the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. The governance of the school is good. The leadership provided by the headteacher and her leadership team is very good, and is especially strong in creating a very inclusive school. Overall, the leadership of middle managers is good. Several subject areas have very good leadership. There is a weakness in the leadership of religious education. The management of the school is good. The statutory requirements for ICT are not being met. Inconsistent use is made of assessment data to raise standards across all subjects. Significant weaknesses in the fabric of the building have not been tackled effectively.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents have positive views about the school. They believe that the school encourages their children to become mature and independent. They believe that the school is well led and that the staff expect children to work hard. Nearly a third of parents have concerns over homework, and inspectors agree that parents could monitor homework more effectively if there were a published homework timetable.

Most pupils, more in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11, are positive about their school. They share similar concerns to those expressed by their parents.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in religious education by ensuring that requirements of the agreed syllabus for religious education are met and by improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Improve the level and reliability of ICT equipment to ensure that all subjects can use ICT to support pupils' learning.
- Work with the LEA to improve the quality of accommodation and to improve the maintenance of the current site.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that all pupils receive the statutory entitlement to ICT, religious education in Years 10 and 11, and a daily act of collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards of work are well above average in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. Pupils achieve well throughout their time in the school, given their attainment when they enter the school. Language and literacy skills are very good. Pupils' competence in mathematics is very good and their competence in ICT is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make progress at the same rate as their peers. Gifted and talented students make good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9.
- Standards are well above average in the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11.
- Standards are well above average in all years for English and mathematics.
- Standards are low in religious education.
- There has been a continuous improvement since the last inspection to increase the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A*-C.

Commentary

1. The standard of pupils' work when they joined the school in Year 7 is above the national average. Standards of attainment in the 2004 National Curriculum tests in Year 9 were well above the national average for English and mathematics and above average for science. In 2003 it was well above average for English and above for science and mathematics. Results in 2004 for English were in line with those achieved in 2003, above for mathematics and below for science. The trend of improvement has remained above the national trend. The proportion of pupils reaching level 5 and above in 2004 for English, mathematics and science showed an increase on the 2003 results.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.0 (36.1)	N/a (33.4)
Mathematics	37.9 (36.5)	N/a (35.4)
Science	34.9 (35.1)	N/a (33.6)

There were 256 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Standards seen in many lessons were above average in Years 7 to 9. Pupils enter the school with standards that are above the national average and by the end of Year 9 standards are well above average, which indicates that pupils are achieving well. The major factors for this are the positive attitudes most pupils have in lessons and because they are well taught.
3. In individual subjects by the end of Year 9 the standards of pupils' work are well above average in English, mathematics and physical education and above average in most other subjects. The exceptions are that standards are in line for design and technology and ICT and below in religious education. Standards in religious education are below because of prolonged absence of specialist teachers. Pupils are making very good progress and are achieving very well in design and technology, modern foreign languages and physical education. In all other subjects they are achieving well, except for history where achievement is satisfactory and religious education where it is unsatisfactory.

4. For each of the last two years the school has met its targets for the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 and above in English and ICT but has not met the challenging targets set for mathematics and science. The school is on course to meet the challenging targets set for 2005.
5. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C was well above the national average in 2003 and 2004. The provisional results for 2004 show an increase from 64 per cent in 2003 to 70 per cent. There is a similar pattern of improvement for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-G and one A*-G in 2004 when compared with results in 2003. In 2004 the proportion gaining five GCSE grades A*-G and one A*-G was well above the national averages. However, when comparing the performance of pupils in 2004 with their prior attainment at the end of Year 9 the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A*-C, five grades A*-G and one grade A*-G were each well above the respective average. The average point score per pupil student is well above the national averages, as it is when compared with similar schools.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	70 (64)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	98 (97)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (100)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	322.1	282.8

There were 255 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. In the analysis of individual subjects in the 2004 GCSE examinations, all subjects, except ICT, show results in excess of the respective national averages. However, the results for design and technology, art and design and geography were significantly stronger than the results pupils gained in other subjects.
7. In 2004 the school met its challenging targets for the proportion of pupils gaining five GCSE grades A*-C, five GCSE grades A*-G and average points score. The school is on course to meet its 2005 targets. The trend in the school's average points score is above the national trend.
8. Standards in lessons seen in Years 10 and 11 reflect the standards of recent examination results. Standards were higher in Year 10 than in Year 11, mainly as a result of pupils' more positive attitudes to learning than in Year 11. Standards were well above average in English, mathematics, art and design, geography and music. For all other subjects standards are above average, except for religious education where standards are below average as a result of insufficient time for the subject to be taught and prolonged staff absence. In relation to their prior attainment most students are achieving very highly in art and design and geography because they are well taught. They are achieving well in all other subjects, except for religious education where achievement is unsatisfactory.
9. Overall, most pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. Relative to the national performance of boys and girls there is no significant difference. Girls do outperform boys but the gap is in line with the national difference. There is very good additional provision

for gifted and talented pupils. In 2004 the proportion of pupils gaining the higher GCSE grades increased as a result of the provision for gifted and talented pupils.

10. Pupils with special educational needs attain good standards in relation to their prior ability and achieve well. When dyslexic pupils are withdrawn from lessons for extra tuition they achieve very well.
11. Standards in English at the end of Year 9 are well above average. Higher-attaining pupils write extended, accurate accounts. Average-attaining pupils write quite detailed, although rather shorter, pieces. Lower-attaining pupils make many more mistakes in their writing: for example, in spelling more complex words and in paragraphing. By the end of Year 11, standards are well above average, too. Higher-attaining pupils produce detailed, stylish essays and can write in different styles for different purposes. They can analyse literature very well, using appropriate technical terms. Lower-attaining pupils write shorter pieces and make more mistakes, but, nevertheless, they can develop an argument convincingly. Those with special educational needs get good support in lessons from both additional teachers and teaching assistants. There is, currently, only one pupil who is learning English and he gets good support to help him to understand in lessons and to improve. There is a good emphasis on improving speaking and listening throughout the school, and standards are well above average.
12. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment in mathematics that are above the national average. By Year 9, standards of work seen are generally well above national averages. Higher-attaining pupils learn successfully how to use scientific calculators to find the inverse sine function; this is very demanding work for this year group. Average-attaining pupils show good numeracy skills. Lower-attaining pupils have weak knowledge of basic tables and directed numbers. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 demonstrate very high numeracy skills. Lower-attaining pupils struggle with basic numeracy skills. Pupils' achievement, overall, is good considering the level at which they joined the school.
13. In science the standards of work in Years 7 to 9 are above average and the overall achievement is good. Encouraged by supportive teaching pupils settle quickly on entry to the school and soon display good scientific ideas. Their ability and enjoyment are very apparent. The standards of work in Years 10 and 11 are above average and achievement is good. The department is better meeting the needs of individuals by offering higher attaining pupils in Year 10 the opportunity to study the separate sciences and by its intervention strategies in Years 9 and 11. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support with teachers and support staff well aware of their requirements. They participate fully in lessons and progress as well as others. There are no differences in achievement between any groups of pupils.
14. Pupils' competence in ICT in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. They have basic skills in word processing, desktop publishing, researching, use of spreadsheets and databases. There is little expertise in the more complex elements of ICT, such as control of light, sound and movement, plus comparing and measuring, as a result of logging data. In Years 10 and 11 standards are in line with national averages. Their progress is restricted because there is not enough curriculum time to cover the course effectively and the hardware has proved unreliable. The modified network is fragile and frustrates staff and pupils; it often lets pupils down, with loss of work being a real issue in Year 11.
15. Since the last inspection the proportion of pupils reaching level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science in the National Curriculum tests has increased significantly. The pattern of improvement at GCSE is equally significant. In 1999, 48 per cent of pupils gained five GCSE grades A*-C and this increased to 70 per cent in 2004.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, although a minority of pupils have a less positive attitude to their environment and peers. The school's work with disaffected and vulnerable pupils has beneficial results. Attendance and punctuality are good, overall, although some pupils arrive late to lessons. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although good, is hampered by weakness in religious education. There is variability in the provision of collective worship in form time; in this it does not meet statutory requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is better than in most secondary schools owing to the school's efforts to promote regular attendance in partnership with parents.
- Truancy and lateness are well monitored but lessons are often delayed by the late arrival of pupils in transit between rooms.
- Attitudes to school are positive and most pupils work hard.
- Behaviour is good in the classroom and also in restricted areas such as the dining-room.
- Many pupils drop litter on the site and its surroundings.
- A minority display scant respect for their peers and visitors.
- Bullying is treated seriously and dealt with effectively.
- Spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good and embedded in the school's ethos.
- Spiritual development is no longer a weakness, but is less effective than it could be because of weaknesses in the teaching of religious education.

