

INSPECTION REPORT

THE WESTGATE SCHOOL

Winchester

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116407

Headteacher: Mr Peter Jenner

Lead inspector: Hugh Betterton

Dates of inspection: 7th - 10th February 2005

Inspection number: 268499

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1,152
School address:	Cheriton Road Winchester Hampshire
Postcode:	SO22 5AZ
Telephone number:	(01962) 854 757
Fax number:	(01962) 840 080
Website address	http://www.westgate.hants.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	Local education authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Brecknell
Date of previous inspection:	10 th May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Westgate School is a mixed comprehensive school, with specialist school status for science, for pupils aged 11 to 16 in Winchester in Hampshire. It is situated on a well-appointed site that has been redeveloped considerably in the last six years. There are 1,152 pupils on roll, in line with the national average, with similar numbers of boys and girls. The school has grown in popularity since 2000. It has boarding provision on site for 34 pupils, including several from other countries. The overwhelming majority of pupils are white British, with just under five per cent from ethnic minority backgrounds. A very small number of pupils is entitled to free school meals. Pupils' prior attainment on entry is just above average. A very small number speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs is well below average. One hundred and thirty-five pupils have been reviewed for intervention through school action, school action plus and statements of educational need, as required by the code of practice. Nine pupils have statements, which is below the national average. Pupils' needs are learning, social, emotional, behavioural and sensory. A recently opened bilingual signing department provides for a small number of profoundly deaf children whose first language is British sign language with English as a second language.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17478	Hugh Betterton	Lead inspector	Personal, social and health education and citizenship
9406	Roy Cottington	Lay inspector	
32324	Frances Buckler	Team inspector	Music
21954	Terry Chipp	Team inspector	Art and design
15075	Bryan Goodman-Stephens	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
16786	Selwyn Hodge	Team inspector	Science
8183	Gillian Keevill	Team inspector	Physical education
21899	Gillian Lawson	Team inspector	
13805	Lynn Lowery	Team inspector	Design and technology
3669	Tony Maslin	Team inspector	Mathematics
13122	Stephanie Matthews	Team inspector	History
1723	Michael Milton	Team inspector	Geography Religious education
22685	Natalie Moss	Team Inspector	English
14522	Ian Smith	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology Work-related learning

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI

1 - 4 Portland Square

The Westgate School - 2

Bristol
BS2 8RR

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Westgate School is a **very good** school with many significant strengths, not least of which is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. Teaching is very good, so that pupils achieve very well. Pupils have high levels of confidence and pride in their school. There is a shared commitment by all to raising pupils' self-esteem and aspirations. The school's leadership team have a very clear vision of what the school could, and should, achieve and are a powerful driving force in sustaining high standards. The governing body provides very good support, and challenges the school rigorously to improve its performance. The school provides **very good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- It provides an exceptional ethos in which all are valued and expected to do well.
- By the time pupils leave school they attain high standards.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by other staff with leadership responsibilities.
- Many pupils display excellent attitudes to all aspects of school life.
- Provision for modern foreign languages is excellent.
- Teaching and learning are of very good quality.

There are no significant weaknesses in the school as a whole, although there are some areas for improvement related to particular aspects of the school's work.

At the time of the previous inspection, there were no major issues for improvement. Since that time the school has continued to improve and progress is good. High standards have been maintained. Leadership and management have been strengthened. Planning has a better focus now on improving performance. The school has successfully achieved specialist status for science. A substantial building programme has improved accommodation markedly.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Overall, pupils achieve very well. The attainment of pupils on entry to Year 7 is just above average. The results in the end of Year 9 national tests in 2004 were well above the national average and also well above those achieved in similar schools. Results in mathematics and English were slightly stronger than in science. Pupils gain a solid foundation for the next stage of their education. Current standards are above average in nearly all subjects and well above in English and mathematics. In 2004, GCSE results were also well above national averages, but the proportion of pupils achieving one or more grades at A*-G was below average, mostly because a small handful of pupils did not complete their courses. Standards in lessons in Years 10 and 11 are well above average.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, are very good. They grow in confidence as they move through the school

and are very keen to take advantage of out-of-class activities. Their attitudes are exemplary. Behaviour is very good, and many pupils, as they move through the school, are considerate of others and act with increasing maturity. The incidence of bullying is insignificant, and is dealt with effectively. Attendance is in line with the national average, yet its monitoring is not rigorous enough to sustain improvement. Pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is very good; their cultural development is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The school has created an outstanding ethos which has high expectations of all involved. Teachers are hardworking and reflective. They make appropriately high demands and are confident in their subject knowledge. There is little difference between the quality of lessons in Years 7-9, and Years 10-11. Very good teaching is evident in all subjects. The curriculum, which is enriched very well by extra-curricular activities, provides a broad range of courses, including a few vocational courses. While pupils are generally competent in their use of information and communication technology (ICT), these skills are not yet fully and systematically developed and used across the curriculum. The school provides high quality support, advice and guidance for virtually all of its pupils, including a particularly successful review process. However, pupils learning English as an additional language are not consistently well supported in their learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management in the school is very good. Exemplary leadership by the headteacher inspires others, and creates an ethos of high professional standards and trust. He is very well supported by his leadership team. Together they give a clear sense of direction to the school and have established appropriate priorities for improvement. The work of the governors is very good; they have a clear grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide knowledgeable and committed oversight of the school's work. **Management is good.** The school is reflective, and management procedures for the monitoring and self-review of its work are in place, although these are not always rigorously and consistently well applied at subject level. Although the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship is not fully met, governors have done all they can and standards are not being adversely affected.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The large majority of parents and carers take a very positive view of most aspects of the school's work. However, of those returning the parental questionnaire, several considered they were not well informed about their child's progress. Inspectors judged that reports are of good quality. Equally, some parents did not feel that the school sought their views sufficiently. The school makes every effort to consult parents, yet will review its current provision. Parents particularly commented on how much pupils like school, that they are working hard and making good progress. They also appreciate the good arrangements made to ensure their child settled in well on arrival in Year 7. Pupils also express considerable support for the school, saying they are taught well and feel safe. They feel trusted by their teachers. Pupils report that bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Even though there are no major weaknesses, the most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Ensure that the current programme of professional development for subject leaders leads to a more rigorous approach to self-evaluation and monitoring.
- Ensure that pupils have better planned opportunities for developing their use and understanding of information and communications technology across the curriculum.
- Improve its provision for pupils learning English as an additional language to include broader support where necessary.
- Establish greater consistency in following up pupils' absences.

And, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' overall achievement is very good.
- Most pupils make very good progress because they have very positive attitudes to learning, and are well behaved and well taught.
- Standards in Key Stage 3 tests and in GCSE are well above national averages.
- By the end of Year 11, standards in most subjects are well above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are deaf achieve very well because of a knowledgeable, inclusive and wide ranging approach to their individual needs.

Commentary

1. The standard of pupils' work when they join the school in Year 7 is just above the national average, similar to that over the last few years. Standards of attainment in the 2003 National Curriculum tests in Year 9 were well above the national average for English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, based on pupils' prior attainment, results for English, mathematics and science were well above average. This represents good achievement for these pupils.
2. Unconfirmed national data shows that in the 2004 tests pupils have attained results that are still well above the national averages. In comparison with results in similar schools, based on pupils' prior attainment, results in English were well above average, while they were average in science and mathematics. At the higher levels of attainment, though, the school's results are well above those of similar schools. Teachers' assessments in most other subjects show attainment to be above or well above national expectations and standards seen during the inspection confirm these assessments. The overall trend is one of continuous improvement, in line with the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	36.9 (38.0)	n/a (33.4)
mathematics	39.6 (38.9)	n/a (35.4)
science	35.8 (36.8)	n/a (33.6)

There were 211 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Boys do particularly well in mathematics and science, where their performance often exceeds that of the girls. In English, though, girls attain slightly better than boys. However, the overall difference between boys' and girls' results is not significant.

pupils and those identified as gifted and talented achieve very well in Years 7 to 9. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is also very good.

4. For each of the last two years the school has met its targets for the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science. The school is on course to meet the challenging targets set for 2005.
5. At the end of Year 11, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades in 2004 was 73 per cent, well above the national average and in line with the similar schools' average. Although the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades rose slightly from 72 per cent in 2003, the percentage has been around this level for the last three years. In 2004, the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A*-G passes (96 per cent) was above the national average. However, the percentage achieving one or more A*-G passes dropped to 97 per cent, mainly because of the long-term illness of two pupils, and four pupils who were not of the appropriate age to have their attainment recorded. Over the last three years, these measures indicate how well the school caters for pupils of all abilities.
6. The average points score of pupils' best eight subjects in 2003 was well above average (42.0 compared with 34.5 nationally) and in line with the average of schools which performed similarly in Year 9 tests in 2001. Results of pupils achieving five or more A*-C grades overall since the last inspection have been similar. However, the overall trend has not been rising as fast as the national trend, and the school has re-focused its planning accordingly. The proposed targets for 2005 are challenging, yet evidence from the inspection suggests that they should be achieved. Value-added analysis indicates that pupils made well above average progress from the time they entered the school at age 11, representing very good achievement throughout their time in school. This is offset by lower than expected progress across Years 10 and 11 in 2004.

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	73 (72)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96 (95)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (99)	96 (96)
Average points score per pupil (best eight subjects)	42 (41.9)	34.9 (34.7)

There were 166 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

7. In 2004, virtually all subjects achieved results significantly better than the national average, whilst results were closer to the average in home economics, and just below average in physical education. In 2004, results in art and design, English literature, drama and music were particularly strong. The best performing subjects in the school were French and English literature. In five subjects – German, music, religious education, Chinese and statistics – all of those entered achieved at least grade C. Both boys' and girls' performance is well above that recorded nationally in 2004 and in the last three years. In that time, girls' performance has been better than boys', while being relatively stable. Boys' performance has dropped away a little since 2001.
8. Overall, pupils' achievement (that is, how high standards are in relation to their prior attainment) is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. In work seen during the inspection, standards were above average in Year 9 and well above average in Year 11. The most significant factors in the improving standards are the strong

attention that has been given to improving the quality of teaching and learning, and the very good attitudes of pupils to their learning, both of which help to promote very good progress. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are achieving satisfactorily overall. They do not always receive sufficient classroom support in key subjects to ensure that their language use matures as they move through the school. However, they make better progress overall in English, as their language skills advance quickly, so that they are able to participate and learn well in lessons.

