

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WESTFIELD SCHOOL**

Mosborough, Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique Reference Number: 107135

Headteacher: Mr R W Porter

Lead inspector: Dr D A W Biltcliffe

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

Inspection number: 268514

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:	1,290
School address:	Westfield Crescent Mosborough Sheffield
Postcode:	S20 5AQ
Telephone number:	(0114) 248 5221
Fax number:	(0114) 247 0779
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Briggs
Date of previous inspection:	19 <sup>th</sup> - 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This comprehensive school is larger than average and educates some 677 boys and 613 girls aged 11-16. On the basis of the take-up of free school meals, pupils' social and economic background is broadly average. Their overall attainment on entry at 11 is a little below average.

Ninety-five per cent of pupils are white; the remaining small minority come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds.

The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (SEN) is above the national average, whereas the proportion with official SEN statements is slightly below it. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English.

In 2003-2004, nearly one in ten pupils joined or left the school other than at the usual time at the beginning or end of the school year.

The school gained a School Achievement Award in 2002 from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). It gained the Sportsmark award in 2001 and 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1025	Dr D A W Biltcliffe	Lead inspector	
9034	Ms J W Biltcliffe	Lay inspector	
13452	Mr H Meggitt	Lay inspector	
11479	Mr J A Paine	Team inspector	English Drama Media studies
30576	Mr P Bannon	Team inspector	Mathematics
4607	Dr D E Ward	Team inspector	Science
11190	Dr W M Burke	Team inspector	Art Design and technology
17923	Mr M Shaw	Team inspector	Citizenship
8873	Ms C Evers	Team inspector	Geography History
2048	Mr R D Masterton	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
4829	Mr I H C Waters	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
4697	Mr R Black	Team inspector	Music
13217	Mr M D Butterworth	Team inspector	Physical education Special educational needs
10448	Mr M F Elson	Team inspector	Religious education
1819	Mr R H Crowther	Team inspector	Business education

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI  
1 - 4 Portland Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This above-average size comprehensive school of some 1290 boys and girls on the south-east of Sheffield was inspected on 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> February 2005 by an inspection team led by Dr D A W Biltcliffe.

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Westfield provides an education that has many satisfactory and some good features. It does, however, have several serious weaknesses. Overall, it is **an insufficiently effective school**.

Academic attainment is below average. Overall achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils achieve well throughout design and technology, history and physical education (PE). They do not achieve well enough throughout English, mathematics and music. Attendance is satisfactory, but punctuality is unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are not good enough. Too much teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 7-9, whereas they are good in Years 10 and 11. The range of courses is good. Pupils' care and welfare are satisfactory. Leadership is satisfactory. Owing to serious weaknesses in achievement, teaching, attitudes and behaviour, however, management is unsatisfactory and the school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

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

- Provision is good in design and technology, history, modern foreign languages, PE and business education.
- Provision is unsatisfactory in English, mathematics, art, music and religious education (RE).
- Pupils' achievement was good (or better) in just over half the lessons seen in Years 10-11.
- Achievement was unsatisfactory (or worse) in nearly one in every four lessons in Years 7-9.
- Overall, teaching is good in Years 10-11, but unsatisfactory in Years 7-9.
- The best learning, attitudes and achievement were seen in Year 10. The worst were in Year 9.
- Serious decline in the buildings erodes pride in school life.
- Statutory requirements are not met for RE in Year 11 or for collective worship.
- School management is unsatisfactory owing to the range of weaknesses above.

Since its last inspection, the school has made unsatisfactory progress overall. The 2004 GCSE results were a little higher than those of 1998, but the school's test and examination results have not kept pace with the rise nationally. Many pupils achieve satisfactorily, but teaching, achievement and attitudes to learning are not good enough in Years 7-9. Two of the three core subjects (English and mathematics) are unsatisfactory. Last year, attendance noticeably improved, but punctuality did not. Pupils' behaviour is not as good as it was at the last inspection.

The school has made variable progress on improving the main weaknesses identified in 1998. There are now enough books and equipment. Attendance is up. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is better (though more pupils need help). Although the school is to be rebuilt in 2006, present deficiencies in accommodation undermine school life. Literacy, art and music remain unsatisfactory. Not enough progress has been made on meeting collective worship requirements. The overall rate of progress has therefore been unsatisfactory.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	E	E	E	D

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.  
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

**Pupils' overall achievement is unsatisfactory.** In Years 10-11, achievement is satisfactory overall, and was good in just over half the lessons seen. The amount of unsatisfactory achievement

in Years 7-9, however, pulls down the overall picture to “unsatisfactory”. The subjects that head the list of *Strengths and Weaknesses* (above) show what can be achieved in this school. All three core subjects, however, need to be better. Pupils’ GCSE performance in 2004 was well below average and showed some underachievement, especially amongst higher-ability pupils.

**Pupils’ personal qualities are developed unsatisfactorily.** Pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory overall. Although they were good in two-thirds of the lessons in Years 10-11, they were unsatisfactory (and occasionally poor) in a quarter of the lessons in Years 7-9. Cultural and moral development are satisfactory, whereas pupils’ spiritual and social growth are unsatisfactory. Pastoral care and guidance are generally good. Relationships are satisfactory. Punctuality is unsatisfactory. Last year’s improvement in attendance is a success story.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of pupils’ education is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall.** It is good in Years 10-11, but unsatisfactory in Years 7-9. In nearly one in five lessons, teaching was very good. Three teachers were outstanding. Overall, teaching was good in Years 7-11 in design and technology, history, PE and RE, but unsatisfactory in mathematics. Good teaching is well organised and interesting. Inadequate class control typifies unsatisfactory teaching. The school’s learning is broadly satisfactory, not quite as good as its teaching; its ethos needs to be better. The curriculum is generally well balanced and provides suitable options in Years 10-11. There is no RE in Year 11. Homework is intermittent. The induction arrangements for new pupils are very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school’s **leadership and management are unsatisfactory.** Governors are supportive, but not sufficiently proactive or well informed. Senior management is hard-working, thoughtful and focused on the school’s best interests, but has not succeeded in keeping all the school’s key work at a satisfactory level. Middle management ranges from very good to unsatisfactory and is satisfactory overall. Most routines run smoothly.

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

Those parents whose views are known believe that the school works hard to get pupils to do their best. Three-quarters think teaching is good. A significant minority are unhappy with homework. Half think behaviour is not good enough. Most pupils regard behaviour as unacceptable and a significant minority have concerns about the way the school runs. They do, however, think that academic work and pastoral care are good. Inspectors judge that behaviour, homework and academic achievement are matters of concern. Personal care is good.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise the overall level of achievement (and especially that of higher ability pupils);
- improve the unacceptable attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils;
- remove the weaknesses in teaching identified in the main body of the report;
- improve pupils’ punctuality for school and lessons to an acceptable level;
- bring provision in English, mathematics, art and music up to at least a satisfactory level;
- produce an acceptable learning and physical environment up to the buildings’ closure;
- ensure that management focuses relentlessly on the above issues;

**and, to meet statutory requirements, provide:**

- a daily act of collective worship for all pupils; and
- religious education for Year 11 pupils.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

The proportion of pupils reaching nationally expected levels of attainment is, overall, below average by the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. In 2004, pupils' level of attainment was below average in the Year 9 national tests and well below average in GCSE examinations. These results were a fairly satisfactory achievement, but should have been a little higher. Pupils' achievement at the time of the inspection varied very widely: it was unsatisfactory in Years 7-9, satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, but unsatisfactory overall. The 2004 results in GCSE were higher than those at the time of the last inspection.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school in design and technology, history and PE.
- They achieve unsatisfactorily in Years 7-11 in English, mathematics and music.
- Overall, academic achievement is not high enough.
- Unlike the national picture, boys here have done as well as girls at GCSE in the last two years.
- Standards in the core subjects are not high enough.
- Pupils do better in GCSE in French, and worse in English and science, than in most other subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	32.0 (28.7)	N/a (33.4)
mathematics	33.4 (32.7)	35.5 (35.4)
science	32.3 (32.1)	33.1 (33.6)

*There were 230 (276) pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for 2003.*

#### Commentary

1. Pupils' overall standard on entry in Year 7 is a little below average in most academic years. By the end of Year 9, the overall standard reached in the 2004 national tests was also below average. In earlier years, it was often well below average. In 2004, the proportions of pupils who reached either Level 5 or the higher Level 6 in these Year 9 tests were below average. The overall picture was, however, the best the school has had – much higher than usual in English and a little higher in mathematics, although a slight drop on 2003 in science. Over the last few years, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 6 has been around three-fifths of what is typical nationally.