Commentary

16. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good, both in lessons and around the school. However, there is a small group of pupils who do not show proper respect for others, including visitors and the school environment in general, and many pupils drop litter to an unacceptable degree. Most pupils said that they felt safe in school, that relationships, with a few exceptions, were good between them and their teachers, and that they felt there were people to turn to if they were troubled.
17. Spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. Opportunities for spiritual development were judged weak in the last inspection. Now there has been a concerted effort to include time for spirituality and reflection; this takes place in assemblies, through many experiences via literature, music and the arts, and opportunities to appreciate the nature of the surrounding countryside. However, religious education makes little contribution to this aspect of pupils' learning. Although assemblies in themselves are a good example of spiritual development, the daily act of collective worship in classrooms is of variable quality and does not fulfil statutory requirements.
18. Moral development is good; any difficulties pupils may experience are well managed. Pupils are expected to behave well and most of them do. A wide range of clubs, teams and opportunities for co-operation, such as the popular Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, contributes well to moral and social development.
19. Cultural development is enhanced by opportunities created through specialist status to learn about different cultures and languages, including Chinese. Links with other schools and teams provide valuable multicultural contacts between pupils. The Year 11 prom is praised by pupils, parents and staff as a positive and heart-warming event each year, rewarding and exemplifying good attitudes, social development and behaviour.

Attendance

Attendance is above the national average and the school has successful arrangements to track attendance and truancy. Punctuality is generally good, but a lack of urgency leads to some lateness to lessons during the day.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003-2004 (93.1%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.4
National data	6.9

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.5
National data	1.1

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

Exclusions

The rate of exclusions is usually low, apart from during an offensive on smoking last year, which resulted in many one-day exclusions, with very few re-offenders.

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	1236	57	2
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	1	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education provided for pupils is good. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum and assessment are good. The out-of-school activities are very good. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and resources are satisfactory. There are very good arrangements for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety. The support, advice and guidance for pupils are very good. There are effective links with parents. There are very good links with the community and with other schools. The school responds well and acts on pupils' views.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. It is particularly strong in Years 10 and 11. Assessment is good. There is a very effective system for identifying targets based on pupils' assessment data. However, there is an inconsistent use across the school of this information in order to raise standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning was good or better in four out of every five lessons observed.
- There is very good teaching in all years in modern foreign languages and physical education.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory in religious education as a result of staff illness.
- Assessment data are not always used effectively to identify how pupils can improve their work.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 127 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (3%)	44 (35%)	55 (43%)	21 (17%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

20. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Teaching and learning are stronger in Years 10 and 11 than they are in Years 7 to 9. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is very good in modern foreign languages and physical education. In all other subjects, teaching is good, except for religious education where it is unsatisfactory as a result of staff absence. In Years 10 and 11 teaching

is very good in art and design, geography, ICT, modern foreign languages and physical education. In all other subjects teaching is good, except for religious education where it is unsatisfactory.

21. As a result of good teaching pupils are learning well; in part, because of the high quality of relationships between most pupils, and their teachers. Most teachers provide encouragement and give students confidence to tackle their work effectively. The high quality of relationships results in pupils' having very positive attitudes towards their learning and contributes to effective learning taking place in lessons. There is also a very good pace to learning when teachers have high expectations for pupils. This is particularly evident in many mathematics, modern foreign languages and physical education lessons.
22. One of the major strengths is the very good management of pupils' behaviour and it is rare to see teaching or learning time lost because of time spent in managing challenging behaviour. However, pupils do not always treat supply teachers with the respect they give to other teachers.
23. The variety of teaching tasks set for pupils is satisfactory. In English and science it is a strength. It is a weakness in some history lessons. When pupils are given the opportunity to work in pairs, or small groups, they concentrate on tasks and can give clear feedback to the class. As a result of being well taught many pupils have well-developed skills in working independently.
24. In most lessons teachers set tasks that fully meet the needs of pupils. Occasionally, in some English and science lessons, there was a lack of challenge and on occasion the tasks set for pupils in Year 7 were not always based on accurate knowledge of pupils' prior learning.
25. Many teachers are making good use of ICT to support their teaching but less well developed is their use of ICT to support learning. The level of available ICT resources does not meet the demand. As a result, opportunities are missed in the use of ICT to support learning in modern foreign languages, mathematics, physical education and citizenship.
26. Several pupils and parents raised concerns about homework. The inspectors' judgements are that homework is satisfactory, most teachers set appropriate tasks to extend and reinforce what has been learnt in lessons. However, there is a weakness in that the school does not have a published homework timetable, so that parents are unable to use the planners to monitor the homework set.
27. The schools' arrangements to promote basic skills are good in literacy. Teachers are aware of the need to raise the levels of the pupils' basic literacy, and many departments include statements on how this can be done in the department's handbook. Teachers show good awareness of the need to develop specialist vocabulary in their subjects, as well as to extend the pupils' use of English in general.
28. A whole-school policy on the use of mathematics across the curriculum has recently been issued to all teachers. The mathematics faculty teachers offered in-service training to all staff in the ways in which numeracy calculations can be completed. There is a stress on mental arithmetic and knowledge of multiplication tables. Pupils' planners contain numeracy hints and frequently used formulae. The weekly bulletin to pupils includes a numeracy puzzle. There is a numeracy co-ordinator in the school who stresses the use of mathematics in other subjects whenever possible.
29. Teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers know their pupils well and set work at an appropriate level for their individual needs. Where pupils with dyslexia are withdrawn from lessons for extra tuition, the withdrawal is in line with the 2001 Code of Practice for special educational needs and teaching for these pupils is excellent.

Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are good and contain suitably specific targets to enable pupils to make progress. Individual education plans are not yet extended into those that are more specific to individual subjects. Classroom support assistants give effective and caring support to pupils with special educational needs, but they are not often involved in lesson planning with teachers. Assessment procedures for special educational needs are good and enable teachers to set realistic and attainable targets.

30. The arrangements for marking and assessing students' work are very good. Work is marked regularly and standards and achievement are routinely reported to parents. There are good procedures for collecting information on pupils' capabilities as they enter the school and settle into Year 7. Target grades are identified from this information and distributed to all subjects. By the end of Year 9 results from national tests and teacher assessments provide further information that assists decisions as to which courses and examinations are to be taken in Years 10 and 11.
31. At individual subject level and classroom level practice is inconsistent. The available information is not always used fully to inform teaching and learning strategies and in planning work for pupils of different levels of ability. Assessment data are not always used effectively to identify how pupils can improve their work. There is a very good practice in modern foreign languages, English, mathematics, geography and physical education. Assessment in science, history, religious education, design and technology and music is not sufficiently rigorous to indicate clearly to pupils how they can improve their work.
32. The good standard of teaching at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. However, there has been an increase in the proportion of lessons judged to be good or better: up from three in five lessons to four in five lessons.

The curriculum

The curriculum provides all pupils with a good range of learning opportunities. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good access to the curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
- Accommodation and maintenance of the site is unsatisfactory.
- A wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities is well supported by pupils.
- The curriculum enables pupils to achieve well in all subjects and courses and to develop academic or vocational directions.
- The curriculum is further enriched by the school's designation as a specialist language college.
- There is insufficient time for the Agreed Syllabus to be met in religious education in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

33. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for most pupils. It takes every opportunity to provide a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of its pupils, rather than merely seeking to ensure good results. There is good access and opportunity for pupils of all ages, backgrounds and attainment.
34. In Years 7 to 9 the requirements of the National Curriculum are met with the addition of a second language in Year 8, and 25 per cent of pupils taking Mandarin in Year 9. Courses are available in French, German, Spanish and Mandarin. Provision for PSHE is good and all pupils are provided with one lesson every two weeks, taught by an experienced team of teachers. The school makes good use of outside speakers from a variety of agencies to support this programme that includes work related learning, citizenship and careers. In Years

10 and 11 the majority of pupils follow the double award science course. Vocational courses are included and help to provide a suitable alternative for those pupils for whom the normal GCSE examination course is not appropriate. Links with other schools and colleges and local businesses enrich pupils' vocational experience.

35. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are very good in English, art and design, drama, modern foreign languages, music and sport. Specialist practitioners visit the school and work with pupils. There are regular theatre visits and study days as part of the English curriculum. Pupils' participation in sport is very good and opportunities are provided in art and design for visit to museums and galleries, workshops and life-study sessions.
36. The school takes an inclusive approach to the curriculum, emphasising equal opportunities for all. In Years 10 and 11 there is a good range of GCSE options to choose from and all pupils select four options, including one modern foreign language. The school has identified gifted and talented pupils in academic work, art and design, sport and music.
37. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and enables them to achieve well. Provision is well planned to meet pupils' specific learning requirements. All pupils have access to the curriculum and in addition a wide range of activities and strategies is provided to enable them to benefit fully from this. These focus on improving literacy skills and include specialist individual teaching and well targeted individual guidance by teaching assistants in lessons.
38. Developments in the curriculum since the last inspection have been good. The move to specialist status has enabled the school to initiate some imaginative ideas in modern foreign languages. The impact of the move to a 50 period timetable in September 2004 is being monitored carefully. There have been improvements in the efforts to provide a daily act of collective worship, but there is insufficient time for the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus to be met in religious education in Years 10 and 11.
39. Pupils with special educational needs have access to the same curriculum as other pupils and to all areas of the school's activities.
40. The match of teaching staff to the curriculum is good. Teachers are experienced and well qualified to teach their subjects. The retention and recruitment of staff is not a major problem and the school is well advanced in implementing the workforce reforms.
41. Accommodation is unsatisfactory and does not match the needs of the curriculum nor does it meet the number of pupils within the school. Planning and teaching to cope with the disrepair, caused by leaking roofs, has a detrimental impact on the workload and stress levels of teachers, site staff and pupils in specific areas of the curriculum.
42. In English, modern foreign languages and special educational needs accommodation is very good; the result, in part, of gaining Language College Status. Standards are high in these areas, because a clean and stimulating environment enables successful teaching and learning. However, in areas such as physical education, art and design, design and technology and ICT, dealing with the inconsistent quality of accommodation reduces curriculum time, and has a debilitating impact on the morale of staff and pupils. Accommodation for indoor physical education is satisfactory but outdoor facilities reduce team practice opportunities and most inter-school games have to be played in other schools where the accommodation is suitable. Pupils interviewed during the inspection week were unhappy with some conditions in the building. The dining areas are far too small for the numbers of pupils within the school and it is only a result of good supervision and positive behaviour by pupils that the dining areas are able to work effectively. The school playground is covered with potholes that have been patched up, but fallen into disrepair again, causing a potential hazard. The corridors and social areas are stark, and in poor weather the transfer of mud from the outdoor areas of the school where drainage is insufficient, cause corridors to look dirty. The reduced cleaning team compounds this. Cleaning staff are often pulled off site and

