

# INSPECTION REPORT

## STALHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Stalham

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121155

Headteacher: Mr J Chilvers

Lead inspector: Mr T Wheatley

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> February 2005

Inspection number: 268469

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:	12 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	462
School address:	Brumstead Road Stalham Norwich Norfolk
Postcode:	NR12 9DG
Telephone number:	(01692) 580 281
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Michael Cullingham
Date of previous inspection:	April 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school has 462 pupils aged 12 to 16 who enter the school in Year 8. Overall, there are more boys than girls, though there are more girls than boys in Year 8. Pupils come from predominantly one middle school but increasingly pupils are joining at later stages from areas outside the school's natural catchment area. Many pupils are bussed in from other villages and the surrounding rural community. Pupils are from almost entirely white British backgrounds and there are very small numbers of pupils from other white and Bangladeshi backgrounds. One pupil is in the early stages of acquiring English language – a Bangladeshi native speaker. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN) is lower than the national average. The proportion with special needs is broadly average. Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and dyslexia are the main areas of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the socio-economic background of pupils are broadly average. Attainment on entry to the school in Year 8 is currently above average and has varied between average and above average in recent years.

The school premises are used for adult education and for its sports facilities. The school has been part of a national programme for rebuilding schools that has now collapsed and is now planning with the local authority to rebuild and expand the buildings as part of a local reorganisation of schools. The school has links with Great Yarmouth College, City College Norwich and the University of East Anglia. It has the 'Healthy Schools' Award (1996), Schools Achievement Award (2003), FA Charter Mark (2000).

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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30901	Sue Schofield	Team inspector	Art and design
7084	Jack Haslam	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology
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12118	Allan Paver	Team inspector	Religious education
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1340	David Wigley	Team inspector	Music Citizenship
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school has serious weaknesses. Whilst over half of teaching is good or better, in a significant minority of lessons teaching is unsatisfactory and the curriculum is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Many pupils achieve well, but the attitudes of some pupils are unsatisfactory, detrimentally affecting the achievement of others. Accommodation and staffing are unsatisfactory. The headteacher has identified many of the school's problems but the pace of improvement has been too slow. Governance is unsatisfactory. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of a significant minority of pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, is unsatisfactory.
- The attitudes of too many pupils in lessons are unsatisfactory, lead to unsatisfactory achievement and disrupt the learning of others.
- Leadership, management and governance are unsatisfactory, but some aspects of school self-evaluation initiated by the headteacher are good.
- Whilst many lessons have challenging work, in too many lessons teachers do not provide sufficiently challenging work or manage the unsatisfactory attitudes of pupils well enough.
- The quality of care and relationships between adults and pupils are good.
- The school has had difficulties in appointing staff in some subjects and some of the teaching rooms are too small.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 does not match the needs of some pupils.
- Statutory requirements for religious education (RE) in Years 10 and 11 and for information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum are not met.
- Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Improvement since the last inspection in April 1999 has been unsatisfactory. Standards have not improved enough and achievement is worse overall. Whilst boys' achievement overall is better than it was, it has not improved enough. Provision for ICT as a separate subject has improved, but requirements to teach it across the curriculum have not. Provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is still unsatisfactory but plans to remedy this are good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved and is now satisfactory. Resource shortages have been addressed. Teaching is worse now than it was at the last inspection.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

**Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall.** In the Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2004, results were at the national average – they were average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Results were similar to those of schools with pupils of similar prior attainment and have improved over recent years. Standards seen are above average, continuing the trend of improvement. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average, reflecting satisfactory achievement against pupils' above average standards on entry to the school. In art and design, design and technology, geography and ICT, standards are above average. Overall, achievement is satisfactory; it is good in citizenship, design and technology, geography and ICT and unsatisfactory in history, music, physical education (PE) and religious education. In the

2004 GCSE examinations, results were close to the national average and part of an improving trend. Compared with schools with pupils of similar prior attainment, results were below average and lower than in previous years. This reflects unsatisfactory achievement overall. Girls performed better than boys overall, but the gap between them has narrowed. Standards seen are average overall, but pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory, as they often do not reach the levels they are capable of. Achievement is good in science, art and design, citizenship, geography and music due to good teaching and good management of pupils. In mathematics, history, French and physical education, achievement is unsatisfactory. In history, physical education and religious education, work is not planned well enough; in French and history, the highest attainers are not sufficiently challenged; and in most subjects, there is a pattern of often deliberate distracting behaviour, usually boys, that restricts the achievement of many pupils.

**Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.** Although many pupils have good attitudes to learning, attitudes are unsatisfactory overall due to a significant minority of pupils, mainly boys, having unsatisfactory attitudes which persistently disrupt the learning of others. Behaviour overall is satisfactory with a low level of exclusions. Attendance is unsatisfactory. It is consistently below the national average and too many pupils attend less than 90 per cent of the time.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is unsatisfactory.** Overall, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, though a significant amount is good or better. However, in a large minority of lessons, teachers do not consistently challenge the highest attainers or deal effectively with the disruptive attitudes of a small number of pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9 but in Years 10 and 11 is not inclusive enough, providing too little choice or flexibility for pupils. Plans for improvement are good. Requirements for religious education in Years 10 and 11 and ICT throughout the school are not met. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall. Assessment is satisfactory and improving. Staffing and accommodation are unsatisfactory though the school has worked hard to resolve difficulties.

Support for pupils' personal development is good and satisfactory for their academic development. Pupils do not feel actively involved in the development of the school. The good links with other schools and colleges ensure that young pupils settle in quickly and older pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Involvement of parents in school life and their children's learning is satisfactory and improving through a more proactive approach.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.** The headteacher has a satisfactory understanding of how the school needs to improve. His monitoring and evaluation of the school has many strengths, but he has carried much of the responsibility of this himself as well as too many other major responsibilities. The chair of governors has a sound knowledge of the school, as do some other governors, but overall their understanding of how this can be used is limited. They do not meet their statutory obligations for religious education, ICT and collective worship.

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

Parents are generally supportive of the work of the school but would appreciate greater consultation. Overall, pupils are satisfied with the school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure work is consistently challenging and matched to pupils' needs.
- Implement the school's behaviour policies consistently and rigorously in all lessons.

- Improve leadership and management by allocating responsibilities equitably, pushing forward improvements and supporting staff in their efforts to do so.
- Support governors in understanding the wide range of information they receive so that they are in a position to be critical and supportive.
- Continue to appoint staff to fill posts and work with the local authority to improve accommodation.
- Implement the good curriculum plans in Years 10 and 11 to meet the needs of pupils.
- Ensure statutory requirements are met for religious education in Years 10 and 11, ICT across the curriculum and collective worship.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

Standards are **average** overall. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 8 and 9 and **unsatisfactory** in Years 10 and 11. Results are improving overall, but too slowly in Years 10 and 11.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is improving in Years 8 and 9.
- Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is detrimentally affected by disruptive behaviour of a small proportion of pupils, usually boys, in many lessons.
- Higher attainers sometimes do not achieve the levels they are capable of.
- Achievement is good where teaching is challenging, interesting and engages pupils.

#### **Commentary**

1. Attainment on entry to the school is above average overall and has been for several years. Pupils have above average literacy skills on entry to the school and these have improved in recent years. They enter the school in Year 8, a year later than in most secondary schools.
2. In the end of Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2004, results were in line with the national average and average compared with schools with pupils of similar prior attainment. Results in English were at the national average and they were above the national average in mathematics and science. Results were better in 2004 than in 2003, continuing an improving trend of recent years.
3. Standards seen in Year 9 are above average overall and this is in keeping with their attainment on entry to the school. In English, mathematics and science, pupils perform at above the average levels. This is an improvement on the results of the national tests in 2004 – the result of improved stability in staffing, the impact of the adoption of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy and the recent appointment of new heads of departments. Achievement is satisfactory, taking into account pupils' prior attainment. In other subjects, standards are above average in art and design, design and technology, geography and ICT. Standards are average in citizenship, history, French and physical education. They are below average in music and religious education. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but it is good in citizenship, design and technology, geography and ICT. It is satisfactory in art and design and French. In history, music, physical education and religious education, achievement is unsatisfactory. In history, this is because work is not challenging enough and there is too little focus on developing historical skills; in music, lack of music specialist teachers has seriously disrupted the continuity of learning for pupils; and in religious education, inadequate planning of learning means that pupils lose interest and start low-level disruption of lessons. Where achievement is good, work is challenging and matched to pupils' learning needs.
4. In the GCSE examinations in 2004, results were in line with the national average overall and part of an improving trend of recent years. The percentage of pupils obtaining five or more A\*-C grade GCSE passes was below the national average but slightly higher than in 2003 and the percentages of pupils obtaining five or more A\*-G grades and one or more A\*-G grades were average, but lower than in 2003. Compared with schools where pupils had similar prior attainment results in the National Curriculum tests in 2002, they were well below average and lower than in 2003. This means that overall pupils' achievement has been unsatisfactory over their time in Years 10 and 11. This was particularly so in English and mathematics, ICT, design and technology, history and physical education. Achievement was good in science, art and design, and in the textiles element of design and technology. Achievement overall was

unsatisfactory in French, but about three-quarters of pupils – much higher than the national percentage – were entered for the subject and, whilst there were fewer higher grades than expected, the majority of pupils achieved satisfactorily considering their prior attainment. Across the subjects, girls performed better than boys and, whilst the gap between them has decreased, there is still some underachievement by boys.