2. When these (unvalidated) 2004 Year 9 results are compared with those in schools which have a similar economic background (as measured by the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals), available evidence indicates that pupils in this school performed in line with the group average. These results represent a satisfactory achievement and rate of progress from the standards pupils had on joining the school. Over the 1999-2003 period [the only national information available at the time of the inspection], the school's results did not keep pace with the rise in results nationally. In English, girls tend to be ahead of boys by the end of Year 9, but there was a downward trend in results for both sexes over the 2001-2003 period. Girls are also very slightly ahead of boys in mathematics and science.

3. By the end of Year 9, the overall level of current attainment is below average# overall and in most subjects. It is, however, average in design and technology, history, PE and religious education (RE). In no subject is it above average. It is well below average in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress and achievement in their studies over Years 7-9 are unsatisfactory overall. They make good progress and achieve well in design and technology, history and PE. Achievement is unsatisfactory, however, in English, mathematics, art and music.

**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	35 (29)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	84 (80)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (90)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil [best eight subjects]	233 / 27.5 (26.7)	282 / 34.9 (34.7)

*There were 264 (240) pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. The figures in round brackets are for 2003. The method of calculating average point scores changed between 2003 and 2004: both methods are therefore included in the table above.*

4. In the GCSE examinations of 2004, pupils' overall attainment was well below the national average. Since the last inspection in 1998, GCSE results have risen a little. For example, 29 per cent of pupils gained five or more grades A\*-C in 1998 (the same as in 2003), but this rose to 35 per cent in 2004. This latter figure is, however, lower than the results' peak of 2001 at 42 per cent and the rise in results has been at a slower rate than the rise nationally. These results indicate some slippage in achievement.

5. In the core subjects, pupils' attainment of a grade in the range A\*-C in GCSE in 2004 was well below average in English; in this subject, boys underperformed. Attainment was higher in mathematics and science, but still below average: in these two subjects, boys and girls did as well as each other. The proportion of pupils gaining at least grade C in all of English, mathematics and science (26 per cent) was two-thirds of the national average figure.

6. When pupils' performances in all the subjects they take in GCSE are compared with one another, pupils tended to do better in the last two years in French than in most of their other subjects. They have tended to do worse in two of the three core subjects, English and science – a matter of concern. The underachievement here has resulted, at least in part, from major staffing problems.

7. The proportion of the top A\* grades obtained was low in 2004, at about one third of the national average. In the core subjects, for example, only one girl gained such a grade in mathematics, one boy and one girl did so in English and three pupils did so in science. These proportions are lower than they should be. Higher-ability pupils underachieved. In contrast, around nine out of every ten pupils who gained Level 5+ in the 2002 Year 9 national tests in all the three core subjects went on to gain at least five grades A\*-C in GCSE in 2004 – a good result.

8. When the school's results at GCSE are compared with those in schools with a similar "free school meals" background, this school's performance was worse than most others in the group in 2004. By the same measure, pupils' overall performance in 2004 was well below the group average in English. It was, however, broadly in line with others in mathematics and science.

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# "Average" in relation to classwork means that the standard of work is typical of what pupils of the same age produce nationally.

9. During the last two years, unusually, boys and girls have gained a similar proportion of the higher grades A\*-C – a big improvement on the position in 2002 when boys gained only half the higher grades that girls did. Indeed, in 2004, a slightly higher proportion of boys than girls (36 per cent compared with 33 per cent) gained five or more A\*-C grades.

10. Taking into account the standard they reached in the national tests two years earlier and the level of attainment they had on entry in Year 7, many pupils made satisfactory progress in their studies up to the end of Year 11 in 2004. The 2004 GCSE results do, however, reveal underachievement. A smaller proportion (60 per cent) than would be expected of average and above average pupils went on to gain five GCSE grades A\*-C. The limited evidence available suggests that, at least in some cases, inadequate command of English and insufficient progress in Years 7 - 9 limited pupils' performance. In around two-thirds of the cases of underachievement, the school has reasonable explanations. The school reached most of the GCSE targets set for it in the 2004 examinations. Overall attainment has been held back, too, by considerable difficulties in recruiting and retaining teachers of suitable quality.

11. Currently, by the end of Year 11, the proportion of pupils reaching nationally expected standards is below average overall and in most subjects. The proportion is, however, average in art, citizenship, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), modern foreign languages, PE, business education and drama. Nowhere is it above average. It is well below average in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs (when they have in-class help) make sound progress, but there is not enough support for them overall. The most able generally make insufficient progress, although they do well throughout the school in design and technology, modern foreign languages and PE. Pupils from minority ethnic groups tend to achieve as well as other pupils.

12. Pupils' overall level of achievement was unsatisfactory during the inspection. In over two-fifths of the lessons observed, pupils achieved well – and very well indeed in one in every nine lessons. Their achievement was satisfactory in almost a further two-fifths of lessons. Achievement was, however, not as good as it should have been (and sometimes poor) in around one in every six lessons.

13. The picture above does not, however, tell the full story. Achievement was satisfactory overall in Years 10-11 and in more than half the lessons there it was good. It was not as good as it should have been in just one in ten lessons – all in Year 11. Pupils achieved at least satisfactorily in all the Year 10 lessons inspected, because all the teaching reached at least a basic, satisfactory standard.

14. It was a different picture in Years 7-9. Here, achievement was unsatisfactory overall. Pupils achieved well in only a third of the lessons seen. Their achievement was unsatisfactory in nearly one in every four lessons. Attitudes to work and basic behavioural standards were not good enough. Pupils usually did well where teachers controlled classes adequately, were well organised and gave stimulating, pacy lessons. Pupils did not make the progress they should when teachers put up with noisy behaviour, superficial work and a slow pace.

15. Across the school, pupils' overall standard of literacy is below average. Most pupils read well enough to tackle the texts they face in school. Some are fast, accurate, analytical readers, but fewer than usual understand and extract quickly the essential messages they read. Most pupils plan their written work satisfactorily, but rarely draft and reshape their first ideas. Note-taking is infrequently practised (with honourable exceptions in English and RE). Presentation, handwriting, spelling and punctuation are below average. This is partly because there is insufficient emphasis on good standards and corrections.

16. Speaking is below average. Some pupils are highly articulate, very clear and confident. Many, however, have limited confidence and vocabulary. The quality, range and frequency of group discussion are fairly restricted in most subjects. Specialist vocabulary is generally well used in English and in design and technology, but the overall picture on this aspect is below average. Pupils listen carefully when they respect their teacher. In other cases, listening tends to fall away rapidly. In some classes, there is too much noise for pupils to be able to listen meaningfully.

17. Numeracy is below average overall. Most pupils handle numbers satisfactorily for the arithmetic tasks they have to perform: their overall facility and capability in doing so, however, varies widely. Attainment in ICT is average by the end of Year 11. Most pupils are capable of using successfully a basic range of ICT applications.

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

Attendance is satisfactory, but punctuality for school and lessons is unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour, especially in Years 7-9, and the school's provision for pupils' personal development, are unsatisfactory. A significant proportion of pupils lack pride in their school and show insufficient commitment to achieving success. Attitudes, values and personal development have deteriorated since the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attendance has improved significantly in the last year and is now about average – a success story.
- Too many pupils arrive late for school and do not get to lessons on time.
- Pupils' attitudes, aspirations and behaviour are not good enough. The pupils agree.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is insufficiently planned and is unsatisfactory.

#### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year, 2003-2004 (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.1	School data	1.4
National data	6.9	National data	1.1

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

### **Commentary**

18. Pupils' attendance is broadly satisfactory, although fractionally below the national mean. It is much better than it was at the last inspection and in the intervening years (when it always failed to reach the basic benchmark of 90 per cent). In the 2003-2004 academic year, it was 91.5 per cent – around three per cent better than in 1998. This improvement in attendance has been maintained so far in the current academic year: authorised absence has continued to fall, but unauthorised absence has risen. The weakest level of attendance since September 2004 is in Year 11 at 88.5 per cent.

19. Punctuality for school is unsatisfactory. Around 70 pupils are late for school on a typical day. During the inspection, about half the lateness through the main gate was due to pupils being brought late to school in private cars. Once in school, punctuality for lessons is unsatisfactory overall. Although most pupils go steadily to lessons and, despite this extended site, are fairly punctual, a significant minority dawdle between lessons, make little effort and waste much of their own time and that of staff.

20. Since the last inspection (but particularly in the last academic year), the school has worked hard and successfully – with strong local authority support and guidance – to secure good attendance. It has used a wide variety of measures, such as home telephone calls on the first day of unexplained absence, twice-daily checks on registers and the coordinating work of its own, internal attendance officer. Spot-checks suggest that truancy is only a minor problem for the school.

21. The school has given high priority in recent years to the provision of "Student Services". The school's expectations of pupils are clearly and simply stated and widely displayed. The school has strengthened the pastoral system by appointing a pastoral manager and assistant year heads. The school has a "duty manager" each day and the "on-call" system offers a structure of direct support to

teachers facing classroom or other difficulties. Contact with a senior teacher allows the removal of misbehaving pupils from class. The school records and monitors such incidents carefully. The "Student Services Base" operates as a valuable internal means for the most vulnerable pupils not only to be contained within the school, but also to continue learning.

22. The school sets high expectations for pupils' conduct and works to achieve them. In most lessons and usually around the school, most pupils show appropriate attitudes and behaviour. During the inspection, attitudes and behaviour were good or better in half the lessons observed in Years 7-9 and in two thirds of lessons in Years 10-11. In these lessons, teachers were successful in engaging pupils' attention and interest, and so success in learning and achievement followed.

23. In a significant minority of lessons, however, pupils show unacceptable attitudes and behaviour. In a quarter of the lessons seen in Years 7-9 and in one tenth of those in Years 10-11, negative attitudes and misbehaviour by pupils seriously impeded learning. In such lessons, pupils often arrive late, are inattentive to teachers and do little work. When teachers fail to engage pupils' interest or do not exercise sufficient control, neither the school's code of expectations nor the "on-call" system compensates for lack of motivation and endeavour. That so many care so little about their own or other pupils' learning is a major barrier to higher achievement for all pupils.

24. This finding receives support from the pupils themselves who, in response to their pre-inspection questionnaire and in discussions with inspectors, indicated a high level of concern about misbehaviour in the school. Of even more concern to pupils were bullying and other forms of harassment. They expressed appreciation for the services of the peer mentors. The school has taken the positive step of consulting a sample of pupils about bullying and reached some useful findings, but has not, surprisingly, made them available to the school council. The perception of many pupils was that the amount of bullying and misbehaviour was an unacceptable feature of the school.

25. The number of pupils permanently excluded in the last academic year (three) was typical of the pattern nationally. The number of fixed-term exclusions, although still very high, is beginning to decline. In discussion, some pupils expressed the view that the frequent use of fixed-term exclusions was ineffective.

26. Provision for pupils' personal development is unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory level of pupils' respect for the feelings of others and their lack of acceptance of the responsibilities of living together in a community are evident around the school – as, for example, in the high amount of litter. The poor condition of the toilets shows that the school does not sustain a minimum acceptable standard in an important part of its provision.

27. Pupils attend assembly once a week but, neither then nor at other times, do they have the benefit of an act of collective worship. The school has regressed on meeting statutory requirements by removing RE from the curriculum for pupils in Year 11. This requires early reinstatement. Provision for the personal dimension of pupils' lives has deteriorated since the last inspection and is unsatisfactory overall. Cultural provision is satisfactory. Without a school policy, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' personal development are, however, inadequately coordinated. This weakness results in unhelpful variability and missed opportunities both within subjects and across the school as a whole.

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1229	266	3
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	5	7	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	7	5	0
Black or Black British – African	1	1	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5	4	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	18	8	0

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL****Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in Years 10-11, but is unsatisfactory overall in Years 7-9. The quality of teaching has declined a little since the last inspection. Teaching is at least satisfactory in almost nine out of every ten lessons. Most pupils learn well here when teaching is stimulating and in a well-disciplined environment. In a significant minority of classes, there is too much noise and inattention for pupils to learn well enough. The assessment of pupils' work and progress is satisfactory and improving.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Two-thirds of the teaching in Years 10 and 11 was good (or better).
- In Year 10, all the teaching seen was at least satisfactory; one in five lessons was very good.
- Mathematics teaching is unsatisfactory overall throughout the school.
- Some outstanding teaching was seen in mathematics, however, and within design and technology.
- In Years 7-9, one in every five lessons was unsatisfactorily taught.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 162 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5 (3%)	22 (14%)	62 (38%)	53 (33%)	15 (9%)	4 (3%)	1(0.6%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; the figures in brackets show percentages. The percentages do not total 100 owing to "rounding".*

### Commentary

28. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in Years 7-9, good in Years 10-11 and broadly satisfactory overall. Teaching was good (or better) in just over half the lessons seen. The overall quality of teaching has, however, declined a little since the last inspection. In 1998, 92 per cent of the teaching was at least satisfactory. That figure has now fallen to 88 per cent. Around 60 per cent of teaching was good (or better) at the last inspection, but it is now a little lower at 55 per cent. The proportion of very good (or better) teaching has remained the same at 17-18 per cent.

29. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but needs to be better. Teachers have to work hard in this school to achieve and sustain a good approach to learning amongst pupils. This is partly because, as noted in other parts of the report, the buildings and grounds exhibit serious, widespread neglect. This discouraging atmosphere and the unacceptable behaviour of a minority of pupils undermine good attitudes to learning and care. Additionally, some teaching is not up to the basic standard required and seriously impedes the school's attempt to raise standards.

30. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection covered the full spectrum from outstandingly good to very poor. The half of lessons that are (at least) good show what can be achieved – solid learning, enjoyment and excitement, pleasant relationships and good achievement. The overall standard is pulled down by a significant minority of weak teaching that lacks class control, pace and purpose. Around two-thirds of this below-standard teaching came from permanent staff (including some middle managers) and one third from temporary appointments. The difficulties that the school has had in recruiting some staff are reflected in the quality of some of the teaching seen.

31. Teachers generally know their subjects well. Many choose interesting topics that, coupled with adequate class control, sustain pupils' motivation. As a result of their expertise, the majority engage pupils well – as in a Year 10 science lesson, where the teacher moved smoothly through the different stages of the lesson and, with an assured style, calmly kept pupils on task. Occasionally, however, specialist explanations become a little overwhelming: ideas are not expressed simply or clearly enough for pupils, leading to discouragement or inattention.

32. Lesson planning is usually clear and detailed. Its strongest features are the specific steps and timing of the different stages of lessons. The weakest aspect is the lack of clarity with which some teachers show what knowledge, understanding and skill they intend pupils to acquire during the 50 minutes. Most lessons proceed according to plan. The starts of lessons are well planned – and successfully carried out where teachers have good class control. Very imaginative adjustments are sometimes made to plans. In geography and history, for example, the starts of lessons can be quite different – calming or stimulating, depending on pupils' arrival at class.

33. The conclusions of lessons are often the weakest part. A minority of these are briskly and tightly structured, drawing substantially on pupils' memories. Others are too dominated by teachers telling pupils what they know, or are rushed. A few lessons finish up to five minutes early and create disturbance. In contrast, a strength in some subjects (such as modern foreign languages) is the consistency of teaching quality and practices throughout the department.

34. The school has put much systematic effort into class management issues – as, for example, through requiring the consistent use of a "5 In, 5 for Learning, 5 Out" pattern. Despite these initiatives, a significant minority of lessons are unsoundly managed and there are wide variations of practice within some subjects and year groups. In mathematics, for example, teaching ranges from

outstanding to very poor. The improvement of classroom practice has to be the central priority for governors and senior management. Without such an improvement, achievement and learning will remain below the standard required.