sent to another schools; this puts extra stress on the cleaning staff that remain and who are expected to cover others' work. Pupils' responses to the accommodation are varied. They treat with respect those areas that have been refurbished. However, in many of the communal areas there is a lack of respect and the dropping of litter is endemic. The damaged and leaking roof presents problems in many areas, including damp and fungus on walls, as seen in the reprographics area and the multi-media resource centre. In the winter months some classrooms are so cold that teaching and learning suffer. Many windows have been replaced, but some frames still have rotten wood, causing a damp and unpleasant smell in some areas. There has been little improvement in accommodation since the last inspection report when it was highlighted as a key issue for action.

43. Resources are generally satisfactory to meet the demands of the curriculum. In modern foreign languages the impact of Language College Status has resulted in very good provision of resources, including the language lab and the multi-media resources centre (MMRC). English, science, geography, music and special educational needs have good resources, with access to ICT being a good feature. Other subjects lack access to computers and equipment such as interactive whiteboards. The school fails to meet its statutory requirements to include ICT in teachers' planning. Not all subjects in Years 7 to 9 are meeting this requirement. In addition, the lack of ICT equipment means that the National Curriculum requirement to use ICT to support learning in all subject areas is not being met. The school's ratio of computers is below the nationally recommended average and some equipment is ageing. In areas such as art and design, staff are very resourceful and collect "found" materials from community sources, so improving pupils' final outcomes in art.
44. The multi-media resources centre is a strength in the school. The dedicated staff and refurbishment of the area have led to a huge increase in use. The centre is open for extended hours and is used well by pupils both before and after school, in addition to school time. The MMRC's effective hardware is used to capacity, and the efficient collection of data relating to pupil and department use, proves the worth of the centre. The number of books per pupil is below the Library Association recommendations, and the lack of a security exit means that some books do go missing, but excellent use is made of the books available. The MMRC action plan has focused on improving boys' reading levels and specific books have been introduced to meet that need. A lively newsletter produced by student librarians keeps every one informed of competitions, visits from authors and displays of pupils work, as well as new books.

Care, guidance and support

Care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Child protection procedures are good. Support, advice and guidance are very good, based on strong teams of Year heads working together and close liaison with the successful learning base. The degree of involvement of pupils in the life of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong, committed pastoral team monitors and supports pupils both academically and socially.
- Sources of outside help and advice are well used by the school.
- Child protection is vigilant and pro-active.
- The school promotes inclusion very well and supports disaffected and vulnerable pupils in imaginative ways.
- Nearly all pupils agreed that they had access to well-informed advice and guidance.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to extend their studies and experiences and some successfully vary their curriculum at the college from the age of 14.

Commentary

45. Pupils are supported by a very strong pastoral team, based on the heads of year structure, which provides a coherent approach to pupil support. This involves identifying and helping pupils deemed in danger of underachieving, whether socially or academically. The monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development is a particular strength. The Aim Higher initiative is based on detailed tracking of pupils' achievements. The school has had success in motivating pupils who were disaffected or truanting by imaginative approaches to courses in college and school itself. Heads of year make a significant contribution in ensuring that the school is inclusive and that all pupils are valued.
46. The learning base, which is seen as a haven by many pupils, carries out detailed work with vulnerable or troubled pupils and spreads its concern to all pupils who feel they need it. It is very well led, it is supported by the heads of year and staffed with learning mentors. It is seen as an important part of the life of the school; has established close links with teachers and is successful in its aims.
47. Parents praised the induction arrangements for pupils as they join the school, especially for pupils with special educational needs. The school liaises well with sources of support and is quick to identify opportunities for pupils. Child protection is particularly well addressed, with detailed procedures, a proactive approach to pupil safety and good liaison between staff throughout the school.
48. Pupils feel that their views are taken into account, and the Schools Council is a high profile system of discussing major issues. Pupils also take advantage of confidential boxes where they can post messages to staff.
49. There is very good advice given to pupils on opportunities in and after school, including further study, due to the close links built up with *Connexions* and work with colleges to find appropriate opportunities, such as apprenticeships and academic courses after Y11. The school is carrying out pioneering work to set up practical courses for pupils from the age of 14 to motivate pupils who might become disaffected.
50. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, both personally and academically, by teachers and classroom support assistants.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school creates a good partnership with parents and has very good links with other schools and colleges and with the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed very good links with the local community.
- It works very effectively with education partners, helped particularly by the links formed by the language college with the sixth form college and local primary schools.
- Parents are supportive of the school and of their children's education.
- Links with parents are good, but parents feel strongly that they should be involved more effectively with their children's homework

Commentary

51. Parents are supportive of the school and their children's education. Most feel that their children are happy and make substantial progress in school. They have good information about school events, despite some complaints on this score, and are increasingly involved in discussions about their children's standards, targets and progress. Parents make use of the school's well designed website.

52. Pupils' progress reports are good and contain information on pastoral as well as academic achievement alongside areas the pupils need to develop.
53. Parents particularly praised the way in which the school's management deals with problems such as bullying and feel that their concerns are well and promptly addressed. The school has the confidence of all communities and this is reflected in the popularity of the school for parents. Each year the school is over-subscribed.
54. The school has very good links with the local community that enhances pupils' learning. There are good links with local businesses, which provide good levels of advice and support. Links with other schools are very good. These links have been greatly enhanced by the language college status, which has resulted in regular contact with local primary schools, and by close working with the sixth form college to which most pupils progress, to their mutual benefit. A high number of pupils from the school go on to further and higher education once they leave school at 16. A particular strength in the links with the wider community are the extra-curricular activities that gifted and talented pupils take part in.
55. Homework is an area which parents feel should be improved so that they can help their children plan and carry out their work. At the moment there is no published homework timetable so that parents are unable to monitor accurately their children's homework.
56. The high standards identified in the previous inspection report have been maintained.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. The governance of the school is good. The leadership provided by the headteacher and her leadership team is very good. Overall, the leadership of middle managers is good, as is the management of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership of the headteacher and the leadership team leads to high academic standards within the school and in establishing a very inclusive school.
- Several subject areas have very good leadership.
- The statutory requirements for religious education and ICT are not being met.
- There is a weakness in the leadership of religious education.
- Inconsistent use is made of assessment data to raise standards across all subjects.
- Significant weaknesses in the fabric of the building have not been tackled effectively.

Commentary

57. Governance of the school is good. Governors have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work closely and well with the headteacher and senior staff. Governors play a very supportive role in planning for the school's improvement. Governors offer good support and challenge to the school. One aspect of governance is unsatisfactory; the governing body is not meeting all of its statutory requirements. The requirements for ICT are not being fully met in Years 7 to 9. There is insufficient time for religious education in Years 10 and 11 for the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus to be fully met. In addition, not all pupils are receiving a daily act of collective worship. Improvements have been made in the provision of collective worship since the last inspection. Assemblies provide pupils with an effective opportunity for collective worship but there is a lack of consistency in the interpretation of the 'Thought for the day' across tutor groups.
58. The headteacher has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has a clear vision of what is needed to raise standards. She provides very good leadership for the school and is well supported by her leadership team. She daily demonstrates her respect for pupils and provides an excellent role model for other staff to

follow. She has a particular expertise in strategic planning, a weakness at the time of the last inspection, and in identifying the changes that are necessary to raise standards even higher. The size of the leadership team is appropriate for a school of this size. However, the introduction of some aspects of 'workplace reform' has resulted in an imbalance of responsibilities for individual members of the leadership team. This is an issue the school is aware of and will be tackling in the course of this academic year.