9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well throughout the school because teaching is expertly matched to their individual learning needs. In particular, pupils with statements make very good progress towards targets set for them in their individual education plans. They meet the majority of their targets through systematic, well-structured teaching and work that is well matched to their individual needs. Pupils with specific literacy difficulties achieve well in regular group reading and spelling sessions where they receive effective help from special needs teachers. They make significant gains in reading and spelling ages. Pupils follow GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11 with successful results and the majority leave school with several GCSEs, achieving their predicted grades. The school has begun to supplement these with very relevant work-related accredited courses including the award scheme development and accreditation network (ASDAN).
10. In work seen in English during the inspection, standards are well above average in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. In light of their attainment on entry, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well by the time they leave the school. Standards of literacy are above average throughout the school, and pupils make good progress because of their confidence in the use of language.
11. In mathematics, standards are also above average at the end of Year 9 and well above in Year 11: pupils' achievements are very good overall. Standards of numeracy are above average. Most pupils accurately use and apply numeracy skills in different contexts, and are reasonably confident at mental calculation.
12. Standards in science are above average in Year 9 and well above by the time pupils reach Year 11. Pupils' achievement is good throughout. They have a good grasp of scientific principles, and many higher attainers can use complex scientific language very well.
13. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' achievements are very good in modern foreign languages, geography, religious education, design and technology and music. They are good in all other subjects. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' achievements are very good in geography, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages, art and design, music, business studies and personal, social and health education, and good in information and communication technology and drama. They are satisfactory in religious education and physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and relationships are **excellent**. Many display a very mature approach to their education. Behaviour in lessons and throughout the school day is very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Attendance is satisfactory and in line with national averages. Punctuality is satisfactory at the start of the day and good while pupils are in school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an excellent school ethos which leads to outstanding relationships, high expectations of pupils' achievement and very high levels of support.
- The school has developed very high levels of confidence and self-esteem in most pupils.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to explore, experience and reflect on aspects of their academic and personal development, these result in very high levels of pupils' maturity and responsibility.
- The school's efforts to promote good attendance need to be developed further.

Commentary

14. Pupils' attitudes to all aspects of school life are excellent and are a key contributory factor to the high standards achieved by the school as a whole. At the heart of this success is the school's belief that all pupils should enjoy school and that all are able to achieve to their full potential. All staff share this belief and the school is highly successful at fostering high levels of confidence and high aspirations in its pupils. Pupils are very articulate, thoughtful and keen to meet those expectations and the overwhelming majority do. From Year 7 pupils take full advantage of the opportunities to discuss potential weaknesses and their subject likes and dislikes. All are expected to achieve well and succeed. A very small number of pupils become disaffected with school, but much is done to limit the impact of this. Pupils for whom English is an additional language approach their learning of English with interest and a very high level of motivation and effort. They co-operate well with teachers and other staff and show a desire to achieve as highly as possible. Pupils with special educational needs make very noticeable progress in the development of independence, confidence and self-esteem.
15. With the large number of pupils on roll, the incidents of inappropriate behaviour are very few. For the most part, pupils' behaviour is very good in all aspects of the daily life of the school. In lessons, pupils show very good levels of concentration and keep well focused on lesson activities. When disruptive behaviour does occur, usually in the form of talking across the teacher, their attention is quickly returned to the task in hand.
16. Of special note is the very orderly way pupils move along corridors, which at times become very congested. On these occasions, pupils follow the routines well, showing concern for the needs of others. Although a minority of parents and pupils identified bullying as an issue for concern, discussions with a cross section of the school council revealed that bullying, oppressive or aggressive behaviour were not a problem. They did highlight occasional spontaneous arguments and disagreements. Indeed, pupils were insistent that any such behaviour is not tolerated by adults or pupils and is dealt with very quickly and effectively. As the table below shows, only one pupil was excluded on a permanent basis for wilful misconduct. The school's overall level of exclusions is slightly better than similar schools locally.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean

Exclusions in the last school year

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1,079	81	3
1	0	0
20	0	0
1	2	0

Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	6	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	15	1	0
Any other ethnic group	5	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	10	0	0

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

17. The school places a very strong emphasis on pupils' personal development, including taking responsibility for their own behaviour and trustworthiness. Pupils take part in a very effective school council, and a range of initiatives aimed particularly at taking and showing responsibility. These include training for some Year 10 pupils as peer supporters, who work with more vulnerable pupils, help with Year 7 and 8 tutor groups and assist with educational programmes, for example anti-smoking. A very effective session was observed when two Year 11 pupils led a discussion between Year 8 pupils about relationships. They were treated well by their younger peers, who clearly valued the advice and help provided.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the school and are making good progress, particularly in the development of independence, confidence and self-esteem. Pupils who are deaf become confident, enthusiastic learners, with admirable attitudes to learning. They have very secure relationships with each other and with the staff, and flourish in the strong, caring and motivating ethos. Pupils learn mutual respect and show understanding of deaf awareness issues.
19. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. They have a good level of self-knowledge and spiritual awareness, which is developed in lessons and assemblies. In particular, lessons in English provide very well for pupils' development. They show very good respect for the beliefs and opinions of others, and their behaviour around the school shows that they have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. This is a main feature of the ethos of the school. They understand the responsibilities of living in the community. For example, many pupils take part in a wide range of outside charity events. Pupils appreciate their own and many other cultural traditions very well. Many participate in a wide-ranging programme of visits locally, across the country and abroad, which adds to their knowledge and understanding. Whilst many pupils develop a good appreciation of what it means to be a citizen in today's Britain, there are fewer opportunities for them to learn about urban living in modern multicultural British society. Pupils leave the school as confident, thinking and responsible young adults and are well prepared for the next stage in their lives.

Attendance

20. The school's attendance levels are broadly in line with national averages for similar schools. The school's efforts to promote good attendance are satisfactory. Tutors and heads of year

regularly monitor attendance levels and letters are sent home when individual attendance falls below an acceptable level. Additionally, a few pupils with particularly high levels of unauthorised absence are the subject of close monitoring and support. The school has been constrained in this area of its work by the absence of a local education authority social worker. In order to reduce further the levels of unauthorised absence, the school needs to focus on improving the effectiveness of its systems for ensuring good attendance and the consistency of current approaches.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

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

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence in 2003/4.

- At the time of the last inspection, pupils’ attitudes, behaviour and personal development were identified as strengths of the school. This continues to be the case with further very positive developments since the last report. These very good standards contribute very significantly to an excellent school ethos and high levels of achievement.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is **very good**. In particular, the very good quality of teaching, the outstanding attitudes shown by pupils to their work, the very good quality of advice and guidance given by tutors and pastoral staff and an effective curriculum are ensuring that most pupils achieve very well. Accommodation and resources are good. There are very good arrangements for pupils’ care, welfare, health and safety. The support, advice and guidance for pupils are very good. There are effective links with parents and with other schools and colleges. Links with the community are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good** overall. Lessons are very well planned, learning activities engage the interest of pupils and challenge them to do their best. Overall assessment practice is good, but there are a few inconsistencies between subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers increase the depth and pace of pupils’ learning through their expertise in developing learning skills.
- Very well-planned lessons make it clear what pupils are expected to learn, and resources and activities engage pupils’ interests well.
- Pupils’ enthusiasm, motivation and hard work help them learn very well.
- There is some outstanding teaching in some lessons in French, mathematics, English, history and geography.
- Pupils in the bilingual signing department are all taught and supported very well.

Commentary

- In the school as a whole the quality of teaching and learning is very good, including in English, mathematics and science. Virtually every lesson seen was at least satisfactory.

Nearly nine out of ten lessons seen were at least good and over four out of ten were very good or better. The quality of teaching is consistently good across all subjects. It is best in Year 11. The result is that pupils learn consistently well. The overall quality of teaching is better than at the time of the last inspection

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 145 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
7 (5%)	55 (38%)	66 (45%)	16 (11%)	1 (1%)	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.

23. Pupils and parents are right to think that teaching is very good. Since the last inspection, the school has concentrated on improving the quality of teaching and learning. This has been a major contributory factor to the current levels of very good teaching. There is a higher proportion of good or better teaching than in the last inspection, where teaching was found to be good throughout the school. The quality of teaching in this inspection, including that in English, mathematics and science, is very good. The school has introduced the national Key Stage 3 strategy well. Good use is made of the three-part lesson structure, ensuring that a lively introduction is followed by opportunities for active participation by all pupils. Objectives are generally made clear to pupils at the outset. In the majority of lessons, opportunities are taken at the end to summarise and reinforce main issues. However, on a very few occasions, lessons overrun, leaving no time for adequate reflection by pupils. In a small number of lessons, the teacher over-directs the learning and fails to allow pupils to develop their own ideas.

24. The most successful teaching shows a good range of activities that enables pupils to work in pairs or groups on a variety of collaborative tasks, leading to high levels of interest. There are particularly good examples in English, mathematics, geography, drama, history and modern foreign languages. In Years 10 and 11, in particular, many teachers have an outstanding command of the subjects they teach. In very good lessons, pace is rapid. Pupils are clear about what they have to do to learn, respond with enthusiasm and enjoy the well-planned and imaginative activities that stimulate their interest. As a result, they take pleasure in developing new skills, deepening their understanding and acquiring new knowledge. In most lessons, pupils learn with enthusiasm. They enjoy what they are asked to do and work hard. Their attitudes are usually excellent and behaviour is very good in most lessons. Pupils also undertake extended independent work in most subjects that re-inforces their achievement. By the time pupils reach Year 11, many are articulate and very knowledgeable about a wide range of academic and practical matters. Teachers care about their pupils and always encourage them to do well. Teachers normally have the highest expectations of pupils and set challenging targets to which the majority aspire.

25. Learning is usually well supported by assessment. Most subject departments have developed individual targets for pupils and are tracking their progress throughout the year, as well as at the end of the year. This complements the very good review process for individuals and groups of pupils undertaken by tutors; clear targets for progress are agreed and then monitored on a half-termly basis. The use of assessment in some subjects, such as mathematics, modern foreign languages, religious education and music, is very effective. However, in a few subjects more work is needed to achieve greater impact by ensuring pupils are clear about precisely what they need to do to improve. In books, marking is regular and constructive in several subjects. Teachers know the levels being attained by their pupils and set targets for them. Pupils are aware of the levels they are achieving and what they need to do to improve. Since the school introduced its recent approach to ensure a sharper concentration on marking significant

pieces of work (SMART marking), most pupils are being better guided about what to do to improve. However, this is not yet being consistently applied across the school. Better monitoring of its impact is needed. Pupils' self-evaluation is being effectively developed in some areas and is being used to set challenging targets.

26. Pupils with special educational needs are taught very well, as are those identified as gifted and talented. Teachers in the learning support team are highly qualified, have a wide range of experience and liaise very effectively with experienced subject teachers to plan and structure pupils' work. Teachers know their pupils' needs well through carefully planned and detailed assessment. They frequently provide additional support through very carefully planned group and pair work. Teaching assistants, who are well trained and experienced, work in close collaboration with subject teachers to support pupils in the classroom. Teaching for pupils for whom English is an additional language is generally good. Each pupil has an individual education plan with specific targets. English teachers, in particular, use them to ensure that pupils acquire the structure and vocabulary they need for their studies. Assessment of these pupils is satisfactory, yet there are no special arrangements to ensure that their language acquisition is maturing as fast as it might.
27. All of the above strengths occur in the context of very good relationships between staff and pupils. Consequently, pupils feel confident when undertaking difficult tasks and readily volunteer to respond and present ideas. The overall effect of the very good teaching is that pupils learn very well, being able to consolidate what has been learnt previously and taking good responsibility for independent work. Pupils are prepared sensibly for national tests and public examinations, with clear reminders about coursework and assignment deadlines.