35. Over half the lessons are well run and soundly controlled. In these, teachers quickly settle pupils down to work, channelling any exuberance, listlessness or lethargy they encounter into purposeful activity and study. They promote good relationships, but do not accept poor behaviour. They press on successfully with the proper business of learning, maintaining clear purpose, firm eye contact, humorous vigilance over all class members and a brisk pace. They make lessons interesting, use the language that pupils understand (though extending their vocabulary), and keep pupils fully occupied. Pupils know that these teachers have their best interests at heart and that they cannot take liberties.

36. A significant minority of lessons, however, are not good enough. About 17 per cent of lessons overall (and one quarter of the lessons seen in Years 7-9) fell into the category of unacceptable attitudes or behaviour. In these, teachers do not have enough control. Time is wasted and too little is learned. Attentive pupils are frustrated. Pupils are allowed far too long to quieten down and be ready to work. A few drift in late and cause disturbance. Learning is hampered by constant chattering, fidgeting, silly antics or rudeness. In particular, the noisy exuberance that quite a number of pupils display around the school is brought into class, resulting in an unreasonably high level of noise that gnaws away at concentrated learning. The school requires a prime focus on those classes where teachers do not maintain good discipline, partly because they are a major cause of underachievement.

37. When good classroom discipline and challenging teaching go together, pupils invariably make significant progress. In the best lessons, pupils work hard and think deeply. They are required to ponder issues carefully and systematically. They are stimulated by interesting topics, challenging ideas and rigorous discussion. They are guaranteed the quiet to think and concentrate. Work has sufficient depth. Ideas, reasons and alternatives are probed. Sloppy or superficial thinking is strongly discouraged. Pupils are encouraged to stand on their own feet and explore – as, for example, in several aspects of design and technology. Pupils enjoy their work and learn a lot. Around one in six lessons were consistently like this.

38. Three mathematics lessons seen were outstanding – all from the same teacher. In one of these (in Year 11), for example, on *loci*, the standard reached was well above average. The whole lesson was a privilege to see – or, as the inspector wrote, “breathtaking”. Work was of the highest standard – from the finely detailed lesson plan (executed faultlessly in practice), through a practical exercise that drew spontaneous applause from pupils, to the plenary session where the class impressively rehearsed all the different aspects of the topic they knew. Learning, attitudes and achievement were of the highest order.

39. In contrast, in a significant minority of lessons, pupils do not achieve enough. This is not only because of the distractions of misbehaviour, but often because work is insufficiently demanding. In such lessons, learning is slow and simplistic. First answers and viewpoints are accepted and not extended by alternative explanations or probing questions. Often teachers do too much of the work for pupils. Rigorous debate is absent. Sometimes pupils have little or no idea of what high quality work looks like and no more is expected of high ability pupils than others. In a small number of poor lessons, no learning of any substance takes place.

40. The school’s focus on teaching, learning and organisation can be seen in the careful way that many teachers begin their lessons, following the school’s “5 In” policy. In a fair proportion of lessons, teachers’ starts and explanations are clear and measured. In better lessons, they ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunity to explore issues by working in pairs or groups and then conduct thorough, whole-class reviews of what has been learned. This approach was seen, for example, in two Year 11 history lessons on 1930s Germany. In one good lesson, a card-sorting exercise in groups led on to incisive, whole-class explanations and questions, and, in a very good lesson, pupils played very effective roles in investigating the Reichstag fire. Weaker lessons, however, provide few opportunities

for pupils to get their teeth into issues, undervalue debate and rely on a narrow range of teaching styles.

41. Learning support assistants, where available, provide very useful help (especially when working in close partnership with class teachers), although there are not enough of them. Technicians give valuable help. Imaginative, stimulating use is quite often made of interactive whiteboards or (as in English) of a set of laptops. In a few lessons, music is used very effectively to establish a calm, focused atmosphere as pupils enter classrooms. In contrast, time is wasted by unnecessary unpunctuality or early finishes. Homework was often set reasonably during the inspection, but the frequent “none set” in many planners shows that this sound picture is not always the case.

42. Teachers’ assessment of pupils’ work and progress is satisfactory, and is improving. It is at least satisfactory in all subjects except art and music. In these two subjects, pupils do not receive enough information on how to improve; a further weakness in art is that pupils’ performance is assessed too generously at the end of Year 9. Assessment is good in design and technology, modern foreign languages and business education. It is particularly helpful in design and technology in allowing smooth progression from one strand of work to another. Challenging targets are set for all pupils in all subjects in Year 7 and pupils are aware of them. The termly progress report of how well pupils meet their targets is a useful tool not only for parents and pupils, but also in guiding teachers to where extra support is needed. The school puts considerable effort into analysing data to try to identify the causes of underachievement.

43. Teaching is satisfactory overall and in most subjects. It is good in Years 7-9 in geography, in Years 10-11 in ICT, modern foreign languages and business education, and throughout Years 7-11 in design and technology, history, PE and RE. The one music lesson seen in Year 10 was very good. It is unsatisfactory overall in mathematics and (in Years 7-9) in art and music. At least one lesson of very good (or better) teaching was seen in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology (eight in all here), history, modern foreign languages, music, PE and RE. In addition to the three outstanding lessons in mathematics, two were also seen within design and technology. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in design and technology, history, ICT, modern foreign languages, PE, business education, media studies or drama.

## **The curriculum**

The school’s curriculum provides a good range of opportunities and, for pupils in Years 10 and 11, a wide choice of academic and vocational courses. There is good collaboration with a college of further education. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, though of good quality, is unsatisfactory, because there are not enough learning support assistants to meet their needs consistently. The range of extracurricular activities is satisfactory. Accommodation is unsatisfactory because of the poor condition to which the buildings have deteriorated. The school has sufficient resources for learning.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good range of courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Uncared-for buildings make the learning environment unpleasant and demotivating.
- There are not enough learning support assistants for pupils with special educational needs.
- Careers education is good.
- Religious education is not provided in Year 11, and a daily act of worship is not held.

## **Commentary**

44. There is a satisfactory balance of subjects within the curriculum for pupils in Years 7-9. All pupils study one modern foreign language and a considerable proportion learn two. All subjects (except RE) receive an adequate amount of time.

45. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are offered a wide range of courses, some of which are run in association with a local college of further education. A good range of vocational courses (including leisure and tourism, and child care) is included within this choice and is one reason why a higher proportion of pupils than in the past from this school continue successfully with education beyond the age of 16. The school provides GCSE courses in three modern foreign languages. All pupils take an examination course in citizenship.

46. Provision for work-related learning is good. For example, the school provides a wide range of vocational courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11. These include business and communications, childcare, engineering, ICT and media studies. Most pupils take at least one of these subjects. Further provision is made through a *Skills for Working Life* programme. Additionally, the school has developed extensive contacts with colleges and local training providers, securing extended work placements and individual vocational programmes.

47. The fact that business education, work experience and careers education are coordinated by the same member of staff has significantly aided the integration of contacts with employers. There are close, regular and effective links with local colleges and *Connexions* staff to aid transition and progression. Other elements of work-related learning are provided through careers education and personal and social education.

48. The school complies with all statutory requirements in respect of the curriculum, with the exception that pupils in Year 11 do not study RE. It now requires plans to close that gap. The school does not comply with the requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship and has no clear policy to help it to do so. The curriculum is equally accessible to all pupils.

49. Specialist provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good, but there is not enough of it in classrooms, especially to help with behavioural difficulties. The help provided for pupils with low reading skill is good: most of these pupils make good progress. The alternative curriculum (with access to vocational courses) provided for pupils with special educational needs in Years 10 and 11 is effective and enjoyed. The school continues support for these pupils in English, mathematics and science by providing appropriate lessons when they are in school. Records of pupils' progress and achievement are well maintained. Pupils do not, however, have enough access to ICT. There has been good improvement in SEN provision since the previous inspection.