5. Standards seen in Year 11 are average overall, but achievement is unsatisfactory as pupils are frequently not reaching the levels of attainment they are capable of. In English and mathematics, standards are average and in science, they are above average. Achievement is satisfactory in English, taking into account literacy skills of these pupils on entry to the school. Achievement is unsatisfactory in mathematics, partly due to past staffing difficulties, but also due to some disruption to learning by the negative attitudes of some boys. In science, achievement is good, due to some challenging teaching that engages boys as well as girls. In other subjects, standards are above average in geography and music. They are average in art and design, citizenship, design and technology, ICT, core physical education and religious education. Achievement is good in art and design, citizenship, geography and music, due to challenging teaching, well-planned lessons and activities that interest and engage pupils. It is satisfactory in design and technology, ICT and religious education. Achievement is unsatisfactory in history, French and physical education. In history and physical education, work is frequently not planned well enough to cover all of the subject skills needed for pupils to achieve as they ought to. In French and history, the highest attainers are not sufficiently challenged enough. In most subjects, there is a pattern of often deliberate talking, interruption and distracting behaviour that restricts the achievement of the pupils involved, usually boys, and disrupts the achievements of other pupils.
6. Literacy skills are average overall. Writing skills are average, though not practised consistently in all subjects. Standards of reading are above average. There is good practice in design and technology where teachers reinforce the terminology they use. Standards of numeracy across the school are satisfactory overall. However, as with literacy, practice is inconsistent. In French and science, pupils develop their graphical skills from analysis of information and in science, numerical skills develop well through rearranging equations. In other subjects, there are few planned opportunities to develop numeracy. ICT skills are broadly average. Few teachers provide planned opportunities to use computers to support work in their subject and to develop pupils' ICT skills.
7. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special needs, is unsatisfactory overall because they are often in classes where there is some disruption to learning. Nevertheless, individual support from teachers is often good and teachers plan work carefully, based on pupils' identified learning needs. Many of the pupils with special educational needs experience difficulties with literacy skills and some have specific, moderate learning difficulties or behavioural problems. Their difficulties also affect their ability to progress in several subjects. However, support from teaching assistants is effective and most teaching staff are aware of pupils' needs and work hard to ensure that appropriate strategies and resources are used. The achievement of the very small number of pupils from ethnic minority groups is satisfactory. Specialist support is provided and this is effective.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	n/a (30.8)	n/a (33.4)
mathematics	n/a (34.7)	n/a (35.4)
science	n/a (32.5)	n/a (33.6)

*There were 106 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	45 (39)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	90 (93)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	32.7 (31.4)	34.9 (34.7)

*There were 102 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

### Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)

Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are **unsatisfactory**. Pupils' behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **satisfactory** overall, though the low-level disruption by a few pupils distracts others from learning. Punctuality to lessons and in the morning is **satisfactory** but attendance overall is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils want to be at school and enjoy learning but a significant minority of pupils (mostly boys) persistently disrupt lessons and the learning of others.
- The behaviour of many pupils is good and the number of exclusions is low.
- The attendance of a significant minority of pupils falls below acceptable levels and affects their learning and achievement.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are mostly good, often creating a productive atmosphere.

### Commentary

8. Many pupils arrive at school with good attitudes towards learning. They want to do well and want to succeed. They often ask and answer questions to extend their learning and understanding. Many work well independently and manage their time well, working with confidence and enthusiasm. They enjoy their success and want to do better. Many pupils are articulate and want to talk about their work. When managed well by teachers, this liveliness is channelled into hard work and good achievement, often directing the pace of learning. However, too frequently pupils are faced with low expectations from teachers and are often allowed to get away with unsatisfactory and sloppy attitudes. They shout out, interrupt, deliberately distract others and waste time. When tasks and teaching are dull and unchallenging, some pupils are allowed to be lazy and not work to their limits. This affects the achievement they and others make.
9. Behaviour around school is mostly good. At breaks and lunchtimes, pupils mix and socialise well, despite the lack of appropriate areas available in which they can relax. There is little staff supervision but pupils are generally responsible and behave accordingly. There have been no permanent exclusions in recent years and the number of fixed term exclusions is quite low. Most pupils behave well in lessons but again a significant minority seem to take pleasure in deliberately disrupting lessons and they are not always managed well by teachers. Pupils report that they are frustrated when lessons are regularly interrupted by such behaviour and the persistent disruption contributes to the unsatisfactory achievement made.
10. Relationships between pupils and adults and between pupils themselves are mostly good and contribute to the good atmosphere in many lessons. Pupils report that there is little bullying in school and that it is handled promptly and well. Many pupils can identify teachers who they feel have a positive effect on behaviour and relationships, and pupils respect and appreciate these teachers.

11. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. The school has a clear intention to promote the values of courtesy and consideration and has a good understanding at senior level of how to achieve this. All subjects include consideration of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects within their schemes of work but there was little evidence of this in lessons and many opportunities are missed to consciously extend and develop pupils' awareness. Whilst most pupils respect the values of fairness, trust and tolerance, a minority of pupils show little understanding of those who are different and little concern for the effect their behaviour has on others, particularly in lessons. During the inspection, offensive remarks towards other pupils and teachers were heard and racist jokes were being circulated. Not enough is done to actively promote and monitor a genuine understanding of and respect for others in all pupils.
12. Pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to lessons. They are confident they will succeed because they have good and effective support and because both learning support staff and teaching staff are generally aware of pupils' specific needs. Pupils have good relationships with other pupils and with most members of staff.

### Attendance

13. Overall, the attendance rate is unsatisfactory. It is consistently below national averages and 30 per cent of pupils attend less than 90 per cent of the time, and this regular absence limits pupils' achievement. Although punctuality is broadly satisfactory, there is sometimes a lack of urgency to move to lessons and some lessons begin late.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.2	School data	0.9
National data	6.9	National data	1.1

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

### Exclusions

#### **Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

#### **Exclusions in the last school year**

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
450	29	0
2	0	0
4	2	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	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

The quality of education is **unsatisfactory** overall. Teaching and learning are **unsatisfactory** and the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is **unsatisfactory**. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 10 to 11 and leads to underachievement in a minority of lessons, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Teaching is good in design and technology, science, ICT, citizenship and geography throughout the school and results in good achievement.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory in history throughout the school, music and RE in Years 8 and 9, and PE and French in Years 10 and 11.
- In a significant minority of lessons, particularly in mixed ability classes, teaching does not match the needs of all pupils, especially the highest attainers.
- Low-level disruption slows the pace of learning in a significant minority of lessons.

### Commentary

14. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall, though there are areas of good and very good teaching where pupils learn well. In Years 8 and 9, where the introduction of the National Strategy is beginning to improve lesson planning, teaching is satisfactory. It is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching and learning has declined since the previous inspection and a larger proportion of teaching is now unsatisfactory or has unsatisfactory features.
15. Teaching and learning are good overall in design and technology, science, ICT, citizenship and geography throughout the school and in art and music in Years 10 and 11. They are unsatisfactory in history throughout the school, music and religious education in Years 8 and 9, and mathematics, physical education and French in Years 10 and 11. Teaching in music is unsatisfactory because of long term problems in finding permanent staff and the illness of the temporary teacher.
16. In most lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge, which is used effectively to involve and motivate pupils and to prepare them well for examinations. The best lessons are characterised by clear learning objectives, understood by pupils, a high level of pace and challenge, high expectations, and good planning using a variety of teaching and learning styles. Good use is made of group and pair work and resources are used well. An emphasis is placed on pupils' personal responses, a high level of discussion is encouraged and a sense of enquiry is developed well. In these lessons, pupils work industriously, are enthusiastic about their learning and make fast gains in knowledge, skills and understanding.
17. In an excellent Year 8 history lesson on Oliver Cromwell, pupils worked at exceptionally demanding levels in interpreting historical evidence. They responded extremely well to the consistent level of challenge demanded by the teacher and to inspirational teaching. They worked at high intellectual levels, understanding the significance of religious symbols and objects and linking them with historical factors.
18. By contrast, in a large minority of lessons, teachers fail to plan work to meet the needs of all the pupils in classes containing a wide range of capabilities or to engage their interest sufficiently. This results in low-level disruption, particularly from disaffected boys, which slows the pace of learning for all pupils in the class. In a minority of lessons, pupil management is

unsatisfactory. This results in a lack of challenge, particularly for the highest-attaining pupils, and wastes time, which could be used more productively for learning. Low expectations are demonstrated in, for example, the acceptance of poorly presented work, or questioning which is insufficiently challenging.

19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and occasionally good. However, the failure to consistently manage the minor disruptions to lessons interferes with the achievement of some of the pupils with special educational needs. Placing pupils with special educational needs in classes where they receive specific support has been effective in ensuring progress of many pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' needs are well known by teachers and in the good lessons a wide range of teaching activities and resources are used. In a good Year 10 English lesson, the teacher had a very good understanding of all the pupils' special needs and structured the lesson to include a range of challenging but achievable tasks; all pupils developed a good understanding of some pre-1914 literature. The learning support assistant was very effective in providing support. Where teaching is less effective, pupils' progress is restricted because the teacher fails to provide tasks and activities for pupils of different abilities. Assessing, recording and reporting on the progress of pupils with special educational needs are good and meet statutory requirements. Individual education plans are used effectively by most teachers. Support from teaching assistants is a significant factor in the good progress made by these pupils. They are very well informed and work very well with teachers to ensure that pupils make progress. Where there is no support, progress of those pupils with special educational needs is restricted. Good support for those pupils with poor literacy skills is effectively provided through some withdrawal from lessons.
20. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Procedures are good in English, design and technology, ICT, geography and music, and are improving in mathematics and science. Assessment is unsatisfactory in history, religious education and physical education. References to National Curriculum criteria for assessment purposes are not consistent across all departments, but practice is improving. Assessment information is used for target setting in most subject areas. However, the quality of marking is variable, with some teachers giving little guidance to enable pupils to improve.

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 85 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (2%)	9 (11%)	33 (39%)	30 (35%)	11 (13%)	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.*

#### **The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is **unsatisfactory** overall; it is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 8 and 9. Staffing and accommodation are **unsatisfactory**. Opportunities to enrich the curriculum are **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is not matched to the needs of some pupils.
- Curriculum development has been too slow to adjust to national requirements.
- The school does not meet statutory requirements for ICT across all subjects or for religious education in Years 10 and 11.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation limits the curriculum.
- Problems of recruiting and retaining staff create major problems for the maintenance of the curriculum.