The curriculum

The curriculum is of **very good** quality, enriched with **very good** provision of extra-curricular opportunities. Accommodation, provision for staffing, and resources for teaching and learning are **good** overall. Better use of the current provision is required for ICT.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum enriches pupils' lives, and prepares them very well for later life and study.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The curriculum is very well planned to meet pupils' needs.
- Support for learning outside the school day is very good.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is very effective.
- The very good improvements in aspects of accommodation have improved curriculum delivery.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped in several curriculum areas.

Commentary

28. The school provides a very good curriculum that meets the needs of its pupils. Statutory requirements are met but the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship. However, standards are not unduly affected. There is a strong emphasis on academic GCSE provision and most pupils are entered for ten GCSEs. The school is beginning to develop a more vocationally based curriculum with a satisfactory range of vocational GCSE and other qualifications, such as the ASDAN award and the junior sports leaders award. Good links with the local college of further education have enabled the school to provide an appropriate work-related curriculum for pupils who find difficulty with more traditional approaches to learning. The success of the

curriculum is shown in the above average numbers of pupils who leave school with very good qualifications. The organisation of teaching groups into broad bands of ability and flexible ability sets has been effective in raising standards of achievement. The school has embraced the National Strategies to raise achievement for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and this has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of education and the large majority of pupils continuing in full-time further education.

29. The school makes successful curriculum provision for its pupils. There is very good provision for more able pupils in most subjects where well-matched work stretches and challenges them. In addition, there are special events, for example, the one-day conference in modern foreign languages and the master class in history. The extra-curricular programme in physical education and music provides very well for talented pupils. They are particularly successful in trampolining and badminton, as well in the range of instruments played with growing proficiency. The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good, giving appropriate attention to sex education and relationships, and to alcohol and drug misuse. Citizenship is taught as a discrete part of this provision and plays an important role in developing the high levels of respect shown by pupils. The quality of careers information is also very good. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 receive early guidance as part of their PSHE programme. In Years 10 and 11 the provision is enhanced by involvement of outside speakers and guidance. Pupils benefit from effective links with local colleges, some community partners and local businesses. Work experience and work shadowing are also used to good effect.
30. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs and pupils who are deaf is very good. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very successfully within the classroom by teaching assistants and support teachers. The bilingual approach for pupils who are deaf and the high quality of support within the classroom ensures they have access to the school's main curriculum, alongside their peers. Highly skilled instruction in signing helps pupils in developing advanced British sign language (their first language) alongside English. The bilingual signing department also offers instruction for hearing pupils in clubs and after-school classes and this year deaf studies will be offered as an option for all pupils in Year 10 and 11, further increasing the wide range of curriculum opportunities for all pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory for those for whom English is an additional language (EAL), since they receive good support in several lessons. However, they are sometimes unable to understand difficult concepts when their vocabulary is limited because they do not receive sufficient support across the whole curriculum. A review of the current provision for EAL is necessary.
31. Extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities are very good. The provision for the arts is very good and the provision in sport and physical education is excellent. A significant feature of the sport programme is the training of pupils to coach and lead their peers. In recognition of the quality of provision in sport, the school has been awarded national accreditation the Sports Mark and the Football Association's Charter Mark. School visits enhance the curriculum, particularly in modern foreign languages, where three different exchange visits are organised at a time when many schools are not able to offer one exchange.
32. There is a very good match of both teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum in most subjects. Generally, the school is successful at recruiting well-qualified and dedicated professionals. For example, provision is outstanding in modern foreign languages because of the stable levels of very well-qualified teachers, augmented by a number of foreign language assistants. The marked levels of staffing change in English have been very well managed by the school and have enhanced provision further. About 30 per cent of the current teaching staff

is part-time and they make as effective an impact on raising standards as full-time teachers across the school.

33. Accommodation has been improved considerably since the last inspection and is now good overall, with very good features. In many areas, now, high quality accommodation is enhancing the curriculum. The phased building programme over a number of years has been very successful in developing the quality and extent of the school's curriculum provision. The accommodation in science has been greatly enhanced through the specialist science college programme and is now good overall. Accommodation for ICT is very good. It is satisfactory in design and technology and history. In music, there is inadequate space for practical work. The sports hall provides very good additional accommodation for physical education. It is also widely used for international level badminton matches and training. Nonetheless the gymnasium is in need of some refurbishment. Overall, the accommodation for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, but the space to meet outside visitors, parents and therapists is cramped and there is no appropriate space for individual testing or small group work.
34. Resources for teaching and learning are good overall. There are very good resources for physical education. While resources are also very good in discrete ICT lessons, there is limited access to ICT facilities in several subjects. As a result, the resources in English and design and technology are just satisfactory. Resources in mathematics, geography and religious education meet curriculum needs well. In music, a shortage of ICT equipment, together with keyboards that are ineffective for course requirements, causes resources to be barely satisfactory. However, as a result of the specialist schools programme, ICT facilities in science are very good. The library provides a very pleasant and conducive learning environment; the broad and well-stocked collection of books and periodicals meets the requirements of individual subjects well. Pupils make good use of this area.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils is **very effective**. Pupils receive very good levels of help, support and guidance. The pupils are seen as an important part of the school community and their views are valued.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- There are well-established and effective systems in place to ensure a safe and secure school community.
- Very good procedures are in place to ensure that each pupil receives the maximum level of support.
- There is a range of successful methods for seeking pupils' views.
- There are excellent systems in place for ensuring that pupils settle in quickly to school and that they receive very good help when leaving school in Year 11.

Commentary

35. The school pays very good attention to its duty of care for the pupils, their health and safety and all aspects of their well being. The health and safety policy is currently the subject of an in-depth review. The well-established health and safety procedures are systematically and effectively followed through. Risk assessments, covering all aspects of the school's work, have been carried out and extend to each subject area. Potential risks are recorded and displayed prominently in departmental handbooks. During the inspection no apparent serious risk to pupils was evident. The school site is very well maintained. The pupils benefit from a good quality medical room and an adequate number of staff qualified to administer first aid. Senior managers and staff are alert to possible child protection issues and carefully follow the guidelines published by the local education authority.

36. The pastoral arrangements for ensuring each pupil receives academic and personal development help and guidance are very good. These start before Year 6 pupils join the school when, through visits and one-to-one interviews, levels of trust are developed. The process continues in Year 7, when every pupil is encouraged to discuss potential weaknesses and subject likes and dislikes. They very quickly realise that teachers are there to help and genuinely want every individual to succeed. The success of these arrangements is, for the most part, due to the very close working relationships developed between pupils and their tutors. No matter what the social or economic background of pupils, they receive high quality guidance and support. A particularly successful activity is the timetabled and systematic individual and group reviews. The process involves pupils reflecting on their results and progress in each subject and identifying action for improvement. The resulting targets, identified by the pupils themselves, are recorded in school planners and form the basis for further monitoring and review. An effective feature of this process is the way the written targets form a vital link to subject teachers who can then help and support the pupil in meeting the targets. The review sessions observed during the inspection revealed a strong commitment to the process by pupils and staff alike. Other support arrangements include involvement of older pupils helping younger colleagues and the very good levels of help provided by teachers in lessons. All of this echoes the very high quality attitudes that pupils display towards their schooling.
37. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is very carefully monitored. Annual statutory reviews comply with legal requirements. In both learning support and bilingual signing departments, individual education plans are detailed with specific and measurable targets and very good strategies to enable pupils to meet them. Individual education plans are reviewed each term in the bilingual signing department and half yearly in the learning support department. The school has very good links with outside agencies and this enables pupils with special educational needs and pupils who are deaf to receive very effective advice for their future needs.
38. The school council, with its own budget, is a very effective body, whose members display high levels of maturity and commitment to their role. Senior managers value the work of the council and give the views and suggestions they receive careful consideration. The close and trusting relationships across the school, especially those between pupils and tutors, allow pupils to raise concerns in a supportive and confidential environment. Although the views of school-leavers are sought, the school has yet to carry out whole-school audits of pupils' views and attitudes, but plans to do so in the near future.
39. Excellent procedures are established to help new pupils settle into school. Key activities include a good range of meetings and information gathering visits. Prospective parents are invited to information evenings and pupils benefit from induction days. The information supplied by primary feeder schools, together with staff/pupil interviews, is used very effectively to build tutor groups and for setting in some subjects. The pre-inspection parental questionnaire identified this aspect as a strength of the school. The school's procedures for preparing pupils to deal with the challenges they meet when they leave school are very good. Comments by pupils indicate that the work experience placements are highly valued and career information and guidance are good. Nearly all pupils leaving school move into further education or training. The school has very good relationships with local colleges and schools and has very effective procedures for helping pupils making choices about the next stage of their education. The boarding provision is also very effective in looking after the small number of overseas pupils resident in the school.
40. The inspection evidence, together with the comments made by parents and pupils, confirm that the welfare and support of pupils continues to be a strength and that the school has continued to build on the successes described in the previous report. The way in which pupils are treated, valued, supported and trusted all make a major contribution to high quality learning and achievement.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links between the school and the parents are **good**. Links with other schools and colleges are very good. Community involvement is good.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The majority of parents value the school's work and provide good support.
- The quality and range of communication with parents is good.
- Points of contact with staff are not fully understood by some parents.
- A wide range of links with other schools and colleges has a very positive impact on learning and achievement.

COMMENTARY

41. At the pre-inspection parents' meeting and in the parental questionnaire, a large majority of parents expressed a high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's work. They particularly highlight the good teaching, the progress their children make, the high expectations of teaching staff and the very good arrangements in place to help pupils settle into school. The inspection team fully endorses these views. The concerns expressed by a minority of parents include the quality of information they receive about progress, the extent to which the school seeks the views of parents and concerns about approaching staff about problems. The inspection evidence does not fully support these views. The annual progress reports to parents are of very good quality, fully meet legal requirements and include targets for improvement. In addition to these annual reports, parents also receive interim termly reports giving details of attainment and effort. The school recently commissioned an independent organisation to seek the views of parents. Some 600 parents took part and the research covered a wide range of school activities. The school also encourages parents to make use of the school's website to give feedback. Discussions with pastoral care staff revealed a very positive attitude and response to approaches by parents.
42. The quality of information about the school is very good. The school prospectus is well designed and gives a very clear picture of what the school provides and its underlying values and beliefs. A regular newsletter, with contributions by pupils, celebrates success and provides interesting information about the life of the school. The school's website is also an effective means of communication with parents. However, not all parents are fully aware of these aspects of the school's provision and the school should reassess its current processes for contact with parents and carers.
43. Pupils' learning is well supported in the home by nearly all parents. They want their children to do well and help to facilitate completion of homework and coursework, for example, through access to the Internet and the school's own website. Parents of pupils with special educational needs value the support they are given and trust the staff. Parents and their children attend major events such as annual reviews, reviews of individual education plans and school performances and are comfortable about contacting the school with any concerns they may have about their children. Whole-school events such as parents' evenings are very well supported, with high levels of attendance and participation. Winchester Cathedral is filled to capacity for the annual carol concert.
44. The school has developed very good links with local primary and secondary schools. These links not only serve to ensure the smooth transition from one school to the other, but also enhance teaching and learning through shared activities and resources, and joint teacher training. The school is very well regarded in the local community for its

very good levels of involvement in a wide range of activities including charitable events. Sporting activities are especially well supported with high levels of pupil participation either in teams or as individuals. The school enjoys a considerable level of success in this area. The links with other schools, colleges and the community make a very important contribution to learning through enrichment of the curriculum and to pupils' social and moral development. Equally effective is the boarding provision the school manages, as it brings an added dimension to school life.