59. The very good leadership provided by the headteacher, and supported by members of the leadership team, has contributed to raising standards within the school. The leadership team is committed to running an inclusive school, as is demonstrated by the very good support provided for vulnerable pupils. There is also a determination to ensure that the curriculum provided by the school is matched to pupils' needs. The size of the leadership team is appropriate for a school of this size.
60. Overall, subject and pastoral leadership is good. There is very good subject leadership in English, modern foreign languages, science, ICT, geography, art and design. In most other areas the leadership and management is usually good and never less than satisfactory. The exception being the leadership of religious education, which is poor as a result of extended periods of absence of the head of department. There is a lack of a co-ordinator for work-related learning. Self-evaluation is used effectively to produce school and department improvement plans. Senior and middle managers write effective plans to reflect the school's priorities. Monitoring and recording of classroom performance are good, although monitoring the use of tutor periods is not as good, because it is not so rigorous.
61. Leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. There are clear identification procedures and good priorities for development. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has a very heavy teaching timetable and this limits her time for wider support in classrooms and for developing her management role still further. Statutory requirements for special educational needs are fully met.
62. Management is good. The school operates smoothly and procedures are effective, although there are some weaknesses in the construction of the annual timetable. The school development plan identifies appropriate targets for raising standards, which are based on a detailed and rigorous analysis of both assessment data and evaluation of the work of the school. There is a firm commitment to the induction and ongoing professional development of all staff. Performance management is fully implemented for all teaching staff and has been extended to include all support staff. There is a rigorous system for the monitoring of teaching and learning and the roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators have improved since the last inspection.
63. The school's policies identify effectively a clear vision for improving the school. Less effective is the consistent implementation of these policies. For example, the school is rich in data on students' performance. Monitoring data provided by a senior member of staff identifies targets effectively for individual pupils. However, there is inconsistent use of these data by subjects to raise standards. In English, very good use is made of the data to identify strategies which help pupils to reach their targets, but this is not the case across all other subjects. There is no evidence to indicate that there is a consistent use of the data to influence the planning of schemes of work or that it is used to ensure that the level of challenge in lessons fully meets pupils' needs. Whilst the day-to-day administration of the school enables the school to run smoothly, there are some weaknesses in the production of the timetable. The timetable is weak in ensuring that students have a balance of subjects across the two-week timetable: this has a detrimental effect on the progress they make. This is a particular issue for the timetabling of mathematics, music, physical education and ICT lessons.

64. Since the last inspection there have been some improvements to the leadership and management of the school. The lack of a long-term strategy for the school's development has been tackled effectively and is no longer a weakness. The leadership of the school has contributed significantly to raising pupils' standards of work. However, some issues identified in the last inspection report remain to be fully resolved. Although some improvements have been made, weaknesses still remain in accommodation and there is still a failure to provide a daily act of collective worship.

Financial information

The governing body accepted the recommendations from the latest auditor's report, which was conducted in November 2000. It is surprising that there has not been a more recent report, especially since there has been a change in staff responsible for finances since then. The management of finances is good, with the exception that insufficient funds have been spent on the maintenance of the site and buildings. The allocation of funds to departments is based on a historical distribution adjusted for inflation. However, there are opportunities for departments to make bids to the headteacher for additional funds, which are related to implementing priorities in the school development plan. There is a good use of benchmarking data from other schools to compare patterns of expenditure with that of Saddleworth School. The governing body applied the principles of best value effectively when it introduced a new system to meet the school's photocopying needs.

The additional grants the school receives are used effectively for the purposes for which they were intended. In particular, the school makes very effective use of 'Excellence in Cities' funding to provide for the needs of gifted and talented pupils.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,768,699	Balance from previous year	137,729
Total expenditure	4,584,052	Balance carried forward to the next	322,376
Expenditure per pupil	3,570		

65. There is a very high carry-forward figure into the current financial year. However, this figure is misleading in that it includes £147,000 from the developed capital fund, which has been allocated for improvements to the school. There are significant weaknesses in the fabric of the building, in particular the quality of the roofing. There is a dispute, as yet unresolved between the LEA and the governing body, as to who is responsible for repairing the roofs. In the meantime, the damage to the state of the internal decoration and the destruction of pupils' work every time it rains continue.
66. Overall, in relation to the standards achieved and the quality of education provided for pupils the school is providing good value for money.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work-related learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in vocational subjects.
- Good links with a local college enable pupils to pursue a range of work-related courses.
- The lack of a school co-ordinator for work-related learning has limited the awareness of all staff.

Commentary

67. GCSE courses in leisure and tourism and business studies were sampled. Standards in leisure and tourism in the 2004 examination were above average. Teaching and learning are good and pupils are achieving well on this course. Pupils taking leisure and tourism have limited access to ICT and this affects their motivation and achievement. In business studies, standards in the 2004 GCSE examination were average. Pupils' achievement in lessons is very good because of very good teaching. A strength of both courses is the thorough planning by committed staff that work within a very well led faculty. Pupils receive very good feedback on their work, and, as a result, they are motivated to improve and achieve well. The school is developing its links with Manchester Airport and these links are well explored in both courses.
68. The school has good links with a local college, and this enables pupils to undertake courses which are appropriate to their needs. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 currently follow a range of work-related options. Foundation level courses are followed in hair and beauty, sport and leisure, art, bricklaying, catering and dance and drama. Pre-apprenticeship courses are undertaken in brickwork, hair and beauty, plumbing and catering, and there is an applied GCSE course in engineering. College provision also enables pupils who are not well motivated, to undertake courses that are relevant to them and, as a result, their attitudes towards the school are more positive.
69. Work experience in Year 10 is well organised and pupils are matched carefully to their placements. The difficulties of finding appropriate placements have meant that Saddleworth, along with other local schools, have had to reduce the length of placement from two weeks to one week. There is good support within the PSE programme, which prepares pupils well. Work experience is thoroughly followed up in PSE and English lessons.
70. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The programmes and courses are well organised and managed by the individual staff responsible, but there is currently no identified school co-ordinator. Within the current school development plan this issue is recognised and will be rectified during this academic year. A thorough audit of provision has been undertaken, and this has been mapped against nationally produced criteria. As a result, revisions have been made to the PSE programme to ensure equality of access to an appropriate level of provision. Currently, work-related learning has been identified in English, modern foreign languages, design and technology and art and design. Because there is no identified co-ordinator, the potential for all curriculum subjects to contribute to this area has not been fully developed.

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 **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain well above average standards and are very well prepared for tests and examinations.
- The department has made outstanding progress since the previous inspection.
- There are excellent systems in place for tracking how well pupils are doing and identifying underachievement.
- In a minority of lessons, the pace is rather leisurely and there is some lack of challenge.

Commentary

71. Year 9 results in 2004 were well above average and also well above those of similar schools. The rise in results over the last three years has been greater than the national trend. Girls do better than boys in the tests, but the gap is similar to the national average. GCSE results in 2004 were well above average and well above those of similar schools, and these were a significant rise on the 2003 results. Boys did less well than girls and the gap was similar to the national picture. GCSE results in English literature were well above average in 2004: a small rise on those in 2003. The Year 9 tests and GCSE examination results in 2004 represent good achievement for those year groups.
72. Standards at the end of Year 9 are well above average. Higher-attaining pupils write extended, accurate accounts. They can explain different levels of meaning in the novels, plays and poems they study. Average-attaining pupils, too, understand what writers are trying to achieve and they usually write quite detailed, although rather shorter, pieces. Lower-attaining pupils make many more mistakes in their writing in, for example, spelling more complex words and in paragraphing. By the end of Year 11, standards are well above average, too. The highest-attaining pupils produce detailed, stylish essays and can write in different styles for different purposes. They can analyse literature very well, using appropriate technical terms. One essay on 'Frankenstein' showed very good understanding of what the author was intending, and the pupil expressed her own opinions clearly and persuasively. Lower-attaining pupils write shorter pieces and make more mistakes, but, nevertheless, they can develop an argument convincingly as, for example, when writing about the treatment of teenagers by the media. Those with special educational needs get good support in lessons from both additional teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils across the school achieve well. There is, currently, only one pupil who is learning English and he gets good support to help him to understand in lessons and to improve. There is a good emphasis on improving speaking and listening throughout the school, and pupils' standards are well above average.
73. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers know their subject well; they explain ideas and ask questions effectively. A particular strength is the planning of a range of activities to interest and engage pupils. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of how pupils should behave and what they can achieve. They also prepare pupils very well for tests and examinations. For example, in a Year 9 lesson on *Macbeth*, the teacher caught the pupils' imagination by getting them to answer questions in role – he provided costumes to help them

get into the spirit of the occasion. He ensured that pupils had a very clear understanding of

the plot and characters and prepared them thoroughly for the summer tests. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and most lessons have a good, purposeful work ethic.

74. Written work is consistently well marked, with many teachers taking a lot of trouble to explain to pupils how they can improve. In a minority of lessons, there are times when the pace flags and learning drops. This usually happens when pupils are working in pairs and groups. Computers are well used, both by pupils to produce essays and documents, and by teachers to make lessons more interesting. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. There are a lot of opportunities to discuss and write about moral and ethical issues and to consider matters with a spiritual dimension.
75. The department has made outstanding progress since the previous inspection, and is very ably led by the head of department and his deputy. There is a very clear vision for improvement centred on raising standards. These have risen significantly, and one important contributory factor is the excellent system for tracking pupils' progress. When someone is identified as underachieving there is a variety of measures that are taken to help him or her to improve. Schemes of work have been rewritten and assessment practice has greatly improved.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

76. Literacy skills are well above average across the school. There is an imaginative approach to increasing methods for teaching literacy, which includes videoing lessons that focus on reading and writing skills and using these for training purposes. The modern foreign languages department has worked with English on some projects to help raise literacy skills. Last year, for example, there was 'Holidays from Hell', in which pupils wrote in different styles and in particular concentrated on writing in different tenses. The English department, too, systematically plans to raise the literacy skills of the lower-attaining pupils. In most departments, key words are displayed on walls and teachers stress the importance of using technical terms accurately. In geography, pupils produce brochures and write accounts imagining themselves experiencing an earthquake. Art lessons begin with an emphasis on key words and teachers write helpful comments in sketch-books. Science teachers get pupils to read aloud and encourage discussion. Some subjects, however, make less of a contribution. History and religious education teachers do not take many opportunities to encourage pupils to discuss or write in very many different ways.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management are provided for a dedicated team of teachers.
- There is very high level of skill in teachers' command of the foreign language, that results in pupils answering confidently.
- The teaching of grammar in context, which provides a firm base for language learning, is a further strength of the department.
- Opportunities to enrich language learning are good.
- The use of ICT to support learning, whilst improving, is not yet fully developed.