## Commentary

21. The breadth and balance of the curriculum in Years 8 and 9 is satisfactory overall. All subjects of the National Curriculum plus religious education are present with drama and a good programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) in addition. The school adjusts time allocations to meet perceived need. The division of the National Curriculum between middle school and high school is managed well.
22. There is no organised approach to providing opportunities for ICT across the curriculum, and this is a statutory omission. The school does not provide enough religious education in Years 10 and 11 to meet the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. However, religious education is taught through the good PSHE programme and there is a large element of religious education in this that could readily be adapted to meet statutory requirements and provide an examination course to GCSE. Provision for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Although the governors have addressed the issues from the last inspection, overall, provision remains unsatisfactory.
23. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory because it is too narrow and inflexible. Most pupils take an extended core curriculum including French, ICT, history and geography. This provides limited opportunities to make adjustments to match individual pupils' needs or interests, although there are some opportunities to choose practical and aesthetic subjects. The time offered to physical education in the core curriculum is insufficient to meet the health needs of pupils. A small number go to vocational courses at local colleges. Although all pupils take one vocational subject, ICT, the choice of other vocational subjects is narrow. The impact on the ICT course is to limit the time it is taught and this restricts the grades pupils can reach. Plans to improve the curriculum as agreed by governors are good and are intended to provide different routes for pupils to obtain qualifications through an extended range of courses and college experience.
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. All pupils receive their basic curriculum entitlement and the great majority follow the same curriculum as other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs in Years 10 and 11 have good opportunities to participate in vocational courses. For a small number of pupils who have difficulty following the main curriculum there are accredited vocational courses at local colleges. Individual education plans are detailed and give good guidance to teachers when planning work for pupils with special educational needs.
25. Careers education is satisfactory. Careers is taught as part of the PHSE programme from Year 8 onwards. Guidance is intensive in Years 10 and 11, so that all pupils follow a structured programme and receive helpful individual advice and support matched to their needs. Good use is made of local employers, local colleges and outside agencies to support teaching and learning. There are regular presentations during assemblies and there is an annual Careers Convention. The school makes very good use of links with the local Education Business Partnership and pupils take part in events with local business partners.
26. Support for learning outside of the school day is satisfactory. Participation in sport, the arts and other activities is satisfactory. Participation in drama is good, with good GCSE results and good extra-curricular drama, but participation in extra-curricular music is unsatisfactory.
27. Accommodation is unsatisfactory overall, despite considerable work and effort by governors and staff. Some departments are based in old, condemned mobile classrooms that are in a poor state of repair. Some rooms in the school are too small. In the teaching of French, this restricts important group work and in art and design, it limits the breadth of the curriculum. In mathematics, a lack of blinds is affecting the use of overhead projection in teaching and, although the science laboratories are adequate, they are old and in need of refurbishment. The outdoor facilities for physical education are good, but the floor of the large sports hall is cracking. The changing rooms are cramped. Facilities for the disabled are unsatisfactory;

there is no wheelchair access to the upper floors and there are no ramps to avoid the steps on the ground floor. Improvements since the last report, however, have provided good accommodation in some curricular areas in design and technology and in ICT. A refurbished suite of rooms, the learning resource centre, affords good provision for pupils who require extra learning support. A new studio has improved accommodation for drama. The school was part of a public funding initiative (PFI) scheme that collapsed. Plans are at an advanced stage for the local authority (with government approval) to provide a replacement programme.

28. Resources for learning are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection. The number of computers is broadly average, though use of them is not well planned. Most subjects have sufficient resources, though there are shortages in science that limit the range of practical work that can be done. Computers are accessible, but departments do not consistently organise themselves to make best use of them. Statutory requirements to teach ICT across the curriculum are not met.
29. Staffing is unsatisfactory. Staffing is unsatisfactory in music, art and design and physical education. While recent staffing turbulence in mathematics has been resolved, the impact of past disruption is still contributing to underachievement in Years 10 and 11. Staffing problems were compounded in the week of the inspection by staff absences that affected physical education, music and drama. The match of support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good, there being strong fields in response to advertised posts. Learning support staff are effective but too few in number.

### Care, guidance and support

The school provides **good** support for pupils' personal development and **satisfactory** support for their academic development. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **unsatisfactory**. Management of health and safety and day-to-day care is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year heads provide good support for pupils' personal development.
- Good relationships result in most pupils having confidence and trust in their teachers.
- Teachers know the needs of their pupils well and are flexible in their approach to helping them.
- Good arrangements ensure that new pupils settle into school life quickly.
- Pupils do not feel they have an effective and genuine voice in school.
- Health and safety is managed well across the school.

### Commentary

30. The school has a genuine commitment to and interest in its pupils and their wellbeing. Pupils say they feel safe and comfortable in school and many appreciate the individual approach, particularly from the year heads with whom pupils identify closely. Teachers and tutors understand the needs and circumstances of individual pupils well and the year heads work together very well to form a close knit and effective level of support. The mostly good relationships between teachers and pupils often result in good interaction in lessons and around school. Most pupils listen to their teachers and often act on their advice and suggestions. For example, Year 10 pupils say that the overall behaviour of their year group has improved since Year 8 because of the expectations and intervention of their year head. However, the management of behaviour in lessons by teachers is inconsistent.
31. The school has looked at different ways to help those pupils who find it difficult to handle the usual school day. A few pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow an alternative curriculum course with an emphasis on work placements and college courses, and for most of them this is successful. As yet, there are few vocational courses available for pupils who are less suited to

more academic courses. Not all pupils have a good understanding of how well they are doing. However, the target setting and review evenings are effective in giving parents and pupils time to discuss current performance with teachers and to set target grades or levels jointly.

32. Year 8 pupils settle into school quickly through good induction arrangements and good communication between the middle and high school. Many opportunities exist for young pupils to visit the secondary school prior to beginning in September and they are the only pupils in school on their first day. Trained Year 11 pupils act as mentors and are attached to specific tutor groups. They act as friends, listening ears and provide support throughout pupils' early days in the school. Few new pupils arrive after the beginning of the school year but those that do say they settle in quickly and feel well looked after.
33. Although the school council has been rejuvenated in recent months, few pupils feel that it is, as yet, a genuine and effective means of consultation. Some pupils thought that only Year 11 pupils were involved, others thought its purpose was to organise social events and very few pupils knew who their tutor representatives were. Currently, there is little consultation prior to the council meetings and little feedback afterwards. On an individual basis, pupils do feel they can talk to teachers and the dialogue is genuine. Pupils are actively involved in the charity work that goes on throughout the year and genuinely enjoy helping other people.
34. Pupils feel they receive adequate information and support to help them make appropriate decisions about their future once they leave school. Through information from school and good links with local colleges, pupils get an insight into post-16 choices. Last year, 65 per cent of Year 11 pupils went on to further education.
35. The school pays good attention to the physical care and wellbeing of its pupils. There is an effective child protection policy which follows the local authority procedures and all issues are handled appropriately and sensitively. Good use is made of outside specialist agencies where necessary to help and support pupils and families. Management of health and safety across the school is good.
36. Links between departments in the school and the learning support department are good and are very effective in ensuring that most staff have a satisfactory understanding of the specific learning needs of those pupils with special educational needs. Procedures for identifying pupils are thorough. Liaison with primary schools is good and forms the foundation for initial assessment which is then developed through testing of pupils on entry. This provides relevant information which helps the school to make decisions about the level of support. Significant progress has been made to ensure that SEN pupils have access to the whole curriculum.

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

The school has a **good** relationship with other schools and colleges and a **satisfactory** partnership with parents and the community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good links with the middle school ensure there is continuous learning between Years 7 and 8.
- Parents are mostly supportive of the school and communication between home and school is good.
- Target setting and review evenings encourage parents to be more actively involved in their children's learning.
- Links with local business and community are widening the opportunities and experiences for pupils.

## Commentary

37. There are good and strong links between the middle school and high school. The relationship is well established and teachers, parents and pupils are confident the move on to secondary school will be smooth. The schools share common aims and policies so that pupils feel the transition between schools is a natural continuation. The school is an active part of the 'cluster' group of schools that shares professional dialogue and practice. Relationships with four further education colleges are improving and helping pupils make appropriate choices after Year 11. The 'Increased Flexibility' project with two of the colleges involves Year 11 pupils from a group of secondary schools working and learning together. The school regularly helps the University of East Anglia in their Egyptian Educators Programme when over 30 Egyptian teachers observe science and mathematics lessons.
38. The school surveys parents every three years to find out their views and the latest survey showed that parents wanted better communication from the school. The school now provides more information for parents and the parents appreciate having a stable point of contact with the year heads. The year heads have done much to improve the relationship with parents in recent years.
39. Reporting pupils' progress to parents has improved and parents are now invited to target-setting and review evenings with their children to discuss progress in each subject with teachers. Performance is summarised in an appropriate format to give a clear snapshot of progress and parents, pupils and teachers together set target grades in each subject for pupils to aim for. Attendance at the more traditional parents' evening is average but improving, again because of the proactive approach from the year heads.
40. Communication between teachers and parents on a more informal basis is good. Parents are kept well informed regarding behaviour issues and when there are any problems and concerns. Parents appreciate this level of interest and are supportive of the work the school does.
41. Links between departments and the learning support department are good and are very effective in ensuring that most staff have a satisfactory understanding of the specific learning needs of those pupils with special educational needs. Procedures for identifying pupils are thorough. Liaison with primary schools is good and forms the foundation for initial assessment which is then developed through testing of pupils on entry. This provides relevant information which helps the school to make decisions about the level of support. Significant progress has been made to ensure that SEN pupils have access to the whole curriculum.
42. There has always been a good relationship between the school and sports centre. Staff from both communicate well and consider the school's and sports centre's needs when organising activities and events. Sports centre staff have helped in physical education lessons in times of staff shortages and in the running of school teams. Many of the centre's activities involve pupils from first, middle and high schools playing and working together. The school is well supported by local businesses in their industry day in Year 10, work experience placements and sponsorship for special events, sports teams and equipment. Not many visitors are invited into lessons to enhance learning but when they are, they make a positive contribution. For example, an artist has been working with Year 10 pupils and they benefit from the specialist time and skills.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **unsatisfactory** overall. Governance is **unsatisfactory**. The lack of pace of change to bring about improvements is a barrier to raising standards.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pace of improvement is too slow.
- Delegation of responsibilities in the senior team is unsatisfactory.
- Governors do not meet their statutory responsibilities and do not have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The professional development of staff is good.