45. The last inspection report highlighted the school's success in this area of its work. Since then, the school has continued to develop very effective links with parents, schools and the community. For example, valuable links have been forged with two primary schools by deputy headteachers who serve as governors. This emphasises the importance Westgate places on ensuring its role as a broad-based comprehensive school, meeting the needs of a wide range of pupils.
46. Links with other schools are very good and make a valuable contribution to teaching and to pupils' progress. The transition arrangements with local primary schools are very well established and the range of both procedures and activities involved enables pupils to make a smooth transition from their primary school. In particular, the pyramid meetings with the main feeder primary schools promote better curriculum understanding for several subjects, ensuring good continuity of provision for pupils, and they enable senior managers to share problems and good practice. The links also include the facility to enable gifted and talented pupils to receive some of their secondary education at an early stage. Other links with feeder primary schools are used to arrange joint training and provide access to sports facilities at Westgate for primary age pupils, for example.
47. The last inspection report gave a mixed picture of the school's involvement with parents. The school has made good progress on addressing these matters, but is aware that it needs to be constantly reviewing its processes.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The **outstanding** leadership of the headteacher makes a vital contribution to the school's effectiveness as a very good learning community. The leadership and governance of the school are very good, and the management is effective.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The headteacher knows the school exceptionally well and his outstanding leadership has resulted in a school community based on respect, inclusion and very high expectations.
- The governing body is very knowledgeable and has a strong influence on the school's strategic direction.
- The senior management team leads by example and supports the headteacher very successfully.
- The leadership of heads of department and year groups is very good.
- The school improvement plan is good and is taking the school forward well.
- The leadership and management of the learning support department and the bilingual signing department are very good.
- While the monitoring of overall provision is good, its outcomes need to be used more rigorously.

Commentary

48. The strengths of leadership and management reported at the previous inspection have been maintained. The headteacher is always around the school, particularly during breaks and lunchtimes, and is very approachable to both pupils and staff. He regularly takes classes for absent teachers. His calm, supportive approach and commitment to very high standards of achievement and behaviour make a key contribution to the school's tone. He invests high levels of professional trust in his staff and seeks to provide them with the opportunities to give the pupils a very good education. His leadership is exemplary.
49. An equally approachable senior management team, whose members play a full part in all aspects of the school's life, supports the headteacher very well. Each member oversees a range of initiatives that contribute to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement very productively. For example, the school uses a wide range of resources to promote the personal development of pupils so that as many as possible can benefit from the education that the school provides. The headteacher and senior managers provide very good levels of personal support and encouragement to subject departments.
50. Overall, heads of subjects and year groups provide very good leadership and effective management, with some examples of excellence. They all have a clear vision of what they wish to achieve in terms of pupils' achievement and personal development, and are effective in sharing this vision with their subject and year teams. The co-ordination of both special educational needs and the bilingual signing department is very good. Both leaders have a knowledgeable and clear vision for the development of each area. Both lead teams of highly committed, well-qualified and experienced teachers, instructors and communication support assistants. Leadership of the work for pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory. The co-ordinator ensures that early assessment is undertaken and that individual plans are tailored to suit each pupil's needs. However, responsibility for the progress of these pupils is then passed on to their classroom teachers and tutors, who are not always in a position to assess progress in language acquisition and to see when difficulties arise. The overall quality of monitoring and evaluation by heads of subjects is largely satisfactory, but ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. Where monitoring and evaluation are excellent, teachers observe each other's lessons and the head of subject observes all teachers, making clear judgements about the quality of provision and acting on the outcomes. Monitoring records are clear about the observed strengths and areas for development.
51. The school improvement plan is well structured and has the right targets for improvement, although it does not make clear how progress with each target will be monitored and evaluated. The overall quality of subject development plans is satisfactory, but they range from excellent to unsatisfactory. The excellent plans are well structured, have an explicit focus on raising standards and improving teaching, and include links to the priorities of the school improvement plan. Unsatisfactory plans are primarily lists of resources to be purchased or projects to be joined.
52. At a whole-school level, a number of good strategies for monitoring and evaluation are used, including, for example, a survey of parental opinion and an extensive review of the curriculum. The inspection team confirms the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation. However, there are aspects of monitoring and evaluation that are not rigorous enough. For example, there are a few aspects of teaching that need improvement, and there are instances of subject departments that would welcome more feedback about their overall work. Each subject department has a line manager,

but there are inconsistencies in the way that these links operate. In the best practice, there are scheduled meetings and heads of subject are held rigorously to account for the performance of their subjects. Currently, a very effective subject leader development programme is in place to strengthen their impact on managing and leading their areas; a large number of other teachers are also attending to improve their skills and understanding. The day-to-day management of the school is very good, and administration is carried out very effectively.

53. The governance of the school is very good. Many governors have specialist knowledge that they are prepared to use to the benefit of the school. They have a very clear vision for its future development and have a very good understanding of its present strengths and weaknesses. There is a very well-organised committee structure that ensures that governors are aware of developments in all aspects of the school's life. The governing body has skilfully managed a major programme of building improvements which has resulted in high quality accommodation and resources. The responsible committee is forward looking and is continually seeking ways of improving standards, for example the planned provision of a major new swimming pool. Governors are not fulfilling their legal obligations to provide a daily act of collective worship, yet have done all in their power to ensure that it is held.
54. There is very good management of the recruitment, retention and deployment of staff. The programme for the induction of staff is good. The small number of newly qualified teachers had induction programmes before their first term in school, they follow the local education authority (LEA) induction programmes and they receive very effective support within their subject departments. However, there is not a systematic whole-school programme of professional development for newly qualified teachers. A good programme of performance management is contributing to school improvement, although not all support staff are involved yet. There is an effective strategy for the professional development of staff, including a good quality, school-based training course for middle managers. The graduate teacher programme is of good quality, often providing the school with high quality recruits.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,843,459	Balance from previous year	6,342
Total expenditure	3,816,186	Balance carried forward to the next year	27,272
Expenditure per pupil	3,312		

55. The school manages all aspects of its finances very well. Budget monitoring and scrutiny of spending decisions is rigorous and the committee subjects staff to searching questions. The income from the on-site Rotherly Day Nursery is imaginatively used to provide additional resources. The school adheres to the principles of best value very well. Day-to-day spending decisions are subjected to a process for ensuring good value for money, whilst longer-term spending is scrutinised with a view to finding more efficient and cost-effective suppliers. Overall, the governors and senior managers discharge their duties for ensuring efficiency and effectiveness very well. The school provides very good value for money.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

What is the effectiveness of work-related learning?

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a good programme of vocational and work-related activities.
- Pupils are very positive about the range and quality of provision and respond accordingly.
- Leaders show very effective commitment to ensuring improved provision.

Commentary

56. Students' achievements in activities related to the workplace are good. They are learning some of the skills and attitudes that are necessary, and gaining a good understanding of 'real world' situations through the well-planned programme. Standards in child development and business studies are above average. Work experience is well established and the school has used this to develop close links with some local businesses. Tutors visit pupils and they discuss what they have done and achieved in debriefing sessions. Last year, most pupils were judged to have completed the experience well. A work taster day for Year 9 pupils has recently been introduced to extend provision. Similarly, careers provision is good providing a full programme of personal experiences and skills for all pupils.
57. Teaching is very good overall. Pupils have good opportunities to link what they have learnt in the classroom to work situations. Realistic simulated practice in business studies and child development are of good quality. Pupils' attitudes are good and the great majority see the relevance of the work and its importance in understanding the world of work.
58. The specialist science school status is supporting work-related learning developments across all aspects of the science curriculum and beginning to influence the nature of learning for work in the school curriculum. In subject areas such as PSHE, ICT, design and technology and business studies, pupils make good progress in developing skills of enterprise and employability. Health and social care, business studies and the work-related learning dedicated lessons for smaller numbers of pupils provide good learning about work. College courses and the school's work experience, together with the ASDAN course lessons also provide well-planned learning through work.
59. Leadership and management of work-related opportunities are good. The co-ordinator is committed and hard working. The school's management of work-related learning benefits from an experienced co-ordinator who has followed the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidance. Through a whole-school audit, the school has produced a development plan to ensure that by the time pupils reach the end of Year 11 they will have had a thorough introduction into the world of work. The work-related learning development plan is in its early stages of implementation. Areas for further improvement have already been identified, such as monitoring and evaluation aspects of the whole strategy, so that quality assurance procedures and continuous improvement can be established. Nonetheless, there is a strong management commitment to implement this aspect of the educational provision to high standards and the school is well supported by the local authority initiatives to improve vocational provision.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in English is very good by the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
- Standards are well above average in both English language and literature, though fewer pupils attain the very highest grade in English language.
- Teaching, being very well planned, is very good.
- Leadership is excellent and management of the subject is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Spelling and punctuation of some younger pupils are not always as good as they might be.

Commentary

60. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good. Standards in English literature at GCSE have improved: both achievement and teaching are now very good, the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is now very good and the monitoring of teaching is taking place regularly. Boys still achieve less well than girls, though the gap between them is narrowing, because of the measures the department has instigated in this area. The use of ICT is now developing, as the school's resources grow.
61. Current standards are well above the national average at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11 and have remained at this high level over the last three years. This is reflected in the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 9, which are also well above the results attained by similar schools, judged on earlier attainment, and in GCSE results for that year. In English literature, GCSE standards are also well above average, with a very high percentage of the highest A* grade attained. An outstanding feature of the department is the way in which literature of all kinds is used to maximum effect to teach language skills. This excellent combination has the effect of interesting pupils in all English work and also of contributing extremely well to their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, as they consider themes and issues of relevance to themselves and the modern world.
62. Most pupils speak and listen very well. By the time they reach Year 11, the majority are articulate, offer contributions readily, are able to express themselves with clarity and a sense of appropriate style for the occasion and can sustain a reasoned argument. Vocabulary is often mature and sentence structure coherent. Throughout Years 7 to 9 reading skills are very good, and the most able understand, for example, complex accounts from *Samuel Pepys' Diaries* in Year 8. Older pupils read with a high degree of technical competence and fluency across a range of books. In the main, they read with full comprehension and are adept at drawing inference from what they read. Teachers use literature well in the form of novels, stories, plays and poems to improve speaking and comprehension skills. Many older pupils accomplish a great deal of mature and

sustained written work and are able to write in a wide range of styles for many purposes. Younger pupils are well prepared to write effectively through very good opportunities to discuss ideas and styles on a regular basis. The range of work covered is very good. In both key stages teachers make good use of homework to enable pupils to complete longer pieces of work, such as coursework. Spelling and punctuation, however, are not always as strong as pupils' other very competent language skills; this is more evident for younger, less-confident pupils.