Commentary

77. At GCSE level, results are consistently good when compared with national averages. All pupils study at least one language, which is not the case nationally. As a result, this makes the results even more impressive. At GCSE level in French, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades and A*-A grades is above the national averages. In German in 2004, the proportion of A*-C grades shows a considerable increase from 2003, when German was

studied by the main cohort. Results are above national averages and include a high proportion of A*-A grades. Girls perform better than boys, but the gap is not as wide as that found nationally. Spanish has recently been introduced to GCSE level with good results. There are no national comparisons because of low entry numbers.

78. By the end of Year 9, standards are good and above national averages. Achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9. French and German are offered alternately in Year 7, with the opportunity to learn a second language in Year 8, including Spanish or Mandarin Chinese. The teaching of grammar in context is a contributory factor to the very good achievement. Pupils ask relevant questions, showing reasoning. They are interested in understanding structures and are given opportunities to put learning into practice. The enjoyment of successfully communicating and being challenged is evident in lessons, resulting in full response and participation. They show good understanding of written and spoken texts. Oral responses are spontaneous, showing fluency and intonation. When pupils lack confidence teachers have effective strategies in place to tackle this.
79. Pupils' achievements in Years 10 and 11 in French, German and Spanish are very good. An increasing number of pupils are choosing to study a second language. A recently introduced Spanish for business course is proving very popular. There is a wide range of ability within this class, but all needs were catered for and everyone was fully engrossed. In Years 10 and 11 there is much emphasis on examination techniques. Lessons are planned to include all four skill areas, so that each topic is covered in depth. Pupils are confident in their studies, which is evident from their responses in class and work seen. Examples of coursework from preparation to draft and completion stage, together with teacher comments, are evidence of the high standards being achieved. Pupils are keen to succeed and readily contribute to discussions on how to achieve higher grades.
80. Teaching and learning are very good. Pupils respond very well to the enthusiastic teaching and high expectations and challenge. This is a team of talented linguists. Lessons are mainly delivered in the foreign language and pupils respond accordingly. Teachers make appropriate worksheets to provide support or additional materials to enable every pupil to succeed. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of very well-planned lessons and teachers being sensitive to individual needs. Italian and Latin classes provide effective challenges for gifted and talented pupils. ICT is playing an increasingly important role in language teaching and is being integrated into lessons. The interactive whiteboards are excellent teaching tools. Attitudes and behaviour are very good as a result. Relevant homework is set and marking is consistent. Pupils know their targets and how to improve their work. Teachers give freely of their time to support pupils. There are many cultural trips and visits abroad to enrich language learning.
81. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department leads and manages a highly effective team by example. Expectations are very high. Teachers are clear about individual roles and responsibilities. Results are clearly analysed and action taken. Very good use is made of assessment data. Resources are carefully chosen in the best interests of the pupils. Avenues are constantly being explored to raise standards even further, including the wider use of modern technology. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are increasing year on year.
- Teachers insist on good behaviour in their class and, as a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are usually good or very good.

- The match of teachers to the curriculum is very good; the department is very well staffed with qualified and experienced teachers.
- The quality of leadership of mathematics is good.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped.

Commentary

82. Results at the end of Year 9 were well above the national average when compared with all schools in 2004. In comparison with similar schools, based on the prior attainment of pupils when they joined the school, the results were in line with national averages. Higher-attaining pupils perform at well above expected levels when compared with similar schools, which is an improvement on the last inspection when these pupils were reaching levels well below expectations. Considering the attainment levels when pupils arrive at the school, which are above the national average, pupils' achievement is good. Boys performed at about the same level as girls. The mathematics results are about the same as those in English and better than science. The average points scored by pupils have increased steadily over the last four years. The results achieved in 2004 were considerably better than those in 2003.
83. Results at the end of Year 11 were well above average in GCSE examinations in 2004. There has been an improving trend in the examination results since the time of the last inspection. The percentage of pupils passing at grades A*-C increased in 2003, and was maintained in 2004. In 2003, the difference between the percentage of girls achieving these grades and the percentage of boys was much higher than the national average. The percentage of the very highest grades, A* and A, was well above the national average, with boys performing better than girls. In 2003, pupils performed at about the same level as other subjects in the school. The recent results show good achievement.
84. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment in mathematics that are above the national average. By Year 9, standards of work seen are generally well above national averages. Higher-attaining pupils draw diagrams confidently, showing enlargement with various scale factors; they understand the importance of the centre of enlargement and use geometrical instruments accurately. Pupils learn how to use scientific calculators successfully to find the inverse sine function; this is very demanding work for this year group. Average-attaining pupils expand brackets with confidence, and convert fractions to mixed numbers, showing good numeracy skills. Lower-attaining pupils have weak knowledge of basic tables and directed numbers. Pupils with special educational needs understand how to add fractions with the same denominator, and achieve well.
85. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 understand the concept of area and volume; they calculate surface areas and the volumes of prisms, showing good knowledge of the principles involved and demonstrating very high numeracy skills. Their work is in line with that normally associated with top sets in Year 11, and the curriculum offered is very demanding. Lower-attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, have a fair grasp of the ideas associated with proportion; using good, practical examples of food recipes and mixing mortar, the teacher helps pupils to develop good knowledge of basic ideas using ratios. Pupils have a clear idea about their target grades and the tier of examination in which they are to be entered. Lower-attaining pupils struggle with basic numeracy skills. Pupils' achievement, overall, is good considering the level at which they joined the school.
86. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory, with over three-quarters of them being good or very good, which is a higher proportion than at the last inspection. Nearly half the lessons seen were very good. Teachers' command of mathematics is very good. Their lesson planning is satisfactory, but varies in quality and sometimes lacks detail. This was reported at the last inspection. Teachers do not always break lessons into small, sharp sections, and check carefully at each stage that pupils have understood the new concepts. There is not enough use of practical materials in lessons. New technologies are not used enough by pupils to help in their

mathematical development. However, with guidance from their teachers, pupils are becoming competent users of the new interactive whiteboards.

87. Several three-part lessons are seen, which follow the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. However, teachers do not generally leave enough time for a thorough conclusion at the end of the lesson. This session is needed to confirm knowledge and skills gained during the lesson. Teachers expect pupils to work very hard, and have high expectations of what pupils will achieve. They control pupils very well. This leads to mature behaviour and good achievement in lessons. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good; pupils enjoy their mathematics, respond very well to challenges from teachers and work enthusiastically.
88. Assessment of pupils' work is good. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, and their comments enable pupils to see what they need to do to improve. The faculty keeps detailed records of test and assessment results. Targets are set and discussed with pupils so that pupils know the levels at which they are working. Reports on pupils' attainment and progress are concise and specific about the knowledge and skills gained. They give useful advice about the areas of mathematics that can be improved.
89. The leadership of the mathematics faculty is good. The head of faculty clearly identifies objectives for continual improvement, and understands the emphasis that is placed on improving attainment. The schemes of work have been totally revised, and a very high quality document produced for use by all mathematics teachers. There is a mathematics faculty manual, which is issued to all teachers, and gives appropriate guidelines. Management is satisfactory. The head of faculty monitors teaching, but this is not yet rigorous enough. The analysis and use of data on pupils' attainment are improving. A good team effort is seen with the sharing of expertise on the use of new technologies, especially the inter-active whiteboards. There are high aspirations to improve standards further.
90. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Attainment is increasing year on year. The behaviour of pupils and their relationships with teachers are now very good. Teaching has improved and teachers in the faculty are working together well as a team.

Mathematics across the curriculum

91. A whole-school policy on the use of mathematics across the curriculum has been issued to all teachers recently. The mathematics faculty teachers offered in-service training to all staff in the ways in which numeracy calculations can be completed. There is a stress on mental arithmetic and knowledge of multiplication tables. Pupils' planners contain numeracy hints and frequently used formulae. There is a numeracy co-ordinator in the school, who stresses the use of mathematics in other subjects whenever possible. Each week, the school bulletin carries a numeracy challenge. Pupils are working at levels above national averages.
92. In science, pupils' numeracy skills offer good support for their science in all years. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 handle data confidently, and use lines of best fit. Good numeracy skills enhance pupils' science coursework for GCSE. In ICT, graphical work is completed successfully. Pupils use formulae well in spreadsheets and calculations; their spatial awareness is good in constructing logos. In design and technology, accurate measurement is seen in scale drawing. The art and design department highlights symmetry, enlargement and perspective proportion. In geography, pupils use tables and graphs well and interpret statistics at a high standard. There is very good work for GCSE in the interpretation of weather statistics and the comparison of house prices in the local area.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A variety of teaching methods, including good use of ICT by teachers, ensures a high level of interest and learning is productive.
- Teaching is imaginative and interesting in all years, pupils responding with good behaviour and a positive approach to the subject.
- Very good leadership and management and the shared commitment of staff are identifying and implementing action for improvement.
- Planning of lessons is good, but there is a need for greater clarification of objectives and increased checking and evaluation of progress made.
- Marking is variable in standard, not always identifying ways in which pupils might improve their level of attainment.