### Commentary

43. The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory; his knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is satisfactory and he recognises overall where improvement is needed. He has, with very little support from senior staff, observed all staff teach and evaluated the performance of all departments. This is a large amount of work for one person and other senior staff have had too little involvement in either sharing the workload or planning improvements. However, the headteacher has not pushed senior staff enough for them to become involved but has recently begun to involve heads of departments in lesson observations and subject evaluation in order to identify areas for improvement. There are strengths in leadership in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, ICT, art and design, citizenship and geography which are starting to provide the drive for the improvements needed. Leadership is unsatisfactory in history, music, physical education and religious education and it is satisfactory in French.
44. Management is unsatisfactory overall because procedures to help improvement are not effectively established. The implementation of necessary changes to bring about improvements has been slow, even taking into account the staffing problems the school has experienced, and still experiences. For example, the school has been slow to introduce necessary changes in the curriculum to provide flexibility and to meet the individual needs of pupils. Another example is the failure to implement and enforce a behaviour policy so that disruption in lessons is dealt with consistently, quickly and effectively. It is a failure of management not to recognise that a significant amount of disruption comes from pupils who are bored, frustrated at finding some work too easy or following courses they see as irrelevant. There are strengths but they are inconsistently applied. For example, in design and technology and geography, teachers have recognised the need to challenge pupils and, as a result, have high expectations of efforts and attitudes.
45. The school improvement plan has clear priorities, including raising standards and improving teaching. There has been some positive progress, especially in Years 8 and 9, where rising standards are evident. The focus on raising standards achieved by boys is having a positive impact, too, though boys still perform at lower levels than girls. Some priorities are focused on maintaining efforts to involve pupils and improve their attitudes to work and school; here, the school has been less effective because it has not identified causes. This has a detrimental effect on attempts to raise standards, particularly noticeable in Years 10 and 11.
46. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory. The chair of governors has a sound understanding of the running of the school. Committee meetings are effectively conducted and reported. Individual governors have good knowledge of areas of the school in which they have a special interest, but most governors do not visit the school sufficiently regularly in order to gain first-hand information, as they are not linked to departments. Monitoring and evaluation of attainment data is not thorough. Statutory requirements for the provision of collective worship, religious education and ICT across the school are not met.

47. The management of support for learning is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator has developed good links with departments who are, in turn, very well informed about pupils' special educational needs. There is a clear policy and a good and developing range of information for staff. A team of support staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and planning between teaching assistants and teaching staff is generally good. The deployment of teaching assistants is very well organised. Procedures for the recording of the progress of individual pupils is good. The governing body fulfils statutory requirements and a named governor is well informed and supportive.
48. Staff performance management procedures are good and are particularly effective when follow-up training is available. Induction of new staff is good, with separate well-defined programmes for newly qualified teachers and for experienced teachers. Continuing professional development is good, being linked closely to identified school or departmental priorities. The school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training, having strong and well established links to the University of East Anglia. Despite problems, the school has made a strong start with the national agreement on workforce remodelling, with cover supervision already in place.
49. Approaches to financial management are satisfactory. The school receives and spends broadly average amounts. It receives financial support for curriculum maintenance because it is a small school. It is obliged to spend more than average sums on teachers to maintain its basic curriculum and this limits spending on non-teaching staff. The allocation of funds for special educational needs from the Local Authority is insufficient to pay for the school's chosen mode of provision for these pupils, consequently, the school subsidises funding from its basic budget. The budget is properly fixed by the governors and monitored by the finance and buildings committee, which makes secure decisions based on up-to-date information provided by an effective bursar. The sums carried forward from the previous year were within recommended limits and were largely earmarked for the school's own contribution to the failed plans to improve the premises and to transfer Year 7 from the local middle school. Alternative plans to rebuild and extend the school are now being considered. The level of internal control of finances is secure and support from the Local Authority appears good, but there has been no audit of official funds by the Local Authority to validate the school's procedures since January 2000.
50. Approaches to financial management are satisfactory. The budget is properly fixed by the governors and monitored by their finance and buildings committee which makes secure decisions based on up-to-date information provided by the bursar. The sums carried forward from the previous year are within recommended limits and properly allocated to future improvements. The level of internal control of finances is secure and support from the Local Authority appears good but there has been no recent audit of the school's financial procedures. The school receives some financial support for curriculum maintenance because it is a small school and subsidises funding for pupils with special educational needs from its basic budget. The application of best value to the spending of funds has some strong features. For example, governors have recently reviewed the whole curriculum and received reports from curriculum leaders and on examination results. However, application of best value principles are unsatisfactory overall because potentially strong procedures have not brought about change quickly enough.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,671,156
Total expenditure	1,677,594
Expenditure per pupil	3,631

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	68,423
Balance carried forward to the next year	61,985

## **OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

### **Work-related learning**

51. Provision is satisfactory overall and there is a secure base for future development. All pupils learn about work through satisfactory provision for careers education. Year 9 pupils engage in a day with local providers of work and education and Year 10 pupils have a day working with local business leaders on resolving a business-based problem. All pupils learn through work because there is a well-organised programme of work experience. A few pupils have one or two days of extended work experience to meet their particular needs. All pupils take a vocational subject, ICT, but the range of other vocational choices is narrow and too few have the opportunity to take part in college-based courses between in Years 10 and 11. This number is planned to increase in 2005-06 when the school's revised curriculum is introduced. The school has not yet taken an audit of how subjects of the curriculum contribute to work-related learning.

## **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 **satisfactory**.

##### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards of work by Year 9 pupils have improved.
- Results in GCSE English literature are not high enough.
- Boys' attitudes to writing are unsatisfactory.
- Consistent application of the literacy strategy in English is leading to better teaching and learning in all classes.
- The literacy policy for the school is not implemented or monitored consistently.
- There is very good marking which helps pupils to improve their writing.

##### **Commentary**

52. In the National Curriculum tests for Year 9 in 2004, results were average overall and considerably better than in the previous years. Higher-attaining pupils also did well. This resulted from improved approaches to planning and teaching the key skills to pupils. Standards of the current Year 9 are above average. They are making sound progress from above average standards on arrival, and achievement is satisfactory now as teachers are confident in setting work that stretches the middle and higher-attaining pupils. The tasks set for lower-attaining pupils in mixed ability classes are not always well suited to their needs, however. Teachers support them in class and ask the right type of questions but they do not give them different work to do to help them write confidently.
53. Results in the GCSE English examinations have been below the national average in recent years but were close to this benchmark in 2004. Considering the attainment on entry of the current Year 11, achievement is satisfactory overall but few pupils gain the higher grades. Results in literature were unsatisfactory and well below the national average. Work seen during the inspection shows that many pupils, mainly boys, show little commitment to assembling their ideas into a coherent form before writing their answers. The general attitude of boys to writing in the school is not acceptable. They are too easily satisfied, show little pride in the presentation of written work and often leave pieces unfinished. This applies to boys of all abilities except for a minority of higher achievers who do write well.
54. The development of speaking and listening is good. In a lively debate about foxhunting in Year 9 all pupils were engaged in the discussion. They understood words such as "cull", "euphemism" and "quarry" and were able to express their views in a clear and coherent manner. This was reflected in the attitudes to oral work in Year 10, which was also good. Pupils describe even complex issues of human relationships with clarity. Boys enjoy the oral part of lessons but quickly lose concentration if asked to record their ideas. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part because teachers draw them in with apt questions.
55. Pupils read well in most year groups. They bring words to life in poetry and prose by quite vivid reading which shows good understanding. Year 10 pupils support Year 8 pupils who find reading difficult. This is having a very positive effect on the Year 10 pupils' social development and is proving a great help to the younger pupils' improvement in reading. The library is well stocked and attractively presented but is not used as widely as it might be by older pupils.

Most pupils listen well to each other and to the teachers, who provide good role models for them.

56. Writing skills are average. The presentation of writing is unsatisfactory. Although drafting books are used well by a minority and the marking of teachers is very good and very detailed in its guidance, too many pupils make little effort to take note of the good advice they receive. Spelling is erratic because the school does not have a strategy for promoting careful proof reading of finished work. There is not enough display of good practice from pupils on the walls with annotation to show why work is good. Teachers do not consistently encourage the use of information and communication technology to help spark motivation in reluctant writers. The good writing comes mainly, but not always, from girls and is characterised by very good use of quotation and telling conclusions. For example, in a comparison between “Dracula” and a short story on a similar theme in Year 9: “The impact comes from the use of the past tense.”
57. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching, and very good teaching in lessons with pupils with special educational needs. In these, the demands made on a fairly large class were high but the pupils rose to the challenge well, enjoying the brisk change of task and good relationships to produce some very good work at the end of a busy lesson. Teachers plan well and they follow the literacy strategy to good effect. Lessons usually start well, have good pace and resources are well chosen. There is a tendency for a minority of pupils to lose impetus when the task of writing begins because the outcomes are unclear or the timing is not precise. The teaching of higher-ability pupils in those year groups that are set is often good.
58. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The relatively new head of department has shown some good qualities of leadership in setting out a clear agenda for improvement. The impact of these ideas is seen in the very good marking and the development of good assessment procedures that are now involving pupils actively. The monitoring of teaching and learning and the sharing of good practice are less effective.
59. There has been satisfactory improvement in many of the issues identified in the previous inspection. There is still a way to go to raise the aspirations of boys, which was an issue before, and to lift standards in GCSE English and literature.

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

60. Standards of reading are above average. Writing, though average, has some weaknesses. There is inconsistent practice in applying the school’s marking policy with the result that standards of spelling and presentation are uneven across departments. There is no evidence of proof reading or showing awareness of the intended audience as a common feature of improving work. Display is sometimes good but rarely points out the skills that make writing effective, including attractive presentation. There is some good practice in geography where pupils are given substantial help in constructing good letters to foreign lands with clear advice on relevant vocabulary and tone. In design and technology, teachers follow up the practice stated in their policy and support pupils in their evaluations of projects with key words and helpful marking. The lack of regular monitoring results in few other departments, apart from English and drama, emphasising these important aspects of writing.

### **French**

Provision in French is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Higher-attaining pupils underachieve in Years 10 and 11.
- A minority of pupils who have negative attitudes slow the pace of learning for others. Occasionally, management of this behaviour is unsatisfactory.