50. All subjects have schemes of work that are at least satisfactory. Most are good. The school prepares pupils well for the later stages of education or employment throughout Years 7-11. The school works closely with the *Connexions* service to ensure that pupils have good-quality guidance about future choices: additional careers support has been purchased, for example, to help gifted and talented pupils. The school works closely with post-16 providers to ensure that pupils have a good knowledge of the courses available to them after the age of 16 and that pupils make appropriate choices.

51. The school has a satisfactory range of extracurricular activities. A praiseworthy attempt to broaden the curriculum for pupils in the first three years of the school is the programme called T6. The school asked pupils what activities they would like to pursue. The range on offer includes a choir, golf, producing the school magazine, a film club and the chance to make sculptures. These activities take place on the last lesson on a Tuesday. The impact of this programme is enormously reduced because participation is voluntary. It is regrettable that, as pupils identified the activities, the vast majority choose to go home. Only three out of every five pupils in Year 7 take part and in Year 9 participation is less than one in five pupils. Considerable thought and effort by teachers organising this programme are not producing commensurate benefits. Participation in sporting activities is good. It is satisfactory in the arts. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in both visits and work experience abroad to gain intensive practice in the language they are learning.

52. In spite of continuing difficulties in recruiting teachers, the school has sufficient teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. Nearly all teachers are suitably qualified for the subjects they

teach. Overall, there is an insufficient level of support staff: there are not enough learning support assistants to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs in all subjects.

53. The school has sufficient accommodation and a suitable range of specialist rooms. Rooms are large enough for the expected range of activities. The accommodation is, however, unsatisfactory overall, because neglect of basic maintenance over many years has resulted in a poor learning environment. Although a new school on a new site is firmly planned, two year groups will have left the school before the move is accomplished.

54. The poor state of the buildings means that neither pupils nor staff can demonstrate pride in an important aspect of their school. Where individual teachers have made laudable efforts to overcome these difficulties, using stimulating displays (as in the support base), classrooms look attractive. This effort, however, takes considerable time away from other tasks and draws attention to how bleak nearby areas are.

55. Currently, the school environment is in a downward spiral. Partly because of the poor state of the buildings and grounds – but also because inadequate efforts have been made to maintain standards – pupils do not respect their surroundings. The result is that litter, graffiti, dirt and vandalism make the surroundings even more unpleasant. It is vital that the downward spiral is reversed – not only for present pupils and adults, but also to improve attitudes, care and pride before relocation. The consequences of inaction are potentially dire.

56. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall. There is shortage of some equipment in science and RE lacks textbooks. The school has an adequate number of computers for pupils to use. The learning resource centre is well stocked with books; the librarian knows, and meets, the needs of pupils well. An attractive environment and the opportunity to borrow such resources as CD-ROMs and DVDs to enhance learning draw pupils to the library.

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

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. The physical environment is poor. The advice and guidance that the school gives pupils are good. The school's involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The arrangements made for pupils' induction into Year 7 are very good.
- The dirty, dilapidated state of the buildings denies pupils a pleasant learning environment.
- The maintenance and supervision of the toilets are poor.
- The school gives careful support to its most vulnerable pupils.

### **Commentary**

57. Overall provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is satisfactory, but has poor features. The school has largely addressed the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Within departments, attention to matters of health and safety, including risk assessment, is effective. Suitable procedures for child protection are in place.

58. The management and maintenance of the site as a whole, however, lacks coherence and attention to detail. The school is disfigured with litter and the hazard of uneven paving stones around the site remains. The dirty and dilapidated state of the buildings undermines the wish that pupils might have a sense of belonging to a community of which they could be proud. The governors and senior management require a clear plan of action not only to prevent the school's environment deteriorating further before relocation, but also improving quickly the dirty, littered and scarred appearance it has away from its front elevation.

59. The toilets are poor. They are smelly, smoky and abused by pupils. Because the doors to the cubicles have no locks, “you have”, as one pupil said, “to get someone to hold the door closed for you”. Pupils’ perception is that the school has largely lost control of what happens in the toilets. The toilets require rehabilitation.

60. The personal, pastoral support and the advice and guidance that the school gives to pupils are good. Both parents and pupils agree that the arrangements for the induction of new pupils into Year 7 are very effective. Pupils have the opportunity to get to know key staff, including the school’s learning mentor, before they arrive.

61. In discussions, pupils confirmed that the school has adults that they can talk to about any problems. The school is also good at identifying its most vulnerable pupils. The weekly meeting of the Student Services Referral Panel is a very effective means of monitoring and supporting such pupils. Further support comes through the opportunity to work in the Student Services Base.

62. The school’s involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is satisfactory. The school council has an executive committee, its own officers and recorded minutes of its meetings. The minutes seen, however, record no discussion of several matters of most concern to pupils – such as the state of the toilets, the mid-day mealtime and how pupils perceive the incidence of bullying and misbehaviour in the school.

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

The school is generally well regarded by most parents. They feel comfortable in approaching the school and think that teachers have appropriately high expectations. The school has good links with the community, especially in sport. Information systems for parents are broadly satisfactory, but could be better. The close relationships with contributory primary schools are a strength.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The transfer and induction of pupils from primary to secondary education are well handled.
- The school works hard with parents and the wider community to raise the aspirations of pupils.
- Community use of the sports facilities is extensive.
- Curricular information for parents and the school’s website require improvement.

### **Commentary**

63. The school’s links with parents are good. Parents generally hold a favourable view of the school and what it offers. Those parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that their children make good progress and that there is a good range of extracurricular activities on offer. In particular, they (rightly) feel there are good arrangements to help their children to settle at the school. They are happy with the expectations that staff hold for the pupils. Concerns were, however, raised in the questionnaire regarding pupils’ behaviour, the provision of homework and the level of information about pupils’ progress.

64. The school’s prospectus provides parents with a suitable range of information about the school and its aspirations in preparing pupils for the adult world. Much is also made of the opportunities to be available in the imminent new school, especially in its provision for sport. A good half-termly newsletter highlights a wide range of pupils’ activities and achievements. There are additional, suitable newsletters relating to such projects as the wider partnership of local schools, the *Gifted and Talented* initiatives and the work of sports coordinators. There is, in contrast, little curricular information provided for parents to help them to support their children’s learning. Much information on the school’s website is out of date: the latest examination results on it relate to the year 2000.

65. Parents are kept well informed of their children’s progress in a variety of ways. Consultation evenings are well attended. Year 7 parents can find out in the autumn term how their children have

settled at the school. Alternative arrangements are offered to those parents who are not able to attend the normal consultation evenings. Satisfactory annual reports have recently been supplemented by a good system of termly report cards that also encompass a very useful self-evaluation process for pupils. Most pupils use their *Student Planner* to good effect. The links with parents of those children who have special educational needs have improved since the last inspection and are now good.

66. The concerns raised by parents about pupils' behaviour and the organisation of homework are justified. Whilst a homework timetable is issued for all year groups, inconsistencies and frequent gaps in the setting of homework do not encourage a positive climate of working. The degree of unsatisfactory behaviour in school, as noted elsewhere in the report, is a major weakness.

67. The school believes strongly in the importance of its role in the local community and the part it can play in raising the aspirations of the community for its children. Sporting links with those outside the school are extensive. Community groups, including local primary schools, make very good use of the school's indoor facilities, the swimming pool and the playing fields. Some adult evening classes are held on the school site. The headteacher is actively involved on area and community panels.

68. The school's close links with contributory primary schools are a strength. Staff from the school visit many primary schools to talk with pupils and teachers and to identify the needs of new pupils before they arrive in Year 7. A range of "transition units" helps pupils to move smoothly and confidently from primary to secondary education. Careful consideration is given to personal factors in the composition of tutorial and teaching groups. The school has good links, too, with post-16 providers of education and training.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership of the headteacher is satisfactory. The leadership of all other key staff varies from very good to unsatisfactory, and is satisfactory overall. Management is unsatisfactory overall, however, because of the serious weaknesses the school has. The effectiveness of the governing body is unsatisfactory. It supports the school strongly, but has not ensured sufficient improvement since the previous inspection, has not given sufficient attention to the state of the buildings and does not fulfil all its statutory obligations.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school feels a high commitment to serve its community.
- Management is not sufficiently rigorous in tackling identified weaknesses swiftly and effectively.
- The buildings have been allowed to decline over many years, setting a poor environment for learning.
- Knowledgeable financial management benefits the school considerably.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are not well managed.