63. The Key Stage 3 literacy strategy is used very well to plan good coverage of literacy targets throughout the school. The head of department has implemented very good new programmes of work for all years. In addition, the curriculum is enriched by the provision of extra classes and other measures for those pupils who need encouragement to attain more highly, and by the setting of all years other than Year 7 into ability groups. This ensures that all pupils are given work relevant to their ability. In this way, very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and for those who speak English as an additional language, as well as for the higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils. The lower ability groups in each year benefit from expert teaching, which has high expectations of the pupils, and these expectations are not disappointed.
64. Teaching is very good overall. No lessons were seen which were less than good, many were very good and some outstanding. Teachers' subject knowledge is of an extremely high level, strong, secure and enthusiastic. Lessons are very well planned and teaching methods are varied, notably engaging pupils' interest very well. Strengths of the teaching are the encouragement and confidence teachers give to pupils, as well as the very high level of expectation and challenge offered. Homework is used well to reinforce work done in lessons and marking is full and helpful in telling pupils what level they have reached and how they could improve their work. The management of pupils' behaviour is often so good that it seems effortless, so that little time is wasted and pupils' achievement is not hindered. Teachers' ability to use and demonstrate the use of ICT in the learning of English is growing as the school's resources grow. Teachers make very good use of the library to help pupils to develop their ability to research for themselves, but, very occasionally, teachers do not help their pupils to work with independence, so that they rely too much on what their teachers tell them and too little on their own ideas and response.
65. The very effective team of teachers, many of whom are quite new to the school, is excellently led by the head of department, who has a clear determination that standards in the subject shall continue to rise and has the welfare of all pupils at heart, whatever their ability. She has made many very good innovations to the curriculum and provides a very good role model to both staff and pupils. She plans and monitors the curriculum very well, ensuring that pupils' progress is analysed, tracked and targeted, in order to help all pupils reach their full potential. She observes lessons regularly to help spread good teaching and learning practices throughout the department, but there is too little opportunity for teachers to observe and learn from the very good and excellent practice within the department.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

66. Even though language and literacy skills are good, the school is aware of the need for the National Literacy Strategy to be widespread throughout the school and has taken some steps to ensure that all curriculum areas are involved in their role in raising standards of literacy. As yet, much of the literacy development and practice is left to the

English department, who work ceaselessly to improve standards. All departments have been included in training and some have taken steps to improve literacy in their separate subjects. There is some good practice evident in some subjects, in the form of word banks and writing frames. However, the progress of the initiative is not yet being fully monitored and evaluated to reach the point where every teacher in the school becomes a teacher of literacy as well as of their specialist subject. This is especially apparent in the need for the constant correction of spelling and punctuation, whatever the subject being taught.

Modern foreign languages

The main focus was on French, German and Spanish, but one lesson of Latin was observed in Year 11. The teaching, learning and achievement were very good and standards were well above the national expectation. The teacher had very good subject knowledge and pupils were motivated and hardworking.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent leadership and management and very good teaching result in very high standards and very high achievement in French, German and Spanish.
- The proportion of pupils opting for GCSE courses is twice the national average.
- The school's extensive links with schools in France, Germany and Spain enhance learning and increase motivation.
- Very good relationships facilitate effective teaching and learning.
- The French, German and Spanish assistants are deployed very effectively and significantly improve pupils' skills in speaking and listening.

Commentary

67. During the inspection, standards observed in lessons and in pupils' written work by the end of Year 9 in French, German and Spanish were well above the national expectation. Most Year 9 pupils ask and answer familiar questions accurately and express opinions confidently. They write and speak using appropriate vocabulary and structures and their pronunciation is very good. Pupils' listening skills are particularly well developed. High attaining pupils communicate fluently and accurately using past, present and future tenses. Many lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs understand lessons conducted largely in the language being studied.
68. In GCSE French in 2003 results were significantly above the national average and in 2004 GCSE results in French continued to be very high; a large number of pupils gained the highest grades. These results are particularly impressive, since the school enters a very high proportion of pupils for French, whereas the national entry is only two-fifths of the cohort. In GCSE Spanish in 2003 results were well above the national

average, and in 2004 GCSE results in Spanish were even higher. In the last two years results in German have been significantly above the national average. Standards of work in all three languages are significantly above those of national expectation by Year 11. Pupils have very good listening skills and good pronunciation. High attaining pupils have very high standards in all four skills and a very good awareness of grammar. Many pupils with special educational needs communicate successfully in familiar situations.

69. The achievement of pupils in all three languages is very good from Years 7 to 11. Pupils who start a second modern foreign language in Year 9 make very rapid progress in the short time available. Gifted and talented pupils achieve very highly and many pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve very well when they join the school in Year 7, but find languages very demanding if they do not come until Year 9.
70. Teaching and learning in French, German and Spanish in Years 7 to 11 are very good. There are also some examples of excellent teaching and learning. Teachers have very good linguistic skills and very good subject knowledge. They also have very high expectations and constantly challenge pupils to give of their best. Lessons are very brisk, very well structured and conducted almost exclusively in the foreign language, which develops pupils' listening and speaking skills fully. Teachers use a wide range of stimulating activities and resources to motivate pupils. Pupils learn very well in pairs and are very keen to participate orally. Pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers provide very good advice on how pupils can improve. The very good relationships also facilitate very good teaching and learning. Pupils are encouraged to use computers for homework and coursework. Homework plays a central part in ensuring very high standards.
71. The leadership and management are excellent. The head of department has a very clear vision and teachers work very hard as a team to achieve agreed objectives. The departmental development plan has a very clear focus. There is excellent evaluation of the work of the department. There is very effective monitoring of teaching, learning, achievement and standards. The department has excellent exchange links with France, Spain and Germany, which motivate pupils and help to raise standards. The French, German and Spanish assistants are very effectively deployed both in the classroom and with small groups and have a very positive impact on the development of listening and speaking, as well as cultural awareness.
72. Improvement since the last inspection is very good, since the very high standards of the last report have been maintained and areas for development have been addressed.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE examinations are well above average.
- Pupils achieve very well in Years 10 and 11 because teaching and learning are very good.
- Leadership is very good, ensuring a high commitment to the continued improvement of pupils' standards.

- Pupils' capacity to use ICT in the subject is restricted because of limited availability of computers.
- The organisation of setting provides very well for pupils of all capabilities.

Commentary

73. Pupils enter the school with standards that are above average. By Year 9, standards are above the national expectations for pupils of this age. This is in keeping with the end of Year 9 national assessments, where results were well above average in 2004. This represents good achievement for all pupils by the end of Year 9. They are numerate, with good spatial awareness and a firm understanding of how to manage data and graphs.
74. Pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is very good. GCSE examination results in 2004 were well above average, with 70 per cent of pupils attaining grades A* to C. Only two pupils were ungraded. The current work in Years 10 and 11 reflects this performance. It is of a consistently high standard, so that the pupils are confident mathematicians by the time they leave the school. For example, their understanding of different ways of using graphs to represent different ranges of data is very good in Year 11. In 2004, the boys attained better results than girls at GCSE. However, in the work seen during the course of the inspection, no significant differences were observed between the performance of boys and girls. Standards for pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are in line with their peers in all year groups. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
75. Standards are very good because the quality of teaching and learning is very good; some is excellent. Clear explanation of the learning objectives for the lesson is shared with the pupils, so that they know exactly what they can expect and what is expected from them. Assessment is very good, so that the teachers know what the pupils need to learn next and how best to help them do it. Because of this and the teachers' high expectations, the pupils respond very well, demonstrating a very good capacity to work and learn productively, both alone and in small groups. They show strong respect for each other's views, support each other very well and have a responsible approach to the mathematics learning community of which they are a part. There are very occasional lapses in Years 7 to 9, where the assessment does not quite identify accurately what the pupils need to do next. Even so, by the end of these lessons, the pupils have made appropriate progress with their learning. The intermittent absence of one member of staff is causing difficulties with the teaching provision for six of the 47 teaching sets.
76. The department is very well led. The leadership of both teaching and the curriculum ensures high aspirations for their pupils by all staff. Very good schemes of work underpin the planning and play a strong role in helping teachers maintain continuity of learning for the pupils, so that the 'next steps' are appropriate. The subject has planned access to ICT resources for supporting pupils' mathematical development which it uses very well, but there is not yet enough access to ICT for it to provide the full range of benefit to the pupils' learning. The setting structure provides very well for pupils of all capabilities, and, in particular, the small sets for pupils with special educational needs contribute strongly to the good progress and achievement they make. Masterclasses and the policy of entering pupils into national mathematics competitions enrich the curriculum. Gifted pupils take GCSE statistics, in which they attain highly.

77. The management of the department is good. The performance data for the pupils is very well monitored to check they are making the progress they should and to set their next targets. There is good monitoring of teaching and learning, but it is not yet sufficiently rigorous for the department to be able to identify all the subtle changes it will need to take to bring about improvement at this level. Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection and the department has the capacity to improve still further.

Mathematics across the curriculum

78. The school has a very clear numeracy policy, which supports the promotion of pupils' numerical and mathematical capability, both within the subject and through links to other curriculum areas. As a result, pupils develop very good skills of numeracy across the curriculum and are able to draw on and reinforce their numerical skills and other aspects of mathematics to support learning in all the other subjects when they need to. For example, in design and technology, Year 7 pupils were able to draw on their knowledge of angle and line bisection techniques when designing and constructing a safe container for an egg. In history, pupils use their statistical skills regularly to analyse data, and in physics, their strong numerical capability contributes positively to the high GCSE grades achieved.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in tests and examinations are well above the national average.
- Teaching is very good overall.
- Pupils achieve well.
- Monitoring does not identify and address the development needs of teachers enough.
- The vision for the future is very strong and is expressed very clearly in the science college development plan.

Commentary

79. Standards in the Year 9 tests in 2003 were well above national averages. Attainment levels continued to rise in line with national trends. In 2004, results were slightly lower than in 2003, but are still well above the national average. There was no significant difference between the results of boys and girls. In 2004, standards in the GCSE double-award examinations were significantly above national averages and higher than in 2003. The percentage of pupils gaining grades A* and A was very high. Although boys' attainment remained lower than that of girls, their results improved considerably.

80. From work seen during the inspection, standards in Year 9 are above national expectations. Pupils have a good awareness of scientific ideas and use technical vocabulary well. Attainment on entry to the school is slightly above the national average and most pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good progress in their knowledge and understanding. Attainment levels are not as high overall as in last year's tests because a few boys and girls fail to concentrate enough in lessons and make less progress than might be expected. Although teachers work hard to address this weakness, the pace of learning is reduced in some lessons. Overall, achievement is good in Years 7 to 9.

81. By the end of Year 11, standards are well above national expectations. Most pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of scientific processes and carry out investigations

effectively, making very good use of ICT. Overall, the achievement of both boys and girls is good because pupils concentrate well and make effective progress in linking more complex ideas with previous learning. The achievement of higher attainers in Years 10 and 11 is often very good, because they respond very well to teachers' challenging expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school because of the help and encouragement they receive. The work of teaching assistants is effective and well managed.