- A minority of teaching is good and challenges pupils to achieve well.
- In a minority of lessons, planning does not take into account the needs of all pupils, particularly the highest attaining.
- Planning for the wide range of abilities is constrained by large group sizes, small rooms and limited resources.
- Non-specialist teaching does not adequately develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.

## Commentary

61. Results in teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 showed that a larger percentage of pupils reached the national average than in most schools. However, no pupils reached the higher levels. Results in GCSE in 2004 were below average and lower than expected on the basis of pupils' prior attainment overall. A larger percentage of pupils studied French than in most schools, so these results represent satisfactory achievement for many pupils, particularly in the middle and lower ability range. There was, however, significant under achievement in the highest grades.
62. Results rose steadily after the previous inspection, until a period of severe and prolonged staffing difficulties, when they fell. They have begun to improve again since staffing issues have been successfully resolved.
63. Standards are at national expectation in Years 8 and 9, representing satisfactory achievement from standards on entry. In Years 10 and 11 standards are below national expectation, particularly for the highest attaining pupils. Achievement for these pupils is unsatisfactory. Pupils lack confidence and expertise in their speaking and listening skills, but writing has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Reading skills are average and knowledge and understanding of grammar develops well. This, too, has shown recent improvement. In a minority of lessons in all year groups, achievement is depressed by low-level disruption from pupils who do not enjoy their lessons. This sometimes results in higher-attaining pupils not getting the attention they need.
64. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. In Years 8 and 9 teaching is satisfactory and occasionally good. Despite seeing much satisfactory or good teaching in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection, teaching is unsatisfactory. This is because planning does not consistently take account of the very wide range of abilities in large groups and the highest attainers are not sufficiently challenged and supported. Lesson planning is further constrained by classrooms which are too small for group work. French remains a compulsory subject and the management of pupils, particularly boys, who are reluctant to learn, is occasionally unsatisfactory.
65. Strengths of teaching include good subject knowledge, which is being used to improve pupils' pronunciation and intonation, and planning, which includes a range of skills and learning styles. A good example was the reinforcement of vocabulary learning through a clapping game. The pace of the best lessons is brisk and good use is made of French for classroom conversation and instructions, providing pupils with more opportunities to learn. The strong emphasis teachers are placing on developing writing and speaking skills is beginning to improve standards in Years 8 and 9. Non-specialist teachers do not have the skills to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills adequately in the small number of lessons they teach. Assessment is satisfactory and pupils receive good oral feedback on their work which helps them to improve.
66. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with improvements made recently starting to have a positive impact. The recently appointed staff have correctly identified the areas in need of development and strategies for improvement are in place and are beginning to have an effect.

67. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory as a result of a long period of disrupted staffing. Since the department has had a brief period of stable staffing, improvement has been satisfactory.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well by Year 9 but their achievement is unsatisfactory by Year 11.
- Behaviour of some pupils, particularly older boys, erodes the quality of lessons.
- The department does not contribute adequately to whole-school programmes for literacy and work-related learning.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.
- The subject is well led and has a clear direction for improvement.

### **Commentary**

68. The department has recently passed through a period of unsettled staffing, the current head of department having held the post for one month. This situation contributed to a fall in pupils' attainment at GCSE in 2004 and the effect of past difficulties are still having a negative effect on pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11, though a reducing one.
69. In the National Curriculum tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2004, results were very high in comparison to the national average and high when compared with results from schools with similar prior attainment. These results represent a very marked improvement over those of previous years. In the GCSE examination taken in 2004, results represent an improvement over those of 2003 but are still significantly below national averages and below those of schools with pupils of similar attainment. Gender differences are not statistically significant.
70. Standards seen are above average by Year 9. In a class of average attainers, pupils showed good understanding of prime numbers and were able to break larger numbers into the product of primes. A top set, working with indices, did so with a good level of enjoyment and reached above average levels. This class, although already grouped by attainment, contained some pupils who worked quickly and begin dealing with surds. Pupils with special educational needs are mostly grouped in lower sets and they make satisfactory progress, their overall standards in some lessons being depressed by attention-seeking behaviour, particularly from a small number of boys. Overall, pupils' achievement, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory.
71. Standards seen by Year 11 are average overall. A class following the less demanding Foundation tier programme used a spider diagram to help them calculate a range of percentages of a sum of money, and did so using a variety of routes. A class of higher attainers, split into two distinct groups, each with different tasks and targets, contained a small number of boys who lacked any work ethic. Their class work was interspersed with periods of inaction and silly banter which interrupted the learning of other pupils, limiting their achievement. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is also affected by disruption to lessons, so their progress is at best, only satisfactory and sometimes unsatisfactory. Overall, achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory.
72. Teaching and learning overall are unsatisfactory, being satisfactory for pupils in Years 8 and 9 and unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is often good but a small amount is unsatisfactory – mostly in Years 10 and 11. Teachers all have a good command of their subject and thus were able to deal easily with a wide range of questions. In a few lessons with older pupils, too many questions from teachers were trivial and lacked challenge. Teachers'

questions frequently fail to engage pupils in discussing their understanding and nor do they explore possible misunderstandings. Teachers' explanations are often clear and cogent, their relationships with pupils are mostly good and many lessons had a good working atmosphere. The behaviour and attitudes of the majority of pupils are good but, in a minority of classes, particularly those of older pupils, a handful of boys wilfully disrupt the work of others with childish and arrogant conduct. No lessons were seen where pupils used computers, although graphical calculators were used to good effect with one class studying graphs of quadratic functions. The work of those classes composed predominantly of pupils with special educational needs had the support of teaching assistants. These staff played a strong role in lessons, making a good contribution to the progress of the lesson. Most rooms for mathematics are somewhat small and those that lack blinds effectively limit or prevent the teachers' use of overhead projectors.

73. Leadership of the department is good. The staff work with a common purpose and support each other very well. In the short period under new leadership – the head of department was appointed only one month before the inspection – classroom management systems are being revitalised, the level of pupil expectation raised, use of assessment information is improving and an evaluation of the use and quality of numeracy throughout the school has started. However, it is too soon for changes to have had any significant impact; management is only satisfactory. Key policies, for example, for literacy, are missing, and marking does not link work to National Curriculum levels, or provide sufficient guidance to pupils to inform them of how well they are performing and what they need to do to improve.
74. Since the last inspection, overall improvement has been unsatisfactory. Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 have improved markedly but the GCSE results have remained broadly the same. Behaviour in too many lessons has deteriorated so that it is now a factor depressing standards. Teaching overall has weakened and is now better for younger pupils than for older ones. The quality of presentation of work has improved, but not for all pupils. Use of ICT in mathematics is patchy but is now improving.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

75. Numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory and standards reached by pupils are broadly average. The newly appointed head of department has taken responsibility for numeracy and begun an audit of need within other departments. Despite the current lack of guidance, several subjects already build numeracy into their work effectively.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are rising and pupils achieve well.
- In teaching, practical work and investigation are used effectively and teachers make very good use of the limited resources.
- Occasionally, the highest attainers are not always sufficiently challenged.
- Day-to-day marking is unsatisfactory.
- The department is well led with a good understanding of the areas for improvement.
- Resources are unsatisfactory and a lack of data-logging equipment is limiting the use of ICT in teaching.

#### **Commentary**

76. In the National Curriculum tests, taken by pupils in Year 9 in 2004, results were above average. Over recent years, results have risen and are better than at the time of the last

inspection. Compared with pupils of similar prior attainment, results were above average and, compared with their attainment on entry to the school, pupils' achievement has been satisfactory. In the GCSE examinations, taken in 2004, results were well above average. In recent years, results have improved. These results represent good achievement, taking into account that the attainment of pupils, on entry to the school, was in line with the national average. The boys performed better than the girls, though in previous years there has been no significant gender difference.

77. Standards seen are above average by Year 9 and reflect the end of Year 9 test results. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Average and higher attainers have a good depth of knowledge and understanding. In investigative work, they predict, analyse and make deductions effectively. They write clearly and make good use of scientific terminology. Lower attainers have a sound but less sophisticated understanding of the subject material, though the poor attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority, principally boys, affects their pace of learning. In Year 11, standards are above average overall. Standards are different to GCSE results in 2004 because the prior attainment of this group of pupils is a little lower, but relative to their attainment on entry to the school, pupils achieve well. Mid to higher-attaining pupils show good recall of previous work and use scientific language accurately. Pupils write fluently and carry out calculations satisfactorily. Lower-attaining pupils handle numerical problems less well. However, these pupils, the boys especially, use their scientific knowledge effectively to evaluate practical work, when directed by the teacher.
78. Within their limitations, pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers, in all year groups. Appropriate grouping, sensitive teaching and good additional support aid their progress.
79. Teaching and learning are good overall and a significant amount is very good. Some teaching is excellent. Teachers' good command of their subject enables them to deliver well-structured lessons that promote learning. Explanations are clear and there is very good use of limited resources to develop and consolidate concepts. In most lessons, there is a practical element that maintains interest effectively and keeps pupils engaged. In the better lessons, this takes the form of an investigation, where pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of enquiry. In the best lessons, questioning is of a very high standard and challenges pupils to think for themselves and apply their previous knowledge. However, in some mixed ability classes, whilst expectations are high for the lower and middle attainers, the highest attainers are insufficiently challenged. Overall, teachers demand a high level of good behaviour in lessons, but occasionally, chatting and immature attitudes go unchecked. Test and examination preparation is very thorough but teachers' expectations of presentation, in pupils' workbooks, are often too low. There is too little marking of class work and its quality is inconsistent; rarely does it indicate to pupils how to improve. Numeracy is regularly included in lessons and it is taught well. Whilst there is good use of ICT for research, it is used insufficiently for measurement. Overall, the use of ICT is unsatisfactory. Homework is set regularly and is well used to consolidate and extend the work done in class. Technical support is of a very high standard and makes a very positive contribution to teaching.
80. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Pupils' progress is assessed thoroughly. Teachers use a good monitoring system; targets are set and underachievement is identified. Most pupils are aware of their attainment, but insufficiently clear as to how to improve. The use of assessment to raise standards is not yet fully developed.
81. Leadership is good and the department is being managed satisfactorily. The new head of department is energetically and enthusiastically focused on maintaining the rising standards and has a positive view of the way to do so, and she is supported by an effective team. The performance of science, in tests and examinations, is being analysed thoroughly and plans are in place to act upon the findings. Formal monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work by the department is in its early stages and underdeveloped. The departmental development plan is insufficiently thorough and the schemes of work are not matched sufficiently enough to the

needs of the pupils. The accommodation is satisfactory to deliver the curriculum, but is in need of refurbishment to provide a more stimulating working environment.

82. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Pupils' achievement is better than at the time of the last report. Standards in tests and examinations have shown a rising trend and have gone from below the national average to above. Resources, however, remain unsatisfactory. Whilst there are now adequate books in Years 8 to 9, there remains a shortage in Years 10 to 11. There is insufficient glassware and many of the larger items of equipment, especially in physics, are outdated. The shortage of data-logging equipment is limiting the use of ICT in teaching, though pupils still experience a wide range of investigative work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very few pupils achieve higher grades in the GCSE examination.
- The head of faculty has successfully overseen many changes and has a clear vision about the need to raise attainment.
- The management and co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum is not effective.
- The curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection.

### **Commentary**

83. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 showed that the attainment of pupils was above the standard expected nationally. Results in the most recent GCSE examination were below the level expected and very few pupils achieved higher grades.
84. Pupils join the school in Year 8 with average skills in ICT. By Year 9, standards are above average and pupils use computers confidently. All pupils, whatever their prior attainment, achieve well. Pupils' understanding of how to present information in different formats is good. Word-processing skills are good – pupils produce documents for different audiences. Pupils use the Internet effectively for research and edit this information to suit their purposes. Pupils have a good understanding of word processing, the use of spreadsheets and databases. They are particularly adept at using presentation software, incorporating image and text manipulation to enhance their work. Higher attainers have a good understanding of how to incorporate and manipulate sophisticated and imaginative materials into their presentations. Their understanding of the potential use of ICT beyond the school is good and a few give examples of where it might be used.
85. By Year 11, pupils' attainment is average and their achievement by all pupils is satisfactory overall. Many pupils achieve well. Pupils work confidently and independently, using a range of software including desktop publishing, a database and spreadsheets to simulate business practice. Good use is made of computers to promote individual learning. Pupils discuss their work with confidence, solve problems and come to reasonable conclusions when given a task to complete. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are adequate for the needs of the courses being offered. Pupils develop and apply their skills further through activities such as extended writing for coursework projects.
86. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a good subject knowledge which they use well to ask searching questions, explain principles and challenge pupils in lessons. Teachers plan their lessons well. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave. Teachers share the lesson objectives with pupils so that they understand what they are going to do and how they will do it. Teachers modify work so that all pupils can achieve as well as possible; higher attainers are suitably challenged. Effective use is made of

data-projectors to demonstrate each stage of the lesson clearly. Relationships are particularly strong and result in a good balance between enjoyment and hard work.

87. Leadership and management are good. The head of faculty has successfully overseen many changes and has a clear vision about the need to raise attainment. Good monitoring systems are in place. The curriculum has improved significantly, meeting the needs of all pupils because the good subject knowledge of the teachers has been used well in planning the schemes of work. The tracking and assessment of pupil attainment and progress is satisfactory and teachers are starting to use assessment information to plan lessons. With these recent innovations, the subject is set well for future developments. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

### **Information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum**

88. Provision is unsatisfactory. There is no planned cross-curricular approach to the subject and very little tracking of the contribution of other subjects to the use of ICT or to developing pupils' skills. The management and co-ordination of ICT is ineffective.
89. Standards of work seen in a number of subjects are average overall and there is evidence of work produced in design and technology, English, modern foreign languages and special educational needs. There are unplanned opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and develop confidence in the use of computers in other subjects. Pupils' achievements across the curriculum are not assessed or fully recognised.
90. Staff have been trained to use applications and the school network, and the skills of some teachers have been used effectively to deliver the curriculum.
91. The numbers of computers available are broadly average. Technical support is good. The computer rooms and the library provide good opportunities for pupils to use computers outside of lessons when they can develop their computer skills and have access to the Internet. However, not all subjects make enough use of ICT facilities to support learning during the school day, although the use of ICT for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- Teaching is good and much is very good, but learning is not sufficiently enriched by fieldwork and the use of ICT.
- Pupils' progress is assessed and tracked systematically, but marking does not give enough guidance for improvement.
- Very good leadership is strongly focused on improving achievement.

#### **Commentary**

92. In teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004, results were above average. GCSE results in 2004 were average and have been broadly average over the last three years. In 2004, pupils did significantly better in geography than in their other subjects. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average and all, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, achieve well. Boys and girls achieved equally well in the work seen during the inspection.

93. Standards are above average in Year 9, broadly reflecting the latest teachers' assessments. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is good. Pupils show good understanding of key differences between the lower and more economically developed countries when comparing working conditions.
94. Current standards show improvement with Year 11 pupils reaching above average standards. Pupils use their knowledge well, for example, in the analysis and comparison of the causes of flooding in Holland and Bangladesh. Pupils develop a good range of geographical skills. Map work and diagrams are neat, and grid references are calculated and used accurately in the location of places. Pupils can identify and compare patterns, for example, in farming in different regions, and draw conclusions from studying evidence. Written work is generally detailed and accurate, and project work is well researched. Good research skills are especially evident in GCSE fieldwork. Numeracy skills, including the use of statistics, are applied well to present findings, and presentation is enhanced in many cases by the skilful use of ICT. Pupils' literacy skills are competent but in some instances, standards are lowered by carelessness and immature styles of writing.
95. Teaching and learning are good and pupils respond well in lessons. Purposeful introductions and clear learning objectives result in pupils settling immediately to work, and sustaining a high level of interest. Lessons are well structured to provide incrementally more challenging tasks, and learning is well supported by clear explanations and re-inforcement of learning. Consistent challenge and high expectations lead to pupils working at demanding levels, as in a Year 8 lesson where pupils worked at very mature levels in exploring economic changes in the Alps. Group work enables pupils to work productively together, and classroom relationships are very good. Questioning is effective in checking understanding, but is not always sufficiently challenging in requiring pupils to extend their answers. Lessons sometimes lack appropriate stimulus and excitement in learning, because pupils are largely compliant and not sufficiently involved in contributing and discussing their ideas. There is a good emphasis on geographical skills but not enough use of fieldwork and ICT to enhance their development. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils achieve well. Pupils' work is marked regularly and data used well to monitor progress, but marking does not give enough guidance for improvement. Marking is linked to National Curriculum levels in Years 8 and 9, but not closely enough to GCSE levels in Years 10 and 11. Furthermore, GCSE levels are not used sufficiently to help pupils set targets for improvement.
96. The head of department provides a very clear vision and direction for the work of the department which is strongly focused on improving achievement. He works closely with the other geography teacher in promoting teaching and learning of the highest possible quality. Management is good. Teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated systematically. The curriculum is kept under review and planning takes full account of the importance of supporting pupils' personal as well as their academic development. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, especially in achievement, teaching, learning, monitoring and evaluation.

## History

Provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Overall teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, though some are good.
- Assessment is not securely related to National Curriculum and GCSE levels, and assessment information is not used to monitor pupils' progress.
- Marking does not give pupils guidance for improvement.

- School evaluation has resulted in key areas being identified for development, but there is a lack of a clearly focused strategic planning to ensure improvement.

## Commentary

97. In teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004, attainment was judged to be above average, but this was too generous because assessment procedures are not secure. GCSE results have fluctuated over recent years, falling from close to the average in 2002, to very low in 2003. Whilst below average, results improved in 2004, though pupils continued to do less well in history than in their other subjects. Girls' GCSE results are consistently better than those of boys. Current standards in Year 11 broadly match the recent GCSE results.
98. In Year 9, standards are average. Pupils' knowledge of the topics they study is generally sound, but the depth of their understanding is often more limited. For example, Year 9 pupils could identify the key decisions made at the Treaty of Versailles, but had little understanding of the motives of the world leaders in making these decisions. Similarly, Year 11 pupils worked at mostly superficial levels in linking causes of cholera with 19<sup>th</sup> century living conditions. Overall, the standards reached by Year 11 are below average. There are weaknesses in pupils' ability to analyse historical evidence critically. Their interpretation of sources of evidence is largely descriptive, with little judgement of their reliability. There was no judgement of bias, for instance, in Year 11 pupils' interpretation of accounts of problems in Ireland. Written work is often detailed and accurate, but points made are not argued or supported sufficiently by evidence. The work of the most able reflects good individual research and initiative. It is well presented, making good use of ICT. Pupils have good literacy skills but the work of some lower-attaining pupils is careless and poorly presented.
99. Standards in both Year 9 and Year 11 indicate that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, are not achieving well enough in comparison with their overall above average standards on entry to the school. Achievement is unsatisfactory.
100. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, pupils respond well to brisk purposeful approaches and well-structured lessons. Pupils relish the challenge to work at full stretch in response to innovative approaches and skilled questioning. Year 8 pupils worked at exceptionally demanding levels in interpreting evidence about Oliver Cromwell as a result of sustained high expectations and challenge. Other strengths in teaching and learning include clear presentations and explanation, and opportunities for pupils to explore issues in pair and group work. Relationships and behaviour are good in all lessons. The key weaknesses in teaching result from too little challenge in many lessons for pupils to contribute orally, and insufficient emphasis on the development of historical skills, field work, analytical essay writing, informing pupils on how well they doing and setting targets for improvement. Marking, including teachers' assessments in Year 9, is often superficial, and not systematically linked to National Curriculum and GCSE levels. These levels are not used to help pupils to understand the standards they are achieving, or to set targets for improvement. School information about pupils' performance is not used well enough for the tracking and monitoring of progress.
101. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory and a key factor in pupils' underachievement. Whilst school evaluation has identified a number of appropriate areas needing improvement, there are weaknesses in the grasp of strengths and weaknesses overall, and the drive for improvement. The head of department is hard working and deeply committed. She has worked hard in the re-writing of detailed schemes of work following a review of the curriculum in Years 8 and 9. But procedures for the management of the department as a whole are not strategic and rigorous enough to enable strengths to be built upon, weaknesses addressed and priorities identified for improvement met. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Years 8 and 9 is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall because work is not matched to pupils' needs, particularly in Years 8 and 9, and because the management of the deliberately disruptive behaviour of some boys is often unsatisfactory.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory and the subject is not offered as a GCSE course.
- The subject does not meet the requirements of the local agreed syllabus in Years 10 and 11.