### **Commentary**

69. The school is very committed to the community it serves. It wishes strongly to ensure that all pupils and parents appreciate the benefits of education. It has appropriate, clearly stated aims. Its success in engaging pupils in education is, however, made far more difficult by the poor state of the buildings, which have been allowed to decline over many years. Peeling paint, graffiti, damaged plasterwork and much low-quality display combine to give a cold, unwelcoming impression away from the front of the school. Although plans for the school to relocate to new buildings are well advanced, at least two-fifths of the present pupils will have left the school by that date.

70. Governors ensure that most of their statutory obligations are met, but pupils in Year 11 are not taught RE and a daily act of worship is still not offered to all pupils. Governors have not ensured that sufficient progress has been made with the areas identified by the previous inspection as being in need of improvement. For these reasons, the governance of the school is unsatisfactory.

71. Governors are supportive of the school. Many give willingly and regularly of their time – as, for example, to visit and report upon lessons. They know about data that evaluate the school's performance, but are too reliant upon the school for the interpretation of the range of data. They are not always sufficiently aware of educational developments to be able to make a positive contribution to the advancement of the school – for example, of the recent requirement for schools to introduce work-related learning.

72. The headteacher's leadership is satisfactory overall, with many good features. Staff praise the efforts of the headteacher to maintain morale in difficult, transitional circumstances. He represents the school's interests strongly. He has a high commitment to meeting the needs of the community that the school serves. The school has serious weaknesses, however, in managing successfully some of its fundamental activities – particularly, as noted earlier, in pupils' attitudes and behaviour and in the quality of classroom learning and achievement, despite the senior leadership team's very high availability of time free from direct teaching. In consequence, senior management's effectiveness is unsatisfactory.

73. There are strengths in senior management's work. A supportive "on call" system operates for classroom problems. The quality of teaching is monitored and appropriate action taken when very weak practice is identified. Performance management is carried out effectively. Leaders are committed to promoting equality and show deep concern for the needs of all pupils. There are also weaknesses. The school's improvement plan is detailed, but insufficiently focused on the extent to which actions raise achievement or how subject improvements, costings and timescales are linked to the overall plan for the school. The school does not have an accurate, coherent management information system (including key data to judge whole-school performance) that is utilised by all managers, other staff and governors.

74. The quality of the leadership of subjects varies from very good (in design and technology) to satisfactory in mathematics, ICT and drama and unsatisfactory (in English, art and music). It is good overall and in National Curriculum subjects (plus RE) other than those mentioned above. Middle management is satisfactory overall. It is good in design and technology, history, modern foreign languages, PE and business education, but unsatisfactory in art and music. It is satisfactory in all other subjects.

75. There is no coherent, whole-staff response to ensuring that pupils have appropriate attitudes to their studies and to movement around the school – a weakness for which responsibility must be widely shared amongst staff. Not all staff consistently provide high quality role models for pupils, so making senior management's task that much more difficult. For example, whilst some teachers vigilantly watch the movement of pupils between lessons from the doors of their classrooms or hurry pupils along, too few staff actively supervise, monitor and appropriately intervene. Such a corporate approach from every member of staff is now essential to improve unsatisfactory behaviour.

76. The school makes a good, carefully planned contribution to the initial training of teachers. It supports newly qualified teachers (NQTs) well in the early stages of their careers. More experienced teachers moving to the school are supported satisfactorily. Training is carefully evaluated to ensure that allocated funds are spent wisely. The school has received external commendation for the quality of its training.

77. For several years, the school has experienced more difficulties than many schools, when seeking to recruit teachers. Some high quality appointments have been made, but the quality of other appointments has been below what the school desired or needed. Temporary teachers have to be used widely: their lack of knowledge of the school's systems and sometimes their teaching competence do not aid good learning. The changes to the duties of teachers ("remodelling the workforce") are being adequately implemented. The school is firmly committed to ensuring that teachers are well supported and do not have to spend unnecessary time on administrative tasks.

78. The school's finances are well managed. The business manager has expert knowledge of financial procedures. He ensures that money is well spent to meet the school's educational priorities and monitors expenditure rigorously. His knowledge ensures good compliance with the principles of best value. Good use is made of information comparing this school's expenditure with others.

79. The school receives less money per pupil than the average nationally, but because pupils do not achieve as well as they should and the school has other serious weaknesses, the school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	4,193,230
Total expenditure	4,160,298
Expenditure per pupil	3,200

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-9,250
Balance carried forward to the next year	23,682

# 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 **unsatisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standard of work and achievement are not high enough.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in Years 10 and 11.
- Teaching in Years 7-11 is broadly satisfactory, but needs to be stronger.
- Progress in improving literacy since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.
- The department's leadership is unsatisfactory.

#### Commentary

80. The Year 9 national test results for 2004 were (provisionally) below average, but an improvement on those obtained in 2003. The proportion of pupils reaching the basic Level 5 was close to average and the best result the school has gained. The 2004 GCSE results were well below the national average and lower than those of 2003. The GCSE results indicate unsatisfactory achievement from standards on entry to the school and from the national test results at the end of Year 9.

81. The standard of pupils' current work by the end of Year 9 is well below average and indicates unsatisfactory progress since pupils entered the school at the beginning of Year 7. The standard of pupils' reading is below average: a significant minority of pupils do not read fluently and with expression. Understanding what has been read and drawing inferences from it are insecure for many pupils. Those whose standard of reading on entering the school was below the nationally expected level, however, make good progress as a result of the carefully planned support they receive.

82. The quality of pupils' written work is below average overall. Most pupils have a satisfactory understanding about how texts are created and the importance of planning and drafting written work. Insufficient attention is given, however, to handwriting, spelling and punctuation. For example, dictionaries are stored in classrooms, but not readily used in lessons.

83. The quality of pupils' oral work is below average. Most pupils listen to instructions in lessons, but do not always speak clearly and audibly, so making it hard for other pupils to understand what has been said. This weakness was well illustrated in a Year 7 class, where a pupil specifically pointed out that the answers of other pupils could not be heard. Although the majority of pupils are willing to learn in lessons, a significant minority of pupils persistently chatter and disrupt the learning of other pupils.

84. By the end of Year 11, the overall standard of pupils' work remains well below average. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress from the end of Year 9. Teachers' careful planning and organisation of written work help most pupils to structure and sequence ideas, but only a minority of pupils readily explore different layers of meaning, when reading. Most pupils use textual evidence to support a point of view, but do not then go on to explain fully its significance. There are only limited opportunities for pupils to think for themselves and express oral points of view at any length.

85. Some very good work was seen. In an inspiring Year 11 lesson, for instance, lively teaching quickly engaged pupils and focused them on the profiles of four fictitious teachers. Working in groups, pupils discussed the profiles and annotated the strengths of each teacher. They then shared their ideas, debating animatedly not simply about which teacher was most favoured, but also about the significance and meaning of such words as “strict”. By quickly refocusing the discussion on the qualities of Mr Farthing and Mr Sugden, two teachers in Barrie Hines’s novel *Kes*, the teacher significantly deepened pupils’ understanding of the characters. The end of the lesson was marked by quick (but sustained) oral responses, as pupils explained how and why their interpretations had changed during the lesson.

86. Teaching ranges from very good to poor. It is satisfactory overall throughout the school, but requires strengthening. Teachers have implemented many aspects of the National Strategy for English. Most lessons, for instance, are planned in great detail to end with a plenary session. This potential strength in teaching is frequently weakened by poor time-management, causing some parts of the lesson to overrun or be cut short. In a number of lessons, teachers talk too much. As a result, pupils become over-dependent on their teachers for ideas and cannot discuss their own thoughts enough.