82. Pupils' attitudes are very good. The majority work very hard and with determination. They are keen to learn and show considerable interest. Most pupils are confident and articulate and willingly join in activities in lessons.
83. Teaching is very good overall, but rather better in Years 10 and 11 because teachers respond more effectively to pupils' learning needs and have a clearer awareness of course requirements. Pupils' progress is generally assessed very effectively, but in Years 7 to 9, improvement targets are not linked sufficiently to National Curriculum levels and pupils are sometimes uncertain about precisely what they need to do to improve. As a result, pupils' learning is very good in Years 10 and 11 and good in Years 7 to 9. Questioning has improved since the last inspection, but limited opportunities are provided at the beginning and end of lessons for pupils to extend their understanding sufficiently. Less-experienced teachers need more specific guidance on structuring the work better in order to improve pupils' concentration and learning.
84. Curriculum provision is very good. Well-designed schemes of work have been introduced into Years 7 to 9 and a wide range of examination courses is available in Year 10. The GCSE applied science course is popular with pupils and the additional challenge provided by the triple science course is helping higher attaining pupils achieve very well. The substantial funding from specialist science college status has improved the quality of the accommodation and resources considerably and has provided state-of-the-art ICT facilities.
85. Leadership is very good. The head of department provides a very clear sense of direction that is evident in the ambitious targets in the development plan. Well co-ordinated teamwork among teachers and technicians is helping to raise standards very effectively. Management is good. Comprehensive and well-designed policies and procedures are in place, but weaknesses in monitoring prevent inconsistencies in marking and teaching in Years 7 to 9 from being addressed properly. The department is aware of these issues and has good capacity to make further progress. Since the last inspection improvement has been good. The few weaknesses identified then have been addressed and standards have continued to improve well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- A thoroughly planned ICT programme of study for Key Stage 3 ensures that pupils' experiences are fully relevant.
- Teachers' understanding of their subject is good and this ensures that pupils learn ICT skills effectively.
- Very good specialist accommodation and small class sizes provide pupils with a very good learning environment.

- A very good match of computers to pupils' needs is evident in ICT lessons.
- Teachers do not involve pupils in teaching and learning sufficiently, such as developing learning in pairs and small groups.
- Teachers are making better use of the assessment system and refer effectively to National Curriculum levels when assessing pupils' work.

Commentary

86. Standards in both key stages are good. Overall, standards on entry for the majority are average and broadly in line with national standards for their age. By the end of Year 9, pupils' ICT skills and capabilities are above average. Their achievement is good. They can present their ideas in a variety of ways to a good standard, including spreadsheets, the presentation of data in varying formats and desktop publishing. The most able can discuss the negative and positive impacts of ICT on society. In Year 10 the small group of pupils who take ICT GCSE continue to make good progress and their attainment is good in comparison with course expectations. However, a large majority of Year 10 pupils are completing a key skills certificate starting in 2004/5 and are reliant on opportunities within other subjects to extend all their ICT capabilities. As these opportunities are not consistently provided in all subjects, achievement by this group of pupils is less secure. Nonetheless, overall achievement by pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good. Many pupils produce polished work, can suggest refinements to existing systems and show good levels of discrimination in their use of information sources. In Year 11, not all pupils continue with ICT. However, for the GCSE groups there has been a steady improvement in standards since the last inspection and in 2004 for the small numbers taking the GCSE course 80 per cent achieved A*-C grades and 100 per cent passed with a grade A*-G. This is well above the national average.
87. Teaching and learning are good. High quality schemes of work and lesson plans have recently been introduced. These incorporate a good variety of stimulating activities and teachers are able to use their very sound subject knowledge to ensure that pupils learn ICT skills effectively. Very good use is made of projection, interactive and computer equipment. All lessons are conducted in a purposeful and well-organised way. The response of pupils to this is very positive and all pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. The majority of pupils use computers at home extensively for ICT work. Their behaviour is very good and those spoken to said that ICT was one of their preferred lessons. However, some pupils do not always engage sufficiently with the teaching. This is because there is not adequately detailed lesson development to meet pupils' needs through teaching methods and learning strategies. Assessment is improving yet there is some inconsistency in the use of the assessment system.
88. Opportunities for pupils to develop and consolidate their ICT learning in other subjects are still developing. This means that pupils are not always able to extend their good grounding in ICT skills in a wide enough range of challenging contexts. On some occasions, ICT teachers provide challenging opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively as a whole class, or in groups or pairs. More high quality examples of learning for pupils to use need to be provided. Planning and teaching are not sufficiently developed to meet the needs of the more gifted and talented or to extend the capacity of pupils to work independently to their full potential.
89. The recently appointed head of department has had a very significant impact in ensuring that there is a much higher level of consistency in all aspects of departmental planning, rigour in management and better teaching and learning in the curriculum. The team of very committed and hardworking teachers combine well to ensure that standards of achievement are improving for all pupils. Also, they are contributing to the

raising of standards in all subjects through ICT as a way of increasing the amount of work completed. The school has a very good technical staff of a network manager and network technician who also has very effective curriculum experience. Many good improvements have been made since the last inspection, the present developments are building significantly on those advances.

90. The school has a clear vision of the future contribution of ICT to the curriculum and pupils' learning. It has ensured that resources are a good match to the present curriculum requirements of the subject. The school is fully aware of the need to raise standards of ICT use across all subjects.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum (ICTAC)

Provision for Information and communication technology across the curriculum is **satisfactory**, with **good** features.

91. The school's management responsibilities for ICTAC are established and a senior manager is suitably positioned to develop the whole school programme in all departments. A school ICTAC strategy, although not published, is prioritising actions through major developments, such as the use of the library as an open resource centre, the development of the school as a science specialist centre of excellence and the establishment of ICT as a major subject on a par with other core subjects. Mathematics, English and business studies have been developing ICT, using resources in the library, ICT rooms and class sets of portable laptop computers. Design and technology have computers in small numbers, as do the majority of subjects. All subjects reported that their National Curriculum requirements for ICT are being delivered. However, inspectors have found that several subjects, for example, music, art and design and design and technology are less effective in their curriculum delivery because they do not have appropriate access to an effective range of subject specialist computer equipment.
92. Interactive whiteboards and multimedia projectors are available for a number of subjects, and teachers are developing their use to improve teaching and learning. Teachers require more curricular-focused training to develop their expertise in using this new technology.
93. When pupils have access to appropriate ICT facilities, they readily demonstrate skills and good confidence in practising their basic competency to high levels in most subjects. In subjects and ICT is extensively used and taught, pupils' capabilities to carry out research and work independently are developing well. The majority of pupils use computers at home extensively for school work. This contributes significantly to the development of their overall ICT capability.
94. However, monitoring and evaluating the current use of ICT provision has not been completed across all subjects. Departments are not always aware of how their subject is expected to contribute to the development of pupils' ICT skills. The school is aware that assessment of pupils' capability from different subjects needs improving. This is beginning to have an impact on provision.

HUMANITIES

History

The overall quality of provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the national average in Year 9 and well above in Year 11.
- Pupils achieve very well by the end of Year 11 because teaching and learning are very good.
- Assessment at GCSE level is very good but procedures are less effective in Years 9 to 11.
- The department is very well managed and good use is now made of visits to historical sites.

Commentary

95. The department's assessment shows that standards at the end of Year 9 have been consistently above the national average. A significant number of pupils reach the higher levels in both history skills and in their knowledge and understanding. Standards in the present Year 9 are equally good. Recent results at GCSE at grades A*-C have been well above the national average although the number of pupils reaching the very highest grades was lower in 2004, mainly due to changes in the moderating procedures of the examination board. Standards in Year 11 are clearly well above the national average and they are similarly high in Year 10. For example, many pupils know both the significant and more minor causes of the Six Day War in the Middle East in 1967, and the most able examine critically the causes of poor public health in London in the 19th century. This shows very good attainment.
96. Attainment on entry is average although literacy standards are good. Pupils achieve very well because of the very good, and sometimes excellent, quality of teaching and the very positive response of the majority of pupils. In Year 9, many pupils understand, and can explain in detail, the causes of World War I. Younger pupils have a good understanding of how Norman castles were built. Boys achieve as well as girls, often contributing very well in class. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils because they receive good quality support from teaching assistants, who ensure that tasks and resources match their attainment levels. The work of the highest attaining pupils in Year 9 is very impressive. They understand clearly, and can write critically very well, about industrial and agricultural change. Pupils' attitudes in most lessons are very good. The overall management of pupils is very good because teachers have high expectations of both work and behaviour.
97. There are many strong features in teaching, which is particularly effective in GCSE classes. From Year 7, lesson planning is focused on the need to develop skills in the use of different sources of evidence, for example about Norman castles, and this prepares pupils very well for GCSE work. Pupils have many opportunities for discussion and paired work. Learning is very good because lessons have a good variety of activity, resources are used very effectively and relationships in the

classroom are very good. Displays and homework tasks support learning very well. Teachers use available ICT resources well, for example to provide an exciting and challenging approach to a study of the events of 1914, but access to computers is limited.

98. The assessment of GCSE work is managed very well and pupils are confident about essay and source-based work. Pupils in Year 11 show a real understanding of events in the Middle East and Year 10 are very clear about the problems of polluted water in Victorian England. Marking is very thorough and pupils understand how they can improve. However, in Years 7 to 9, teachers do not consistently assess pupils' work against the national standards or use that information consistently in their lesson planning.
99. This is a very successful department. It is well led and very well managed. Support for new and inexperienced teachers is very good. Teachers work as a team and individual strengths, for example, expertise in the use of ICT, have been identified and used well. Year 10 coursework is based on local studies and younger pupils benefit from visits to Belgium and Normandy. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, particularly in the development of a greater range of visits and in more effective monitoring of teaching and learning.

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above national averages.
- Pupils' achievement is very good as a result of the challenging, engaging teaching.
- Teachers make very good use of ICT in their lessons.
- There is a good programme of fieldwork.

COMMENTARY

100. Geography is a popular option in Years 10 and 11, and the GCSE results show an average of 85 per cent of pupils achieving A*-C grades between 2002 and 2004. In 2004, almost one third of the pupils achieved A* or A grades. The results of the teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 were also well above national averages in 2004. The standards achieved by the current pupils in Years 7 to 11 are well above national averages. By Year 9, most pupils have a much better level of understanding about different weather patterns than pupils of similar ages elsewhere. High standards are equally evident for older pupils in their knowledge about and understanding of how poor quality housing affects ways of life.
101. All pupils achieve very well because the work is challenging for all abilities, a wide variety of learning resources are used to help interest and motivate the pupils, and teaching assistants are used very effectively. Although the teaching includes a wide variety of different learning activities that match pupils' different preferred styles of learning, sometimes pupils record their work in a limited range of formats. Geography provides some very good opportunities for pupils' personal development as, for example, Year 10 pupils learn about the lives of residents in an area of social housing in Leicester and Year 9 pupils consider the personal experiences of those people

caught up in the most recent San Francisco earthquake. Many aspects of the teaching consider the ethical aspects of development and the environment.

102. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, with some outstanding lessons. Where classrooms are equipped with an interactive whiteboard, teachers make excellent use of this equipment. They create presentations that include a wide variety of learning resources including relevant maps, extracts from newspaper articles, ingenious worksheets and stunning photographs. These presentations require the active involvement of pupils in their learning. The teachers have very good subject knowledge and teaching is well organised, with clear, step-by-step explanations that contribute to pupils' very good levels of knowledge and understanding. They make geography interesting to the pupils, including topics such as the ways of measuring weather and the relationship between winds and weather in Italy. Consequently, pupils are motivated to learn. The pace of learning is always brisk, for example, when volunteers come to the computer at the front of the class to add missing words to a text with the help of the rest of the class, against a time limit on the interactive whiteboard and accompanied by the countdown music from a popular TV quiz. The completed texts provide high quality, clear summaries of key geographical ideas.
103. Ongoing assessment as part of lessons is good and geography makes effective use of the whole-school assessment data to monitor the progress of each pupil. Good progress is being made in recording assessments with ICT. However, there are instances when marking does not include comments to advise pupils about how to improve their work.
104. The leadership is very good and management is good. The team of teachers shares the vision of pupils achieving high standards and the provision of a stimulating geographical education. The department has made good improvements since the last inspection and is committed to ongoing improvement, as with the recent introduction of interactive whiteboards, although its departmental improvement plan does not support this process as well as it could. A good programme of fieldwork is part of the curriculum for each year group, together with an optional fieldwork visit to Prague for Year 10 pupils. Pupils' very good ICT skills are not fully used in geography lessons because of limitations in the access to ICT equipment during lessons. Monitoring and evaluation within the department are informal and would benefit from a more systematic approach.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of Year 11 GCSE pupils are well above national averages.
- The teaching is very good in Years 7 to 9 and for the GCSE course.
- Assessment is used very well to help raise pupils' standards.
- Good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

Commentary

105. Pupils' standards at the end of Year 9 are well above the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. In Years 10 and 11, the number of pupils taking the GCSE course has

increased over the last three years. In 2004, all pupils achieved grades A*-C. The standards of the current Year 11 GCSE pupils are well above national averages. The religious education course for all pupils in Years 10 and 11 is part of the school's PSHE programme and most groups are not taught by specialist teachers. The standards achieved by these pupils broadly match the expectations of the agreed syllabus.

106. Pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9 and in the GCSE course is very good. For example, GCSE pupils have completed a great deal of thorough, well-structured work. For those pupils from Years 10 and 11 taking the religious education course as part of PHSE, achievement is satisfactory. Examples of the subject's contribution to pupils' personal development include, for example, Year 9 pupils who studied forgiveness in the context of racism and explored forgiveness in their own experiences, and Year 8 pupils who examined the links between Martin Luther King's beliefs and actions. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils had a very good understanding of what the Hajj means to Muslims, achieving the intended outcome in their learning.
107. The quality of teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 9 and in the GCSE course. No lessons were observed for the religious education element of the PHSE course. Teaching provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about and from religions. Work is challenging and often includes tasks that require pupils to evaluate religious beliefs and statements. Pupils consider a range of challenging ideas, as in Year 8 when pupils consider the arguments for the existence of God used by three major religions. For a Year 7 assessment task, pupils compared and evaluated the visions of Martin Luther King and John Lennon. A variety of learning activities are provided in each lesson and this maintains a brisk pace of learning as well as motivating pupils to learn. These activities include those that encourage pupils to use their imaginations and to reflect on their own experiences as well as those of other people. Lower attaining pupils receive good levels of support with their learning and, for example, many lessons include resources designed specifically for such pupils. Teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, enabling them to provide lucid explanations and answers to pupils' many questions. Good use is made of pupils' literacy skills, as pupils complete tasks that require a variety of types of writing.
108. Marking is thorough and gives pupils clear information about the standards they are achieving and how they can improve those standards. Pupils carry out some good assessments of their own work and are involved in setting their own personal targets for improvement. The marking of GCSE work is very good.
109. Leadership is very good and management is good. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection. There is a good range of monitoring and evaluation within the department. The small team of teachers share a clear vision and commitment to providing a high quality religious education experience for all pupils. Many improvements have been made to the curriculum over the last few years. However, the current provision of religious education for all pupils in Years 10 and 11 as part of PHSE does not meet the requirements of the new agreed syllabus. Very good links have been made with a nearby primary school, and some Year 8 pupils share their games and videos about Christianity with Year 6 pupils. Visitors include a member of a mosque in Southampton and visits include those to mosques and Buddhist monasteries, as well as a residential course for the GCSE group to the Church of England shrine at Walsingham. The use of ICT is built into the curriculum but, because of limitations to the access to ICT equipment during lessons, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their ICT skills fully in religious education.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is well above average at the age of 16.
- Teaching is very good, as it is based on interesting activities and high expectations of pupils.
- Leadership of the department is very good.
- Pupils enjoy their work and are motivated to do well.
- Limited accommodation for food and textiles study makes teaching difficult.
- Restricted access to the ICT suites limits the frequency and range of ICT use in the subject.

Commentary

110. GCSE results in 2004 were well above the national average. A particularly large proportion of pupils achieved A*, A and B grades. Results in food technology were exceptionally high. Textiles results were lower than in other aspects of the subject, but pupils still attained average standards. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well because of the very good individual advice they receive from teachers and well-planned revision lessons. They also benefit from the opportunity to attend coursework clubs after school. By the end of Year 9, many pupils use a range of tools and materials very well to design and complete different products, often to a high quality. They improve their understanding of how to evaluate very well. Pupils' GCSE coursework is well presented and very thoroughly completed. Their practical work is generally of a high standard. Careful research and evaluation underpin all their work. The products they make are usually reliable and robust, and pupils are able to use materials very effectively and precisely.
111. The 2004 teacher assessments of pupils in Year 9 indicate that attainment is above the national average. The scrutiny of pupils' work and observation of lessons indicate that teachers' judgements are accurate. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Lower attainers receive extra help from their teachers, but they rarely benefit from the support of a teaching assistant. Higher attainers are encouraged to plan more challenging activities and teachers are currently reviewing their schemes of work to enhance opportunities for these pupils so that they can achieve the highest possible levels. Pupils who have English as an additional language receive support from teachers and their friends. However, they struggle to achieve their full potential as no extra adult support is provided by the school and their limited language skills restrict their understanding. Practical skills are well developed, as evident in the wide range of pastry dishes and the very well made cam toys produced by Year 8 pupils. Formal drawing skills are taught well and the Year 7 pupils' ability to bisect lines and angles is impressive. Pupils use ICT to carry out research and competently use a two-dimensional design package. However, its use is more limited than is often the case, due to restricted access to the school's ICT suites. Pupils use the design process consistently and are developing good research and evaluation skills. They show a pride in the quality of finish of their practical work.

112. Teaching is very good overall. Pupils benefit because they have conscientious teachers who plan lessons thoroughly and have high expectations. Activities are interesting and pupils enjoy them. Practical skills are taught competently. Teacher-pupil relationships are very good. Teachers are very well organised and use time efficiently. A very thorough understanding of GCSE examination requirements enables teachers to provide individuals with high quality advice, which results in high standards. Marking is variable in quality in the lower school and pupils are not always clear about how well they are doing or how they could improve. A new assessment system has been introduced this year for the younger pupils. It is detailed and useful but, as yet, not all teachers are using it consistently, so its impact is not as great as it could be.
113. The head of department provides very good leadership and manages the department well. She is enthusiastic, willing to try new ideas and has a clear vision for the future development of the subject. She is very well supported by the recently appointed second in the department and together they are moving the department forward very competently. She is a very good role model and her work for the LEA means that she is at the forefront of national developments in design and technology. She has overcome recruitment difficulties and has successfully built a committed and enthusiastic department. She has begun to analyse data carefully and is now using the findings to improve results. She realises the need to ensure that there is more systematic monitoring of teaching and learning in order to ensure greater consistency across the department. She has recently introduced new courses to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. The GCSE catering course is a popular, well-taught option. Pupils who do not take a GCSE examination are now given the chance to undertake units of work that contribute to their ASDAN accreditation at the end of Year 11.
114. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have generally improved and very high standards have been maintained. All the positive features of the last inspection have continued, despite staffing difficulties. Accommodation remains a limiting factor in food technology and textiles. The very high standards in food technology are achieved through the extremely efficient organisation of the teachers involved. They have to teach in a variety of rooms because there is only one food technology room and it is shared by five examination groups. Textiles is also taught in non-specialist rooms, together with child development.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

In addition to detailed inspection of art and design and music, drama was sampled during the inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The leadership of the subject is very good.
- Results at GCSE are consistently high.
- Very good one-to-one teaching supports achievement for pupils of all abilities.
- Facilities for ICT are inadequate

COMMENTARY

115. Pupils enter Year 7 with very varied experiences of art and design and overall standards are average. They use a good and expanding art vocabulary as they become familiar with a broad range of materials and techniques in two and three dimensions. Pupils co-operate well in printmaking and help each other when constructing in card, wire or plaster. By Year 9 standards are above average, representing good achievement over pupils' first three years. At this stage there are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.
116. Art and design is a popular option choice at GCSE, attracting twice as many pupils than is the case nationally. GCSE results in 2004 were well above the national average with four out of five pupils gaining the higher A*-C grades. This continues a rising trend over recent years, building on already high results. By Year 11 standards are well above average, with a significant proportion of outstanding work. Achievement is very good. In three-dimensional and mixed-media work, pupils show a very good understanding of construction techniques and a sensitive appreciation of the qualities of materials. The vigour and variety of work in sketchbooks show very good achievement through Years 10 and 11 from the closely guided exercises of Year 9. Girls' performance is a little better than that of boys.
117. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. In Years 7 to 9, the very knowledgeable staff work well together to teach a broad range of skills. Teachers promote pupils' cultural awareness through reference, in lessons and homework, to a good range of artists' styles that relate directly to the work in progress. Projects and lessons are planned well to build pupils' experience and confidence. Lower attaining pupils and those with special needs particularly benefit from very good one-to-one guidance. Teachers prepare opportunities for the gifted and talented pupils within classes but there are few activities planned specifically for them. In Years 10 and 11, teachers keep a very good balance between guidance and freedom in encouraging pupils to develop their own interests and styles within carefully structured themes. Resources for ICT within the department are inadequate to teach or promote its use as a creative tool, which slows pupils' development of ideas and imagery. Marking and verbal assessments are supportive and give clear directions for further development. Assessments against National Curriculum levels, at the end of Year 9, are generally accurate but there is no collection of work assessed in this way for staff and pupils to use as reference and to aid target setting.

118. Leadership is very good and management is good. The head of department has succeeded in maintaining very high standards over a period of significant staffing changes through a creative approach to team building and timetable management. He leads by example and presents a very good role model for staff and pupils. Teaching within the department is monitored well. Improvement since the last inspection is good. All key factors have been maintained and results at GCSE have risen.

Music

Provision for Music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good teaching and learning result in very high standards of attainment.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their work.
- There is some very good extended curricular work.
- The limited accommodation hinders some practical work.