### Commentary

102. In teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2004, attainment was judged to be average, but this was over generous because teachers are inexperienced in using the non-statutory levels for the agreed syllabus. Attainment seen is below average. This represents unsatisfactory achievement from average attainment on entry to the school in 2002. Pupils produce limited but thoughtful writing in comparing biblical, aboriginal and scientific views of the origins of the universe. However, work is not planned carefully enough to allow pupils of all levels of prior attainment to write about what they know and understand. This leads to some restlessness. In any case, lessons are frequently disrupted by deliberate low-level misbehaviour of a few pupils, mainly boys, so that the progress of whole classes is slowed. Consequently, many pupils, including those with special educational needs, and particularly higher attainers, underachieve.
103. Religious education is taught as part of the PSHE course in Years 10 and 11. Attainment is average and achievement is satisfactory overall, with good standards achieved in some lessons and unsatisfactory in others. Deliberately disruptive behaviour by a small but significant proportion of boys again leads to underachievement. For example, the opportunity to reflect on hopes for a newborn child was rejected in one class because of disruption to the discussion by boys. However, in other lessons, pupils achieved well, for example, when considering the effects of the abuse of cannabis on a family. Pupils learn to make clear decisions about right and wrong after considering the moral, emotional and spiritual issues involved. The brief written responses do not reflect the good level of debate – orally these classes attain standards at and above the national expectation for both GCSE and the Norfolk Local Agreed Syllabus.
104. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall in Years 8 and 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In Years 10 and 11, there is some good teaching by experienced teachers on the PSHE course, but also a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, tasks are not structured well enough to meet pupils' needs or to encourage pupils to write effectively about their knowledge and understanding, and the management of disruptive behaviour is unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good, pupils are presented with a strong framework of good values and a challenging curriculum. Lesson preparation is careful and good quality resources are used well. For example, powerful videos about drug abuse or green farming provoke strong pupil-involvement leading to good learning.
105. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall. Whilst marking is regular and comments are encouraging, pupils are not shown how to improve. Pupils do not know what standards they are performing at and have no means of comparing their performance with other subjects. Pupils hold religious education in low esteem because it is not formally assessed either at age 14 or 16 and is not offered as an examination subject. The subject meets the requirements of the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus in Years 8 and 9, but not in Years 10 and 11, though the scheme

of work for PSHE, with adjustments, would meet requirements for religious education and provide a good base for teaching a GCSE course.

106. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in teaching, learning and achievement that lead to below average standards at 14. These weaknesses have been identified by two reviews of teaching but line management has not provided the rigorous support necessary to secure improvement. Provision has not improved since the last inspection.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and manage pupils well.
- Assessment is improving.
- The use of ICT is unsatisfactory, particularly for computer-aided design and manufacture.

#### **Commentary**

107. In teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004, results were above average. In the 2004 GCSE examinations, results were below the national average overall but showed an improvement over the previous year. The results achieved by girls were much better than those of boys. Very few pupils achieved higher grades.
108. Standards seen in Year 9 are above average. This represents good achievement, given pupils' attainment on entry to the school. Pupils use a variety of tools and equipment competently and with confidence in all material areas. Designing skills are not as good as their making skills because the department concentrates on teaching practical skills. Pupils make good progress. Teachers provide planned opportunities for pupils to reach the higher levels expected by the National Curriculum and many pupils manage to do so. Pupils produce articles of good quality; they express their ideas well but do not always communicate their designs clearly.
109. Pupils' attainment by Year 11 is average and their achievement is satisfactory. Girls produce high quality work, as can be seen, for example, in the detailed and well presented project folders in textiles, and higher-attaining pupils produce good quality practical project work in all areas. Standards attained by boys are broadly average, and improving. Where pupils use computers, the quality of their course work is improved. However, pupils make limited use of computers, particularly computer-aided design and manufacture. Pupils are challenged to focus clearly on the requirements of the GCSE examination. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are also well supported in order to achieve their best. As a result, pupils understand what they need to do and are helped to reach the grades they are capable of achieving.
110. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils benefit from knowledgeable and committed teachers. Lessons are well paced and have clear learning objectives. Teachers use starter activities to engage pupils, and finish lessons with time spent on ensuring that pupils have learnt what they should have done. The teachers' enthusiasm and thorough knowledge engages pupils. The higher-attaining pupils are challenged well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and teachers manage pupils well. New knowledge is introduced as it is needed so that pupils can immediately use it to develop their understanding. The department places an emphasis on speaking and listening and writing skills. There is use of numeracy in

calculations when measuring length, weight and time. However, the use of ICT is unsatisfactory overall.

111. Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers provide encouraging and motivating comments. In Year 11, the quality marking provides a commentary that shows pupils how to improve their work. Teachers are beginning to establish systems for assessment of pupils' attainment; assessment results are used effectively in planning and teaching to raise standards.
112. The subject is well led and managed. The head of department knows the strengths and weaknesses in the provision and works closely with colleagues to develop strategies for improvement. However, many of these strategies are at an early stage of development and they have yet to affect pupils' performance. Although there have been improvements in methods of assessment, there is an awareness of the changes that need to take place to improve attainment overall and particularly the standards achieved by boys. This includes using assessment information to monitor pupils' performance and to set specific targets for improvement. The accommodation provides an attractive working environment and there is a good level of technician support.

### **GCSE - Child development**

113. Child development was sampled. The standards achieved for the examination in 2004 were below average. The standard of work seen for current pupils is average overall and pupils achieve well, considering their below average starting point. The teaching and learning are good. Questioning and explanation, regular review of pupils' progress and well-planned lessons lead to pupils gaining a secure knowledge and understanding of the stages of learning of young children; this helped them design a suitable toy. There is a commitment to building on what has already been achieved and to improving standards. Recording of progress and target setting based on careful analysis of pupils' performance from assessment is well established.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weakness**

- The achievement of pupils is good in Years 10 and 11.
- The breadth of the curriculum limits achievement in Years 8 and 9.
- The quality of teaching and learning is predominantly good.
- Pupils do not use independent learning skills enough.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The department's contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Assessment systems are insufficiently rigorous in Years 8 and 9.

### **Commentary**

114. During the inspection, the head of department who teaches most of the art timetable was away, on long-term sickness absence. Evidence is based on the observation of one art teacher, one supply teacher, one non-specialist teacher and the scrutiny of pupils' work.
115. In the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9, results were at the national expectation and have been at this level in recent years. In 2004, the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A\*- C were average. Pupils overall did better in art and design than in their other

subjects. Far more girls than boys studied for the examination and their achievement was good. Fewer pupils than in previous years gained the top grades of A\* and A.

116. Standards seen in Year 9 are above the expected level and higher than recorded in the most recent teachers' assessments. This is satisfactory achievement, given that the pupils arrived in Year 8 with an above average level of skills and understanding. Most pupils are confident in art activities and show a good understanding of visual expression. Pupils show high standards in drawing and painting skills and they make good progress in handling line and tone. Pupils learn quickly because the structured course provides a sound understanding of the formal elements. Research skills are not as well developed and this limits pupils' analysis and understanding of artists' work. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of careful support and guidance. Opportunities for pupils to work in a range of media are limited by the size and quality of the accommodation and this restricts their achievement.
117. In Year 11, standards are average. Pupils work confidently and use a range of materials and processes to express their creative ideas well. Most explore and interpret well when researching areas such as Pop Art. Higher attainers produce innovative work when extending studies into large scale sculptures. Achievement is good for all pupils but particularly for the significant proportion of lower attainers on the course. Fewer boys than girls do art and design and, where their work is below the expected standard, it is frequently linked to an over reliance on imagination and poor organisational skills. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when developing work further into areas such as printing and textiles because of the high level of practical work and the good guidance they receive. Pupils take responsibility for their own projects but the lack of independent learning skills means that pupils do not gain the very top grades.
118. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Years 8 and 9 classes are taught by non-specialist temporary teachers, who manage the pupils very well and use clear procedures which result in good use of time and resources. Teachers give clear explanations, set attainable targets and build good relationships, and pupils learn well. In Years 10 and 11, the teacher has a good command of the subject, evident in the frequent reference to artists and cultural influences, and this strongly supports learning. Higher attainers respond well to challenging questions whilst lower attainers are given the support to respond confidently. Sound literary strategies are in place and teachers encourage the written analysis and evaluation of artists' work. Homework is used well to build on technical skills but under-used to develop research techniques. A high emphasis is put on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development, and pupils' work reflects a strong personal response. There are limited resources for ICT within the department and it is not used enough for research or creative purposes.
119. The quality of assessment overall is satisfactory. Teachers give a high level of individual support in lessons with good direction on how to improve; however, formal systems in Years 8 and 9 are insufficiently rigorous to analyse data and track progress. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have an accurate understanding of the level they are working at but pupils in Years 8 and 9 are not clear as they muddle effort and attainment. Marking is frequently good but not always used to advise pupils on how to improve their work.
120. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The acting head of department has only been in place for six weeks and is doing a good job in difficult circumstances. Effective procedures are in place to cope with the instability in staffing and she gives a high level of support to temporary staff. Initiatives such as working with visiting artists are raising standards. The high quality of display around the school acts as a stimulus to learning and raises the profile of the subject.
121. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Standards have overall been maintained. However, there are still outstanding issues; accommodation is still unsatisfactory and poor resources for ICT continue to limit its use.

## Drama

122. Because of staff absence, the subject could only be sampled. Examination results at GCSE have improved so that they are now in line with the national average. The work of the current Year 11 shows that standards are being maintained. When rehearsing their performance pieces, pupils show a growing awareness of a range of dramatic techniques. Their attitudes are very good and they collaborate well to improve their work. Their written evaluations of performances they have seen are average but have improved since the start of the course.