87. The leadership of the department is unsatisfactory, although its current management is satisfactory. The head of department, in post for just over one term at the time of the inspection, is aware of the urgent need to improve the quality of provision in the subject. Staff mobility, long-term sickness and problems of recruitment, however, conspire against the programme for improvement. Schemes of work have been revised and there is an awareness of the need to develop closer links with the contributory primary schools to ensure curricular progression. The rate of improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

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

88. The overall standard of literacy across the school is below average. The standard of pupils’ reading aloud, although broadly average in most subjects, is below average in science and modern foreign languages. Pupils rarely, however, explore beyond the surface meaning of texts. The overall standard of pupils’ written work is below average. Writing is good, however, in PE and business education: here, both the planning and presentation of work are strong features.

89. Pupils’ speaking and listening are below average overall. Standards are average in design and technology, history, PE, RE and business education, because these departments put adequate emphasis on these aspects of learning. Generally, however, insufficient attention is given to the quality and range of pupils’ answers. The use of technical language is a strong feature in design and technology. The school has a clear action plan to improve literacy across departments. Concerted action is now required to implement this successfully, despite staff changes having weakened the impact of staff training on teaching.

### **Modern foreign languages**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is consistent in style across the department.
- The department is well led and managed.
- Many pupils lack confidence in speaking.
- The department contributes very well to pupils’ cultural development.
- No learning assistants work in the department to help pupils with special educational needs.

## Commentary

90. The proportion of pupils attaining grades A\*-C in the GCSE examinations in 2004 in French was above the national average, although no pupil gained an A\* grade. These results were an improvement on those of 2003; boys performed almost as well as girls. Pupils achieved better in French than they did in their other subjects. All 21 pupils entered for the GCSE examination in Spanish attained grades A\*-C: these results were well above the national average, with a good proportion of A\* and A grades. Results for an equally small class in German (principally average and lower-attaining pupils) were well below the national average.

91. The overall standard by the end of Year 9 is below average, but this represents satisfactory achievement. By the end of Year 9, pupils' overall standard in French and Spanish is below average in speaking and just a little below it in writing. Higher-attaining pupils in each language are just beginning to write and speak about past events. Other pupils usually write at an appropriate level, although some lower-attaining pupils have poor handwriting and presentation. Pupils recite in chorus well, but many lack confidence individually and are very reliant on prompt sheets. A stronger feature is that the pupils seen in a Year 8 French class and the second-language learners in a Year 9 German class speak quite confidently. Most pupils achieve at least satisfactorily. The irregular attendance of some pupils impedes the smooth continuity of learning.

92. By the end of Year 11, pupils' standards are broadly average (for a very small group) in German. They are well in line with national standards in French and Spanish. Most pupils achieve well. Coursework is a strength. Higher-attaining pupils write extremely accurately, displaying a wide range of vocabulary, constructions and tenses. Average and lower-attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily, but do not sustain a good level of accuracy in their writing. In the lessons observed, pupils in Spanish in Years 10 and 11 spoke more confidently than pupils in the other languages.

93. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into classes and make similar progress to that of other pupils. Teachers adapt work well to meet their needs, but there is no in-class support from teaching assistants. Gifted pupils make good progress in their work: the writing and presentation of a Year 8 girl in German, for example, are of a very high standard.

94. Teaching and learning range from very good to satisfactory. They are satisfactory in Years 7-9, good in Years 10-11, and satisfactory overall. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are better motivated and learn more productively than in Years 7-9: in a Year 9 French lesson, for instance, boys behaved badly and learned very little.

95. All the teachers teach two languages. They work hard and have good subject knowledge. They are keen and enthusiastic, and have high expectations. Their strength lies in the consistency of their teaching styles and their very good use of resources: flash cards, for example, are used effectively in every lesson to revise past work. Teachers plan a suitably wide range of different activities and skills.

96. Pupils are fully aware of what they have to learn. They work cooperatively in pairs. Evaluations at the ends of lessons, however, do not focus sharply enough on how much pupils have retained during the 50 minutes. Teachers' marking of pupils' written work is regular and often contains constructive comments or targets. Pupils do not always, however, respond positively to this guidance, particularly on matters of dating work and presentation.

97. The department is led and managed well. The subject leader provides clear educational direction and is supported by a good team. There are currently insufficient permanent teachers to match timetabled periods. Good use is made of assessment. The department provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to study different languages – sometimes even after school. It also contributes very well to pupils' cultural development through annual visits abroad and the contact that pupils have in school with native speakers: the three modern foreign languages assistants work

very effectively in classes with a wide range of pupils. The subject has improved well since the last inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Unsatisfactory behaviour hinders progress in too many lessons.
- Despite some excellent teaching, there is too little that is good or better.
- The GCSE results in 2004 were bordering on well below average.
- Teaching is slowly improving, but most teachers do not manage behaviour well enough.

### **Commentary**

98. The 2004 results for pupils at the end of Year 9 were well below average. This represents unsatisfactory achievement from their prior attainment in primary education. The results at GCSE in 2004 were below average (and close to the “well below average” rating). These results also represented unsatisfactory achievement from the national tests at the end of Year 9 and from the standard on intake.

99. The current overall standard in Year 9 is well below average and should be higher. The most able pupils do not have sufficiently good attitudes to learning to allow them to work consistently at the higher levels. Too many pupils, at all levels of ability, do not concentrate sufficiently on their work, but present challenging behaviour to teachers. Many pupils with behavioural difficulties do not receive enough support to help them make satisfactory progress. When such support exists, particularly with lower-ability classes, it is often very good: in these cases, many pupils with behavioural difficulties progress well. Overall, there is too much inconsistency in standards and expectations.

100. In Year 11, the most able pupils currently progress very well, because they receive much outstanding teaching. Their achievement from entry in Year 7 is sound. For most pupils, however, the picture is similar to that in Year 9: pupils who are disaffected do not achieve as well as they should and often disrupt the learning of other pupils.

101. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall throughout the school, because, in too many lessons, teachers are unable to motivate pupils sufficiently to engage in worthwhile learning. In many lessons, pupils who want to chat idly are allowed to do so. Many pupils have done insufficient written work, because teachers do not challenge them to work hard and behave in a suitable manner.

102. In stark contrast, teaching is occasionally outstanding. This is because of the exceptional talents of one teacher. The most able pupils in Year 11, for example, were given responsibility for their own learning when working in pairs to investigate the paths that lines would take according to given rules. The highly imaginative use of resources, including a demonstration by a pupil wrapping string around a table in a school dining-room, set the scene for a truly remarkable experience. Pupils learned exceptionally well through investigation, using a variety of methods that fitted with their preferred learning styles.

103. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new head of department has been in post for a very short time. She is aware of the serious problems faced by the department because of the negative learning attitudes held by so many pupils. There has been, and still is, considerable disruption to staffing arrangements. Whilst there are signs that teaching is improving from earlier on in the current academic year, the classroom management skills of most teachers require quick, decisive improvement. The department urgently requires higher expectations for pupils' standards

of behaviour and attainment being translated into effective practice. Provision has deteriorated since the previous inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

104. Pupils' skills in mathematics are lower than in most schools. They are, however, sufficient to cope with most of the work that pupils do in other subjects – such as interpreting graphs in science, geography and history. In design and technology, pupils show competent, sensible use of calculators and measure accurately. In ICT, pupils calculate accurately and handle data suitably. In PE, however, pupils sometimes have difficulty when asked to do such mental arithmetic as heartbeat calculations.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

- Most pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject.
- Achievement in science is the best of the three core subjects.
- GCSE results are below the national average.
- Pupils undertake too few scientific investigations and practical activities.
- Assessment data are used well to monitor pupils' progress and set realistic targets.

#### **Commentary**

105. On entry to the school in Year 7, pupils' overall attainment in science is a little below average. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 9, results were still below average, but broadly in line with pupils' attainment on intake in 2001. The 2004 results represent satisfactory achievement.

106. The GCSE double-award science results in 2004 were below average. There has been some variation in results over the last three years, but the reasons for slippage in 2003 have been addressed by a newly appointed head of department. Boys do as well as girls, unlike the national picture.

107. By the end of Year 9, the overall standard of pupils' work is below the national expectation. Pupils enjoy practical work. They handle equipment safely, because they watch and listen to their teachers carefully when practical sessions are introduced. These attitudes are often in contrast to their lack of attention at other times in lessons. Overall, however, pupils have limited opportunities to undertake practical scientific work, compared with many schools. This is a factor that lowers pupils' overall standard of attainment. Their achievement is broadly satisfactory.