Commentary

93. GCSE double science results in 2003 were above the national average. Following an improving trend over recent years, and the department's very effective strategy to work with borderline pupils, results rose considerably in 2004 to a figure well above the national average. Girls' results are slightly better than boys. End of Year 9 test results in 2003 were above average compared with all schools but below in comparison with similar schools based on prior attainment. In 2004, results remain above average in comparison with all schools and are in line compared with similar schools. There is no significant difference between the results of boys and girls. In comparison with other core subjects, science is in line with mathematics and slightly below English. As at GCSE level, the intervention strategy used in Year 9 is improving the performance of lower-attaining pupils.
94. Across Years 7 to 9 the standard of work seen is above average and the overall achievement is good. Encouraged by supportive teaching, pupils settle quickly on entry to the school and soon display good scientific ideas. Their ability and enjoyment are very apparent, as seen in a Year 7 class showing good reasoning as they eagerly exchanged ideas about the positioning of dams, wind generators and other sources of renewable energy in order to survive on a remote island. The standard of work seen in Years 10 and 11 is above average and achievement is good. The department is better meeting the needs of individuals by offering higher-attaining pupils in Year 10 the opportunity to study the separate sciences and by its intervention strategies in Years 9 and 11. In all classes, pupils answer questions well with confident and correct usage of appropriate scientific language. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, with teachers and support staff well aware of their requirements. They participate fully in lessons and progress as well as others. There are no differences in achievement between any groups of pupils.
95. Teaching and learning are good, the best teaching characterised by high subject expertise, well planned and managed lessons, encouragement of pupils to think for themselves and a variety of approaches that maintains pupils' interest. The use of electronic projectors to inform and explain is at times outstanding and a key feature in making learning effective. A Year 11 class were captivated by images showing applications of the electromagnetic spectrum in medicine and in fraud detection. A Year 10 class showed good ICT skills and a genuine concern about moral and ethical issues as they produced informative presentations on the implications of mapping a person's genome. Formal assessment procedures are good. However, the effectiveness of learning in lessons is not always evaluated and the standard of marking is variable in terms of identifying ways in which pupils might improve. Lesson plans identify learning opportunities for pupils of different abilities but sometimes there

is a failure to stretch and challenge higher-attaining pupils. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. In practicals and group activities they show respect for one another and work supportively and co-operatively.

96. Science is very well led and managed by a department head with a clear sense of direction for the future of the subject. All staff share a strong commitment to improvement and work well together as a team. Impressive and realistic development plans are in place for taking the department forward. Schemes of work are reviewed regularly. Systems for the monitoring of performance are satisfactory, but action plans need to be more tightly focused towards improvement of learning. The use of ICT as a research tool and in teaching is very good and the department benefits from sixteen laptops for pupils' use. There is a need, however, to increase the application of ICT to the evaluation and analysis of experimental work. Pupils show good standards of literacy in both written and oral work and impressive wall displays in laboratories further demonstrate these skills. Numeracy skills adequately support work in all years. Accommodation is satisfactory. Two laboratories have recently been refurbished to a high standard, but two of the remaining ones are old fashioned and the design does not support a practical approach to learning. A hardworking team of technicians provide good support.
97. Since the previous inspection, improvement has been good. Opportunities are now provided for pupils to develop their own ideas and take some initiative in their learning. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are now good and there is an overall improvement in attainment and achievement. Management of the department is now very good, particularly in self-evaluation and the use made of it.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning are boosting pupils' achievement.
- Lack of adequate curriculum time affects standards.
- Pupils' lack of understanding of National Curriculum levels restricts progress.
- ICT for all enhances pupils' entitlement, but GCSE course does not meet all their needs.
- Good management is using an effective action plan to raise standards.
- Problems with accommodation and resources reduce pupils' use of ICT.

Commentary

98. In 2004, teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 was above average. Inspection evidence indicated that this was a generous judgement; work seen across Years 7 to 9 was in line with national averages. This represents satisfactory achievement, as there is no recorded measure of pupils' computer skills on entry to the school.
99. In 2004, examination results were below the national average at A*-C and above at A*-G. This reflects the change of examination boards. No longer is ICT an option; all pupils take an ICT examination. The school's entry levels are above the national average. This, however, has an impact on grades because, although equality of opportunity is good, since all pupils are entered, the proportion of higher grades is reduced. Data show that girls achieve better than boys and pupils' performance in ICT is not as good as in their other subjects. This represents unsatisfactory progress for higher-attaining pupils, but pupils with special educational needs are supported well and match expectations.
100. In Years 7 to 9, teachers use the National Strategy to aid planning but marking does not reflect National Curriculum levels, so that pupils cannot make decisions as to how to progress to the next level. This is compounded by an historical lack of time for ICT, and in some badly

refurbished rooms a lack of equipment means that pupils have to work three to a computer. However, through work at home, the many extra-curricular opportunities to use ICT and the extended day of the MMRC, pupils develop independence. They have basic skills in word processing, desktop publishing, researching, use of spreadsheets and databases. There is little expertise in the more complex elements of ICT, such as control of light, sound and movement, plus comparing and measuring, as a result of logging data.

101. In Years 10 and 11, results show improvement of understanding and skill. Unfortunately, there is not enough curriculum time to cover the course effectively. Many extra-curricular classes operate during the week to help pupils catch up with their workload. Alterations to the network, during the absence of the network manager at the start of the school year, have caused problems. The modified network is fragile and frustrates staff and pupils; it often lets pupils down, with loss of work being a real issue in Year 11. Parents highlighted many of these concerns. There is a lack of flexibility in examination courses at the end of Year 11 to meet the needs of all pupils. However, despite the problems, this year, coursework is showing a high standard.
102. Teaching and learning are good, with elements of very good teaching in Years 10 and 11- supported by a diligent technical team. Teachers plan well, modifying planning to suit pupils' individual needs. Very good innovative teaching styles encourage pupil participation by making activities relevant and enjoyable; for example, the logo research and design in Year 7, and the "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" challenging revision session in Year 10. In less successful lessons, lack of time-limits activities and the teacher-controlled end-of-lesson review fails to consolidate learning.
103. Leadership of a young and enthusiastic team is very good and focuses on team strengths. Teachers are not all specialists but their corporate commitment, using ICT as a learning tool, and their personal passion for learning, compensates and is raising standards. Management is good because there is an effective action plan for the development of the department. Monitoring of teaching and learning is in place but it is too early to identify the long-term impact. Improvement from the previous inspection has been satisfactory because resources remain below average, although the amount of time for ICT has increased and there have been some improvements in the amount of hardware available.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

104. Cross-curricular ICT does not meet statutory requirements in Years 7 to 9. Pupils use ICT in design and technology, geography, English, modern languages and art science. Most work is of a low level in basic research, word processing and editing. More demanding use of ICT for control of movement, sound and light, measuring and comparing data collected from experiments, and research and manipulation of image, is not part of the planning and assessment in subject areas. There is no up-to-date audit of subject contributions and pupils, when questioned, do not fully understand the value that ICT can bring to their general studies. Staff and pupil confidence in using ICT will not increase until there are improvements in the quality of hardware and increases in the reliability of the network.

Humanities

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average at the end of Year 11 as a result of the very good teaching in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and very well in Years 10 and 11.

- Leadership of the subject is very good, resulting in a very good improvement since the previous inspection.
- A small minority of older pupils have unsatisfactory attitudes to work and this interrupts work in some lessons.

Commentary

105. GCSE results in 2004 were well above average. Girls do better than boys in examinations. Results have improved since the previous inspection. Standards in the work seen are above average at the end of Year 9 and well above average at the end of Year 11. Standards have risen since the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and achieve very well in Years 10 and 11. This is consistent across different levels of attainment. Boys achieve less well than girls, overall. This is because boys in general do not research their work as thoroughly as girls and do not write with the same depth of knowledge.
106. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. There has been a substantial improvement in teaching since the previous inspection. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, of the factual content for work at this level, and know well how best to prepare pupils for examinations. Teachers also take good account of the range of attainment found in most classes and lessons are carefully planned to provide a range of work. In Years 10 and 11, particularly, work is challenging and helps to raise standards. Where teaching is less effective teachers do not take sufficient account of what pupils already know and work does not always build on pupils' prior knowledge and skills. Pupils generally behave very well in lessons and have very good attitudes to work. However, there is a small minority of older pupils whose attitudes are unsatisfactory and this affects their learning and that of other pupils. Very good assessment procedures allow teachers to keep a close check on pupils' attainment and progress. Assessment is used well. Particularly in Years 10 and 11, teachers show pupils how they can improve their work. The use of marking of pupils' work as a means of assessment is inconsistent. The contribution of geography to pupils' literacy and numeracy development is very good. The humanities area has a suite of computers available, which is well used by teachers, and geography makes a very good contribution to pupils' ICT work. The contribution to citizenship development is good.
107. Geography makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leadership of the subject is very good and there is a strong team of teachers within the department. Management is good and geography has made very good progress since the previous inspection.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Where teaching and learning are good it leads to good achievement.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- The use of appropriate video material enhances pupils' learning.
- Historical visits are limited and need to be provided for each year group.
- The use of computers for research and learning is underdeveloped.