## Music

Provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve good standards by the end of Year 11, due to good teaching and to the positive attitudes of the pupils.
- Acute staffing problems have led to unsatisfactory achievement by the end of Year 9, unsatisfactory leadership and management, and unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## Commentary

123. In the teacher's assessment of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2004 results were below average. Compared with their attainment on entry to the school, pupils' achievement has been unsatisfactory. In the GCSE examinations taken in 2004, results were above average. The four candidates were taught out of school time by a musician employed specifically to prepare them for the examination. In 2003, the eight candidates, who were taught within the timetable by the music teacher, achieved very well, all gaining A\*-C passes.
124. During the inspection, the part-time specialist teacher, who has been employed for almost three years on one-year contracts, was absent, due to illness, after the first half-day. A non-specialist retired teacher covered music lessons with work provided by the headteacher, as a holding operation, for the rest of the inspection. Standards by the end of Year 9 are judged through a scrutiny of work and extensive individual discussions with selected Years 8 and 9 pupils.
125. Evidence confirms the teacher assessment of pupils achieving below average standards. This is a direct result of acute staffing problems. Year 9 pupils have limited knowledge of music literacy, and limited keyboard skills, due largely to lack of continuity of teaching. Melody writing is elementary and pupils are unsure how to form chords. Creative composition work, using graphic scores, is often good, and pupils are developing reasonable aural skills. Pupils interviewed had little memory of music they had listened to in lessons.
126. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are good, with pupils achieving well. This is due to good teaching and to the pupils' good attitudes. Their positive attitudes enable them to develop their performance skills and continue their compositions during the teacher's absence. They use music technology effectively to compose and print their work. Talented pupils are extended well, as exemplified by the Year 10 pupil who wrote last year's school production, "Cinderella."
127. The music teacher, who was a very well-respected and successful head of music department in another school, came out of retirement almost three years ago to help this school with its staffing problems. Teaching is thorough and very well-focused, but absence due to illness has led to unsatisfactory achievement by pupils, signifying overall unsatisfactory teaching and learning by the end of Year 9. In the one Year 11 lesson observed, the teacher successfully infused pupils with a sense of urgency about getting their compositions completed in time for

submission. He gave them informative individual advice on how to improve their compositions, by immediate, accurate oral assessment during the lesson.

128. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. As the music teacher is employed on one-year contracts, there are only limited short-term development plans, and no long-term plans. Schemes of work are not very detailed. The teacher has limited time to provide extra-curricular music activities. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Standards are now below average, and pupils make unsatisfactory progress by the end of Year 9. The use of visiting musicians, and visits to concerts, excellent in the last report, are now minimal. The contribution of music to the social and cultural development of pupils has contracted as a consequence. However, GCSE results have improved in the past two years.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **unsatisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teacher expectations of pupils are not high enough.
- The structure and range of activities in many lessons is not ensuring progress.
- Leadership and management of the department pays insufficient attention to the development of standards and to the effectiveness of teaching.
- There are good relationships between teaching staff and pupils in most lessons.

### Commentary

129. In the 2004 teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 9, results were well above the national average but these results are insecure because assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. GCSE results in 2004 were well below the national average. Results have fallen since 2002 and 2003 when they were in line with the national average (although numbers taking the examination in those years was low).
130. Standards seen in Year 9 are in line with the national average. This represents unsatisfactory achievement overall during their first two years in the school, given the above average attainment of pupils on entry to the school. Higher-attaining pupils have well above average planning and evaluation skills in outdoor activities and apply these skills to practical situations. Pupils in a badminton lesson showed good basic skills but had not developed these skills sufficiently to use them effectively in a competitive game situation.
131. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are below average overall. Those pupils not on the GCSE course reach average standards overall. This represents unsatisfactory progress, given these pupils' achievements in their teacher assessments at the end of Year 9. Overall, the achievement of pupils of all levels of prior attainment is unsatisfactory. Pupils in a basketball lesson had good basic skills and a good range of shots but their defensive skills and tactical awareness were below average and their ability to apply these skills to a competitive game situation were also below average. Evidence from GCSE theory work indicates standards that are below the national average. Pupils have a sound understanding of some aspects of the course, including physiology and anatomy, but do not apply this knowledge effectively to other units of study in the course. Apart from Year 9 pupils in an outdoor activities lesson, the ability of pupils to observe and analyse performance is unsatisfactory. There are limited opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in lessons and opportunities to develop planning skills are being missed.
132. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall. It was unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and satisfactory in Years 8 and 9. Although teachers have a generally secure knowledge of the subject, lessons are often not planned in appropriate detail and targets do

not challenge pupils. Teachers' expectations are often too low with the result that many pupils do not make enough progress. Pupils are not given enough responsibility in lessons and the structure of lessons does not ensure that learning is related to pupils' capabilities. This was true in a Year 11 basketball lesson, for example. The range of activities was very limited and opportunities were missed to give pupils the responsibility to coach and referee, with the result that very little progress was made. Relationships between staff and pupils are often good and most pupils respond with enthusiasm to lessons although the disruptive behaviour of a significant minority of boys in some lessons, is restricting progress. Lessons are occasionally late starting. Assessment of performance by teachers in the best lessons is used to enhance teaching. However, overall, assessment is unsatisfactory because it is not accurate enough and is not used effectively enough to guide pupils in how to achieve well. Many pupils on the GCSE course are unaware of their target grades and many do not have a very good understanding of what is required for improvement. ICT is rarely used on the GCSE course and there are very few planned opportunities to develop this use in other areas of the course. The development of both literacy and numeracy skills is unsatisfactory. There is a satisfactory range of activities after school for pupils to support and enrich work done in lessons. The school competes successfully with other schools in a range of sports and some pupils achieve representative honours.

133. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. There is a significant lack of emphasis on developing teaching and learning so that pupils achieve appropriately. Development planning lacks appropriate detail and schemes of work are not yet good working documents. There is a lack of monitoring and assessment of GCSE theory work. Sound communication and co-operation between members of the department and a new team are just beginning to identify appropriate priorities and procedures to take the department forward. The day-to-day organisation of the subject is satisfactory. Curriculum organisation is improving, although in Year 11 there is not enough time to cover the curriculum in appropriate breadth or depth to make satisfactory progress from Year 10. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Although non-participation of pupils in lessons has improved, GCSE results are now below the national average and teaching in Years 10 and 11 is now unsatisfactory.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

### **GCSE – Business studies**

134. Business studies was sampled. One lesson was seen and pupils' work was examined. Standards are average overall and pupils achieve well. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils' progress is regularly reviewed and lessons are well structured with a good sequence of activities. This leads to pupils gaining a secure knowledge and understanding of industrial relations in the work place. The review of pupils' work and teachers' planning shows satisfactory progress over time and regular marking which includes useful comments about the levels achieved.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The achievement of pupils is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The programme for citizenship is well organised.
- The expertise of teachers is very good.
- Opportunities for active citizenship are not always acted upon.

## Commentary

135. Standards meet expectations in Year 9. Pupils are developing knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens. They know how to make their voices heard at local and national level and understand the role of MPs. At a more pertinent level, in meetings, they strongly present their opinions about the poor condition of the accommodation in some areas of the school. They think for themselves competently and have informed views about their own rights and responsibilities. Achievement is good. In Year 8, they learn about the rights of the child and study issues such as child labour. By Year 9, the great majority of pupils understand the laws in relation to alcohol and drugs and consider the links between the law and the community, discussing issues such as 'should the police be armed?' Achievement is good overall.
136. By Year 11, standards are average and pupils achieve well. They can deploy their knowledge, express and justify their opinions and can understand the opinion of others. For example, pupils confidently discussed the economic and emotional factors faced by teenage parents and the effect the media had on both the public and teenagers' perceptions. Achievement is good. Pupils are given the opportunity to consider and respond to a diverse range of controversial social and political issues. In Year 10, they study human rights and what happens when they are denied, and in Year 11, debate topics on issues such as 'Is the role of commonwealth outdated?' Overall, pupils competently express themselves in written work.
137. Pupils show a sound understanding of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society. Many show this in their discussion with one another and their teachers. Elections for the Youth Parliament were recently held in the school, which gave pupils a good understanding of the democratic voting procedure. Pupils are encouraged to play a part in community affairs and are involved in initiatives such as the Fair Play Conference and the Youth Action group. For example, one pupil chose to work with the local Member of Parliament. There are opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of active citizenship and take responsibility roles in the school community, but not enough. For example, the school council has been revived, but pupils did not participate in the election of representatives. There is a history of raising money for charities within the school and the pupils demonstrate an enthusiastic commitment to this.
138. The quality of teaching is good and occasionally very good. Classes are taught by a specialist team who have very good subject knowledge. There is a good balance between teacher input and class activity and pupils are given good individual attention. Teachers use a good variety of methods to deliver aspects of the subject. Imaginative planning, good resources and challenging questioning encourage pupils to think for themselves. Teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations of behaviour. In lessons, pupils are positively encouraged to show respect for each other's values and rights, cooperate well and support each other. Most pupils predominantly learn well because they feel their views are of some importance and they confidently express them.
139. Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress is satisfactory and targets set for improvement. Teachers know their pupils well and this is evident in reports. Systems for formal recording of progress are satisfactory but there is some inconsistency in using them.
140. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a clear vision for the development of the subject and a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Teachers have produced a well-planned scheme of work which is delivered effectively through the personal, social and health programme and subject areas. The informative and thorough documentation gives clear direction to the staff who teach citizenship. There is a thorough audit and identification of what areas are taught across the curriculum.

## **Personal, social and health education (PSHE)**

### **Commentary**

141. PSHE was sampled. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education is taught to all pupils in the school and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development and their ability to play a positive role in school life. It builds on their study and social skills and emphasises personal responsibility. Both the sex and drugs programmes give strong guidance on assertive decision making and problem solving which enables pupils to make informed choices. Defined procedures are in place for any incidents involving the use of drugs with clear communication to parents. Pupils achieve well and make sound gains across an appropriate range of areas because teaching is good. The specialist teachers have good subject knowledge. In the best practice, teachers build on pupils' confidence in discussion and challenge pupils to think independently. The management and leadership of the well-structured course are good.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	5

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	5
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>5</b>
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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