Commentary

119. On entry to Year 7 pupils have widely varying levels of musical experience, but are mostly at expected levels of attainment in music. The number of pupils reaching expected levels at the end of Year 9 is well above the national average and many pupils attain standards well above expected levels. Pupils have achieved very well by the end of Year 9, being particularly good at evaluating the music they make, and what improvements can be made. Year 7 pupils use notation to play keyboard tunes and improvise confidently, demonstrating secure understanding of musical elements. Year 9 pupils play a variety of instruments with good technical control, performing and composing in a good range of styles. The proportion of Year 11 pupils attaining grades A* -C is well above the national average at GCSE. Pupil numbers for the course are expanding rapidly. Their achievement is also very good. Many become much more effective at composition and at developing a personal style. Year 11 pupils produce a rich variety of coursework well matched to their interests and abilities. They usually give convincing performances across a range of styles, including jazz, classical and contemporary. The most able produce very well-balanced compositions that show a high degree of individuality.
120. Teaching and learning are very good and characterised by a highly individualised approach for pupils who work very independently. Assessment is detailed and accurate and pupils know the level at which they are working and what they need to do to improve. The teachers' very good knowledge of and relationships with individual pupils are well used to encourage and challenge all pupils.
121. Pupils experience a rich diet of music and develop skills to a very high standard, covering the National Curriculum very well, apart from the use of ICT. Very good instrumental teaching and extended curricular provision provides a wealth of enrichment open to all and highly valued opportunities for the school and community to work together. The department's staff work very well together to improve teaching and learning, sharing a clear understanding of departmental policies and a common vision for the future. The head of department provides very good leadership and manages the department very well. The work of all members of staff is closely monitored. However, current accommodation limits the continuity of some practical work as one teaching room is inadequate for this purpose. The department lacks the facility for storing pupils' compositions. Despite this, the overall quality of pupils' work is of a very high standard.
122. Progress since the last inspection has been very good, especially work to address staffing. With improvements to accommodation and resources, the department is well placed to maintain high standards and broaden its provision.

Drama

Drama was not inspected in depth, but three lessons were sampled.

123. Overall provision is **very good**. Pupils achieve well and standards are above average in Year 9 and well above average in Year 11. In 2004, GCSE results improved dramatically and were well above the national average. The achievement seen in lessons was very good, with particular strengths in the use of voice and gesture and the realism of performances. In Years 7 to 9 pupils have good opportunities to develop basic skills of speech, production and movement. In Year 11, pupils have a very secure knowledge and intellectual understanding of the main elements of a drama performance. They can use technical terms confidently. Equally they have very good knowledge and understanding of the application of skills to the production process.
124. Teaching and learning were very good in the lessons observed; the wide range of strategies deployed and the high level of subject expertise were leading to enthusiasm for the subject and to very good learning. The department is being led dynamically by the new head of department and significant improvements have been made to the schemes of work and assessment system. Drama clubs and enrichment activities enhance pupils' experience of the subject, and school productions provide valuable opportunities for a large number of pupils to participate. Very effective links have been made with local and regional theatres, enhancing the overall provision. The school has recently won a local arts hub award for drama, recognising its successful local work. Good progress in provision has been made since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**, with **good** features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 9 pupils have achieved well and their standards are above average.
- Standards are not as high as they could be in Years 10 and 11 and the GCSE results are below the national average.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good and this is having a positive effect on their learning.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent and well attended by pupils.
- Good use is made of the new sports hall provision.
- The assessment of pupils' learning is not sufficiently secure and assessment information is not well analysed and used to inform teaching and learning.
- Physical education is taught in a very inclusive way and stereotypes are successfully challenged through the mixed-sex teaching groups.

Commentary

125. In 2004 the standards reached by Year 9 were above the national average, based on last year's teacher assessments. The results of pupils who chose to take a GCSE in physical education in 2004 were below average and standards in GCSE have been falling for the last three years.
126. Standards of work seen in lessons confirm the above average standards by Year 9. Pupils in Year 7 are achieving well and this is generally maintained through Years 7 to 9. For example, pupils in Year 8 are already performing above standards seen elsewhere in dance. They have a good understanding of choreography and use this to construct short dance pieces and to evaluate each other's work. Standards remain high in Year 9; pupils show good control and co-ordination in games skills and can apply these skills in games like basketball, showing a sound understanding of attack and defence. The pace of learning slows a little in Year 9 because pupils do not have

enough opportunity to evaluate their own and others' work. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good and this is having a positive effect on their learning. This was very noticeable in an outdoor and adventurous activities lesson where there was a very high level of co-operation that enabled pupils to solve problems well.

127. Although standards by Year 11 are in line with the national expectation, the good achievement in Years 7 to 9 is not maintained for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. While achievement overall is satisfactory in those years, there are examples of good achievement. For instance, standards in the junior sports leader award course are good and pupils take responsibility well to plan games, to coach and to say how games can be improved. Standards are not as high as they could be in the general physical education course, as there is not enough focus on giving pupils these experiences and responsibilities. There is insufficient analysis by the department of the GCSE results to state securely why standards are falling and not as high as they have been in the past. No practical GCSE lessons were timetabled during the period of the inspection so it was not possible to judge present practical work. In theory lessons, pupils showed secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. Through the excellent provision for extra-curricular activities, pupils are given the opportunity to extend what they have learned in lessons and to reach high standards. Many pupils represent their school, county and country in sport, particularly in badminton and trampolining. The bilingual pupils are making good progress. They are well supported by communicators, each other and fellow pupils and teachers who have learned to sign. Other pupils with special needs are well integrated into lessons and extra-curricular activities and make similar progress to their peers.
128. Teaching and learning are good. There are many strengths in the teaching of physical education. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, lessons are well organised and pupils respond well, maintaining good levels of physical activity. There is a high level of co-operation between pupils, particularly between boys and girls. In most lessons teachers encourage pupils to reflect on what they have learned, but where teaching is good, pupils have a clear understanding of what they should achieve by the end of the lesson and the teacher helps them evaluate their learning in a structured way. This was shown well in a Year 8 dance and a Year 9 basketball lesson. However, the teaching plans do not address the National Curriculum requirements carefully enough. As a consequence, pupils are not given enough opportunity to evaluate performance and older pupils are not given enough opportunity to plan tactics, coach and officiate. However, some noticeable exceptions are evident. First, the pupils who undertake the junior sports leaders award. Second, the outstanding extra-curricular programme where some pupils take a high level of responsibility for leading and coaching their peers. Formal assessment procedures have recently been put in place but they are not yet embedded sufficiently to be a useful teaching tool.
129. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The head of department is on extended sick leave and the department, under the good leadership of the second in department, has pulled together very well to minimise disruption to the pupils and to continue a good level of provision. The curriculum is very good and the department's aim to provide something for every pupil is well met. There are a good range of accredited courses in Years 10 and 11 that will be even wider with the new BTEC sports studies course that is now being offered to pupils. The improvement plan shows that the department knows which areas need improving, although there is not a sufficient emphasis on raising standards. It also recognises the need to study dance to a higher level, and is addressing this. Self-evaluation is thorough, but reflective rather than evaluative, as there is insufficient data on pupils' progress to guide teaching and

learning in the subject. Since the last inspection, satisfactory progress has been made. The accommodation has improved significantly with the new sports hall that provides international standard badminton courts. However, the gymnasium is in need of some refurbishment. The curriculum is now well covered and all pupils have equal access to it. Standards are higher by Year 9 but are lower than they were in GCSE and by Year 11. There is still a need for more formalised monitoring of teaching and learning.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Courses in business studies and child development were sampled.

Business studies

130. The provision for the subject is **very good**. This is a popular subject and the department has maintained very high standards because of the very good quality of teaching, very high expectations of pupils and very good subject leadership. Pupils achieved some of the best results in the country last year and standards in the current Year 11 are similarly high. The department is well equipped and promotes very high standards in the use of ICT. In the Year 10 lesson observed, pupils showed a very good understanding of the advantages of being a sole trader and they were able to produce high quality business correspondence because of the expert guidance provided by their teacher. The attitudes of the pupils were very good, displaying strong commitment to, and enjoyment of, the subject. The very good accommodation and resources are expertly used to enhance pupils' achievements.

Child development

131. **Very good** provision is made for the subject. The 2004 GCSE results for child development were well above the national average. A particularly large proportion of the pupils achieved A*, A and B grades. Pupils of all abilities achieve well as a result of very effective individual support from the teacher. She works hard to establish very good relationships with the pupils. This results in well-motivated pupils who enjoy their lessons and visits to nurseries and pre-schools. The teacher is very well organised. Despite having to work in a variety of different rooms, some of which lack the necessary resources, she plans interesting activities. The teacher's subject knowledge is very secure and she provides detailed guidance that ensures pupils achieve high marks for their coursework. Planning of the course is very good, with a skilful balance between practical activities and important theory. Standards are further improved by good work experience placements.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision is very good. The programme is comprehensive, with citizenship forming a central core in PSHE.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ethos of the school reflects the provision for PSHE and citizenship very well.
- Leadership is very good, reflecting a passion for the well-managed subject.

- Teaching and learning are good, engaging pupils well.
- Pupils demonstrate very good discussion on a range of issues. Written work is generally good.
- Current provision for older pupils does not extend to a short-course GCSE.

Commentary

132. Standards are well above average overall. They are above average in Year 9 and well above average in Year 11. Many older pupils are very mature in their views and their presentation of complex issues, including a detailed understanding of aspects of the youth justice system. By Year 9, pupils have developed a good understanding of the impact of crime on society. Many use ICT well for eye-catching and informative posters. By Year 11 their understanding of the importance of long-term relationships is very good. The majority have achieved very well in Years 10 and 11. Some teachers are very skilled at encouraging debates and reflection, with the result that oral skills and understanding, in particular, are very good. Pair and group work in Year 7 was used very successfully to improve pupils' understanding of Internet safety. Good links are made into work-related learning across Year 9 and Year 10, progressively ensuring pupils understand many different issues relating to work experience. Pupils benefit from a range of outside providers such as the Youth Service, Connexions and a range of speakers from different agencies. The peer-mentoring programme supports personal development and encourages responsibility for other pupils as members of the school community and in making the school environment a safer, healthy place.
133. Teaching and learning are good overall, with very good aspects, especially in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are normally very well planned, with good starters and good group activities. Expectations of pupils are high and most teachers encourage pupils to develop their own ideas and share them with others. Democratic processes are practised in Year 8, for example, when pupils have to decide who would lead them if they were on a desert island, as well as learning different terms for forms of government. Pace and challenge are very good in most lessons. Occasionally, less-confident teachers lack some subject knowledge in delivering the curriculum. Assessment is good overall, with improving provision for self-assessment. Opportunities for learning are varied, with good information sheets from a wide range of sources used very well. Most pupils enjoy lessons, contributing ideas and well-founded opinions. The provision of ICT is usually good, but needs to be planned more effectively to avoid over-reliance during some lessons.
134. Leadership is very good and management is good. The leader is passionate about improving provision and is receiving good support from senior leaders. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is insufficiently sharp. Both citizenship and PSHE are very well established, with an increasingly high profile. The teaching programme is well planned and includes sex and relationships education, drug abuse education and careers education and guidance across each key stage. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum includes religious education lessons for all pupils; however, none could be observed during the inspection. Further developments are planned, including training for staff, to improve standards. Careful consideration needs to be given to the introduction of a GCSE short course.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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