Commentary

108. In 2004, the results are just above the national average. However, they have dipped slightly as they did in 2003. Results at the higher grades of A*, A and B are above the national average. The girls' results are at a higher level than the boys, but the latter are above the national average.

109. Pupils enter the school with varied historical skills and leave having made good progress. By the end of Year 9, standards are broadly in line with those achieved nationally. Pupils' achievement relative to prior attainment is satisfactory. Their own personal attitudes and the teaching they receive help pupils achieve. Most pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of events over time. They can often handle soundly source material in their textbooks and are aware of interpretation and bias. They can extract the information and discuss issues well with their teachers and in pairs. While higher-attaining pupils can write well they need to be constantly challenged to ensure that they do so. Other ability levels generally make progress but some do not always sustain it. Pupils extend their literacy skills and use of historical language throughout the key stage. The department's contribution to the development of numeracy skills was not much in evidence during the inspection.
110. Pupils were working at a level above the national average by the end of Year 11. Pupils' achievement, relative to standards at the end of Year 9, is satisfactory. Most pupils gain confidence with the use of source material in their textbooks, which helps them gain an understanding of developments over time. They have developed the ability to write their observations accurately in a way suggested by their teachers.
111. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good, with some that is merely satisfactory. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. The lessons are well planned with learning objectives, which, are usually shared with pupils. The lessons draw on a range of activities and resources. The use of questioning is often skilful, which, together with oral assessments, helps pupils to understand and reinforce their learning. The use of video material brings life to some of the events pupils study, but the use of ICT is underdeveloped. Pupils were given good opportunities for independent learning and for working in pairs. Occasionally in some lessons the tasks set do not always meet pupils' needs. Pupils with special educational needs make some good progress as a result of the support they receive. Homework is set but needs to be used more often to reinforce what has been learnt in the lesson. While work is marked regularly, with some useful short comments, the grades they were given for class work and the levels in assessed work do not give pupils the information as to how they could improve to the next level.
112. Subject leadership is satisfactory and the management is good. It is not always evident how the subject is to move forward. The schemes of work have been reviewed, but the use of historical visits, which could bring the subject alive in the classroom is limited. Accommodation is good. Monitoring of the work of the department is effective and is contributing to raising standards. The subject area has dealt well with most of the issues identified in the last report. The exceptions being that on occasions teachers still have too lengthy an introduction to lessons and the use of ICT.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Insufficient curriculum time and chronic staff absence have had an impact on provision.
- Unsatisfactory teaching is leading to low standards and poor achievement.
- Teaching methods are limited and there is a lack of appropriate challenge in the work set for pupils.
- Assessment is poor, and there is no accreditation in the subject.
- Most pupils do not value the subject and they often display a negative attitude in lessons.
- There has been no improvement since the last inspection.

Commentary

113. Attainment on entry to the school is above average. Standards, by the end of Year 9, are below the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards at the end of Year 11 are well below the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus.
114. Overall, achievement is poor. This is a result of insufficient time to cover the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus in Years 10 and 11 and unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils with special educational needs do not receive sufficient support to allow them to produce good written work and tasks are often unsuitable. There is little emphasis on key words and literacy strategies are undeveloped. Higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and there is little scope for extended work or research.
115. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. The absence of specialist staff has resulted in the majority of lessons being covered by supply teachers who are not subject specialists. Despite teachers' commendable efforts to teach the subject, lessons seen were often unsatisfactory. Lessons lacked pace and rigour and the methods used were restricted to the use of video material followed by class discussion and the completion of worksheets. The variety of approaches is very limited and the additional pressure of lack of time often leads to lessons that are uninspiring. Class discussions are teacher dominated and there is little paired or group work. Pupils do not perceive the subject as having any status and often display negative attitudes in lessons. This varies from making little effort to complete written work to sometimes behaving in a challenging and disrespectful manner towards teachers.
116. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have only one lesson every two weeks and the Agreed Syllabus is not being covered. Assessment is poor. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' books are often not marked, assessment does not inform learning and target-setting is very poor. In Years 10 and 11 there is no assessment of pupils' work. As a consequence of this, and chronic staff absence, pupils are not motivated and there has not been enough interest in the subject to sustain a GCSE group.
117. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The department is adequately resourced with textbooks, videos and artefacts. There is good ICT provision in a work area shared with the humanities faculty and within one classroom. However, there was very little evidence of ICT being used to enhance teaching or learning. Each classroom has a video and TV and there is adequate storage space for resources. There are good displays in the classrooms and the department has an entrance area that provides a central focus for the subject.
118. The leadership and management of the department are poor as a result of extended periods of absence of the head of department. She has updated the department handbook and has produced a brief development plan. However, they are limited in their scope and it is clear that her absence and that of the other specialist teacher have led to a decline in standards. Religious education does not make a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Improvement since the last inspection is very poor. Issues raised then have not been addressed and the strengths identified in the last report have been seriously weakened.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in all Year groups raises pupils' achievement.

- Teachers' subject knowledge and detailed lesson planning is a strength of the faculty.
- The attitude and behaviour of the students in lessons contribute to their progress and success.
- Marking does not provide pupils with enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- To ensure continuity and progression the scheme of work should be related to the National Curriculum Programme of Study for design and technology.
- Opportunities for pupils to use ICT to enhance their work are limited.

Commentary

119. At the end of Year 9, in 2004, pupils attained well above average results in National Curriculum teacher assessments; results for 2004 have risen and there are now more than half of the pupils who gain the higher levels. This represents a three-year rising trend. In 2004 GCSE design and technology examinations, results at the end of Year 11 were, overall, above average. By subject, results were as follows: textiles technology well above average: food technology, graphic products and resistant materials above the national average.
120. The work seen in Years 7 to 9 is in line with national expectations. Graphic skills are developing, however, there are many missed opportunities to use ICT to enhance pupils' learning experiences. Pupils with special educational needs learn well, owing to the nature of projects, which allow for success at a wide range of levels.
121. Pupils' work seen in Years 10 and 11 is broadly in line with national expectations at this stage of their courses. Pupils achieve well, and good quality teaching is an important factor in pupils' progress.
122. Teaching and learning are good in both key stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge, they plan well for lessons, and this ensures that practical skills, knowledge and understanding are acquired progressively. In consequence, pupils make good progress over time and enjoy their learning. The management of pupils' behaviour is good. The level of challenge in the tasks set for pupils is appropriate. However, there is evidence of some inconsistencies in assessment across the different subjects in the faculty. Marking does not provide pupils with enough guidance as to how to improve their work. There is good use of word banks to help pupils with technical vocabulary and opportunities for extended writing.
123. There is very good behaviour in the faculty and teachers work hard to ensure that pupils are aware of the need to work safely in the workshop or food technology area. Behaviour is very good because teachers set high expectations of pupils.
124. Leadership and management of the faculty are good. The head of faculty has a good vision of design and technology education and what needs to be done to raise standards further. Documentation is good; however, to ensure continuity and progression the scheme of work should be mapped against the National Curriculum Programme of Study for design and technology. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, although there is some duplication because of the nature of the split design and technology accommodation. The faculty is well supported by its technicians.
125. Since the last inspection progress has been very good. The faculty is very well placed to carry out continued improvement.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good: lessons are well planned, with very good integration of theory and practical work in Years 10 and 11.
- Standards in GCSE examinations are significantly above the national average.
- Teachers and pupils enjoy very good working relationships and pupils benefit from personal tuition and guidance.
- Accommodation is inadequate for courses with such a diversification of media opportunities.
- Insufficient use of ceramics limits three-dimensional experience and ICT is underused to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

126. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C in GCSE examinations in 2004 was significantly above the national average. There has been an upward trend since the last inspection because very good leadership has given the subject a clear sense of direction. Over 40 per cent achieved A* or A grades. Although boys perform less well than girls, their scores are still above the national average.
127. Standards by the end of Year 9 are above average. This represents good achievement for many pupils in relation to their knowledge, understanding and skills when they entered the school. Lower-attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, make good progress. These standards are achieved because the teaching is good and pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive. Pupils are able to use line, tone and texture effectively in their drawings. Works shows greater perceptual depth when pupils use first-hand observation as a basis for study.
128. Standards by the end of Year 11 are well above average. This represents very good achievement over the two years of the course for the majority of pupils. Sketch-books for research are used well and pupils' work shows good influence of important movements in art and design or of particular artists. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and benefit from personal tuition and guidance. Very good matching of tastes to capabilities ensures that higher-attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged. The development of personal interests has had a positive impact on boys' achievement. Pupils enjoy their art and design lessons and apply themselves purposefully. There is an effective working ethos and pupils behave and do their best and are eager to explain their work and future direction.
129. The quality of the teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9, and very good in Years 10 and 11. The difference between the groups is mostly explained by teachers in Years 10 and 11 using a greater range of teaching strategies and making better use of homework. Very good teaching was observed when pupils were actively engaged in debate about their work and were clear about their intermediate learning objectives. Teachers are aware of the capabilities of their pupils and often meet their needs through high quality individual tuition. They use their knowledge and subject expertise to very good effect and lesson preparation is very good. Resources are inadequate for teaching and developing ICT effectively and for three-dimensional study.
130. The leadership and management are very good. Staff work very well as a team and give freely of their time to pupils, which extends learning. Staff bring a broad and varied range of experience to the subject, and meetings are used to share ideas and good practice. Schemes of work and departmental policies provide very good guidance for staff so that consistency is ensured throughout the department. Induction of newly qualified staff and PGCE placements is very good. The absence of technical support restricts the range of media taught. Curriculum enrichment through gallery visits, life-drawing classes and workshops have a positive impact upon the quality and range of pupils' work.

131. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good, most notably in GCSE results and boys' achievement. Assessment is now effective and very good displays enhance the school environment.

Drama

132. Pupils have a fortnightly **drama** lesson in Years 7, 8 and 9 and they can choose to follow a drama GCSE course in Years 10 and 11. Four lessons were sampled during the inspection. Three of the lessons were GCSE groups and the pupils learnt well. The teacher used her very good subject knowledge to explain, ask questions and challenge pupils effectively. Pupils had very good attitudes to learning and worked together maturely. In the other lesson, a Year 8 group did not learn enough about drama because the pace was too slow, there was a lack of challenge and the teacher did not emphasise drama skills enough. Pupils enjoy the subject and feel that it helps their self-confidence. There is a thriving weekly after-school drama club and regular theatre visits that pupils appreciate. The accommodation for teaching drama is unsatisfactory. The drama studio is cramped and shabby and an alternative space for lessons is poor.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils is good because of good teaching.
- The department provides very good opportunities for pupils to extend their musical learning outside of the classroom.
- Pupils make good use of ICT to support their musical learning.
- The pacing of the beginnings of lessons is slow and this limits the time available for learning.
- The timetabling arrangements and the organisation of resources have a negative impact on learning.

Commentary

133. Recent GCSE examination results have consistently been well above average. Pupils enter the school with standards that are above average. By the end of Year 9 their standards are well above average and this represents good achievement. Pupils perform together, fluently using secure keyboard techniques, and many show a good understanding of the style within which they are working. They evaluate their work using musical vocabulary and some make effective use of ICT to improve their work.
134. Standards of work in Year 11 are well above average, and a major strength is the imaginative composition work that pupils develop using their own instrumental skills and ICT. Talented pupils have access to a sophisticated software package, which enables them to use the full orchestral palate to create effective and often evocative pieces. Standards in performing are high.
135. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers are very experienced and knowledgeable practitioners. Orderly classroom routines result in very good attitudes and behaviour amongst pupils. Sometimes the formality of the routines slows the pace of the lessons, particularly at the start, and this limits the amount of learning that can take place. In the majority of lessons, tasks are well matched to the range of abilities in the class, and teachers provide good individual support for pupils with special educational needs. The arrangement of the department's resources, and the structure of the schemes of work, mean that pupils are sometimes given a task to work on for a longer time span than their concentration will allow. Excellent workbooks have been developed that support teaching and learning. Pupils review their progress regularly both at the ends of lessons and at the end of topics, although they are not always clear about what they need to do to improve.

136. Leadership and management of music are good and dedicated teachers staff the department. The department's work is managed effectively. Opportunities for professional development are good, although teachers have not had the opportunity to observe other approaches to music teaching in order to develop their own practice. Currently, timetabling arrangements and the large group size in Year 11 puts pressure on the availability of resources and this impedes progress for some in the lessons. The local music service provides very good support for pupils and some excellent small group teaching was seen during the inspection. The number of pupils taking tuition on instruments and the voice is above the national average.
137. The department provides very good extra-curricular opportunities and the activities sampled during the inspection were well led and of a very high standard. Good progress has been made since the time of the previous inspection because standards are higher, overall, and the high profile of the subject within and beyond the school has been maintained.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very high expectations and promote the subject in a positive manner.
- Pupils achieve very well because teaching is very good.
- The quality of assessment is very good and guides teaching and curriculum planning.
- There is a very good extra-curricular programme and participation levels are high.
- Formal procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning are underdeveloped.
- The use of ICT to support learning is limited.
- Poor outdoor facilities restrict the breadth of the curriculum and often the quality of learning.

Commentary

138. Pupils enter the school with average standards and by the end of Year 9 make very good progress because they are highly motivated, work purposefully in lessons and respond positively to very good teaching. Consequently, standards at the end of Year 9 are above national expected levels. Their games skills are well developed. They understand tactics and apply them effectively and have good handling and passing skills in football and basketball. In dance, pupils enjoy a high level of mutual trust and co-operation in their partner work. They show good strength, control and balance. They are able to evaluate each other's performance and are encouraged to use technical terms in their feedback, and they do this with confidence.
139. By the end of Year 11, standards are above nationally expected levels and achievement is good. Pupils respond well to the high level of challenge and are keen to improve their skills. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and good relationships and mutual respect ensure a secure and positive learning climate in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well.
140. A large number of pupils take a GCSE in physical education and standards are consistently well above national expectations and progress is very good. The quality of written work is good. Notes are well written and provide a good source for revision. Work is marked regularly, with suggestions as to how improvements can be made. Homework is set regularly and used effectively to consolidate and extend learning. Completion rates are good.
141. Teaching and learning are very good. The pace of learning is always brisk and lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives communicated to pupils. Teachers use appropriate technical terms and vocabulary and encourage pupils to do the same when they

evaluate their known and other pupils' performances. This contributes significantly to the rate of progress and to the high standards achieved. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. Teachers have very good classroom management skills. They have very high expectations and consistently challenge, encourage and support pupils, who respond positively and work with determination and enthusiasm. Assessment procedures are very good and ensure that pupils understand their targets and how they can achieve them. Staff willingly give their time to support an extensive and very popular extra-curricular programme. A large number of pupils take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided and participation rates are high. There is very good support for pupils with special educational needs. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is developing. These pupils benefit particularly from the very good existing links with local sports clubs. Whilst indoor accommodation is satisfactory, outdoor facilities are poor. The use of ICT to support learning is underdeveloped.

142. Leadership and management are good. The development plan identifies clear priorities and strategies to raise standards. The department works very well as a team and the teachers promote physical education in a very positive manner. The head of department is committed to achieving high standards and provides appropriate support for both staff and pupils. She acknowledges the potential of increased use of ICT to have a positive impact on attainment. Formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has yet to be established to ensure best practice is shared. Planning and organisation are very good and this is reflected in all departmental documentation.
143. Since the last inspection standards of teaching have improved. Assessment procedures are now fully in place and achievement data is used effectively to set targets and track and monitor progress. Pupils benefit greatly from regular opportunities to evaluate their own and other pupils' performances. GCSE results have improved and high standards of behaviour and positive pupil attitudes have been maintained. Outdoor facilities remain poor.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Much of the teaching helps students to become responsible citizens.
- The citizenship curriculum includes activities that include some community partners.
- The School Council gives pupils an opportunity to take part in a democratic election.
- All pupils take part in a citizenship competition.
- Teaching in subjects needs to raise awareness when there are aspects on citizenship.
- Participation in the environment committee is a particular strength of citizenship.
- Assessment is required in all Year groups to provide evidence of achievement reached.

Commentary

144. At the time of the inspection, lessons in citizenship were offered either in subjects or the PHSE programme.
145. Standards are good at the end of Year 9. Pupils over the preceding three years had gained a good knowledge of aspects of society that are to be found in the citizenship curriculum. In Year 9 PHSE they were considering the problem of anorexia and related conditions, while in Year 8 they were considering the effects of alcohol. This type of study gave pupils an opportunity to think about the issues and discuss them within their pairs or groups and develop these skills appropriately. All groups are challenged sufficiently, but the more able could be further challenged with extension work.

146. By the end of Year 11, the knowledge and understanding acquired by pupils were good. Pupils had acquired a good understanding of a democratic society by the issues they discussed and by taking part in a democratic election to become members of the School Council. Pupils had also discussed issues such as drugs in both their groups and with their teacher and developed a good understanding of the issue. The work they were given provided pupils with opportunities to think and sometimes write and discuss issues with sensitivity.
147. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Most lessons had learning objectives that were sometimes shared with pupils. In the lessons that were good, pupils were encouraged to develop informed opinions and challenge those of others. Some of the issues considered were controversial but were dealt with sensitively. In some subject departments there had been aspects of citizenship in lessons that had not been identified; whereas in others they had, but had not always been picked up in teaching. Opportunities for the use of ICT for learning and research were limited as the subject was often set against ICT. The assessment and recording procedures are in place up to Year 9, but not to Year 11, so that opportunities to know how pupils are doing can be limited and assistance with improvement also limited. Some pupils of all ages participate in the Schools Council and come to an understanding of what it is like to take part in a democratic body. Other pupils can volunteer to join the work of an environment committee, which actively responds to issues both in and out of school.
148. The subject leadership and management are good. There is clear evidence of planning and a good coverage of the National Curriculum. Some subject departments have embraced citizenship within their curriculum but do not always raise awareness when an element is taught. The school has endeavoured to include all its pupils in a competition to respond to the local authorities Agenda 21, a response to an international environment conference in Rio de Janeiro.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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