108. Pupils' overall attainment is below average by the end of Year 11. In top sets, pupils' attainment is fairly close to what would be expected nationally for pupils of this ability, but in mid-range sets many pupils are too easily satisfied. With some teachers, pupils have a wide range of suitable opportunities to improve their understanding of science, both written and orally, but this is not a uniform feature across the department. An example of good practice was seen in a Year 11 class that used laptops to access the Internet and to prepare oral presentations. Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. It is held back a little by insufficient practical work, especially in the preparation of coursework for GCSE examinations, and by some pupils' unsatisfactory attitudes to learning.

109. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in lessons vary amongst classes. Teachers have to work hard to gain the attention of pupils in many classes. Many pupils do not naturally settle down without a fuss. Top sets are usually more receptive, but overall attitudes to learning are no better than satisfactory and account for a lack of momentum in many classes.

110. Teaching ranges from very good to poor and is satisfactory overall throughout the school. Two-fifths of the lessons seen were well taught, but a high proportion (around one fifth) fell below a satisfactory level: three lessons were unsatisfactory and one was poor. The scrutiny of pupils' books suggests that teaching is at a similar level throughout the year. Planning is generally good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of subject matter are secure. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and usually reviewed at the end of lessons. Although this is not consistently done across the department, the majority of teachers are experimenting soundly with approaches from the national Key Stage 3 Science Strategy. There are too few opportunities, however, for pupils to discuss and orally present scientific facts and theories. Homework is inconsistently set. These weaknesses slow pupils' progress.

111. Laboratories contain displays of key words, but insufficient time is spent in many lessons checking out the meanings of technical terms. Teachers' questioning techniques are often limited to checking facts covered earlier in the lesson. In some classes, pupils respond well to teachers' questions and listen carefully when other pupils are replying, but in other classes pupils chatter or daydream.

112. The new leadership of the department is good. Departmental management is satisfactory. Appropriate assessment records are thoroughly used to track pupils' progress. Candidates for GCSE are well aware of their progress: their books contain labels with targets and progression. This is good practice. Lessons for low-attaining sets in Years 10 and 11 are carefully planned, with well-sequenced activities. Marking is inconsistently done: some staff undertake this in exemplary fashion, whilst others give little or no detailed guidance.

113. Three technicians adequately service the eight science rooms. The preparation areas are cluttered and cramped. One learning support assistant is attached to the department, but her influence is too thinly spread. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make slower progress than might be expected. Some staff make their rooms interesting, with well-displayed key words and posters. Laboratories are worn out. There is a shortage of such working equipment as ammeters. Pupils make less use than normal of such ICT techniques as word-processing, spreadsheets, datalogging and the Internet. The department has made broadly satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The recently appointed head of department has sound strategies to move the subject forward.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision and standards in the subject are now improving well.
- Test and examination results at Year 9 and Year 11 have been well below average.
- The rate of improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

114. The teaching of the subject was greatly disrupted before September 2004 owing to the inability of the school to recruit a head of department and other teacher shortages that led to many classes being taught by a large number of temporary staff.

115. Pupils enter the school with standards in ICT that are a little below average. In 2004, the school judged that only 24 per cent of pupils had reached the basic Level 5 by the end of Year 9. This was significantly below the national expectation that three-quarters of pupils would do so. As a result of better staffing, there is evidence of recent improvement. The overall standard of work in Year 9 is below average, but far more pupils than previously demonstrate the required standards. The current school target of 77 per cent reaching at least Level 5 is ambitious: owing to previous

staffing problems, Year 9 pupils are learning material that should have been covered in earlier years.

116. The overall standard reached in 2004 in both the GCSE examination and in the Key Skills examination in ICT was low. The standard of work seen currently in class is better, and average overall. Although some work is still below the required standard, many pupils in Year 11 work at an appropriate level for success in their chosen examination.

117. The achievement of Year 9 pupils over all their time in the school is unsatisfactory, largely owing to the staffing difficulties mentioned. The current achievement of pupils in Years 7-9 is satisfactory (and sometimes better) as a consequence of the improved provision for the subject. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 11, too, has been unsatisfactory. Pupils' current achievement is satisfactory and often good.

118. Pupils in Years 8 and 9, using the context of opinions on fox-hunting as the focus of their work on information, made satisfactory progress. Pupils produced an appropriate chart of opinions and incorporated this into presentational software. To this they added appropriate pictures (researched from the Internet), together with facts and personal opinions. Year 11 pupils on the GCSE course made good use of research material into the way that ICT was used in a large pharmaceutical company. Pupils studying for the *Key Skills* examination produced suitable pages for a website to serve the publicity needs of a potential commercial client.

119. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7-9, good in Years 10-11 and satisfactory overall. Work is well planned and structured, and much individual support is given to all pupils. In Years 10 and 11 particularly, assessment and marking are good: pupils receive very good support and advice on the quality of their work and how it can be improved. Pupils are also taught to use the resources on the school network independently. Pupils want to succeed and find their work interesting and satisfying.

120. The leadership and management for ICT are now satisfactory, following an unsatisfactory period. There is a good vision for the way the subject should be taught. Work is planned and documented well. Many appropriate resources, prepared for the school network, are accessible by pupils. Teachers work closely together as a team. There are clear plans to improve rapidly the teaching provision in Years 7-9. Much progress has been made within a short space of time to secure sound provision for ICT. Currently, there is no liaison with contributory primary schools to promote continuity of learning on transfer. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes, however, are positive and there is now better time provision for the subject.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

121. The school has invested heavily in ICT resources. It has a good network infrastructure that supports nearly all computers with Internet access (although it does not extend to the design and technology suite). The school exceeds the national target of one computer for every five pupils, is investing appropriately in data projectors and interactive whiteboards, and provides laptop computers for many teachers. There are five ICT suites. At least one of these (and often two) is available for booking by teachers wishing to use them with their classes. The school also benefits from external investment to support the use of ICT in the teaching of English, mathematics and science.

122. Pupils use ICT for basic purposes across the curriculum at a broadly average standard. During the inspection, inspectors saw little direct use of ICT in lessons, although there was evidence for its contribution in some pupils' work. The Internet is used for research in such subjects as English and history. Food technology makes good use of ICT for nutritional analysis.

In subjects such as English and ICT, pupils use computers satisfactorily to improve their work by using word-processing and presentational software. One outstanding lesson was seen in design and technology, where Year 8 pupils used an industry-standard software package for computer-aided design (CAD). In this lesson, the expert input from the teacher was complemented very well by the fact that pupils helped and taught one another.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers expect pupils to work and behave well: most respond positively.
- Good relationships in most lessons result in most pupils wanting to learn.
- Teachers begin lessons in ways that motivate pupils to work.
- In some lessons, work is not structured well enough.
- There is not enough support for pupils with special educational needs.

#### Commentary

123. Pupils' overall attainment by the end of Year 9 is below average. A small proportion reach the highest standards. Many begin Year 7 with standards that are well below what is nationally expected. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily as a result of effective teaching and because they work with enthusiasm. In a minority of lessons, however, achievement is unsatisfactory, because pupils do not listen to instructions or to their teacher's explanations, talk instead of working and behave in an immature way. In some lessons, teachers have to stop teaching to halt the chatter and poor behaviour. As a result, the learning of all suffers.

124. Most pupils in Years 7-9 have some knowledge and understanding about places. They are not always clear, however, about where the country they are studying is located in the world. High attainers have good understanding of, for example, the ranges of weather and climate in different regions of the world. They use data well to explain climatic differences. They understand well how plants adapt to climate. The lowest attainers know some features of different climates. They draw simple graphs. Low literacy levels mean their written work is of a poor standard; there are often gaps where work has not been finished.

125. The overall attainment of pupils by the end of Year 11 is below average. The proportion of grades A\*-C obtained in the GCSE examinations in 2004 was well below average; only a very small proportion gained the highest grades. The results were similar to those of 2003. Work seen during the inspection was below that expected nationally, although a small proportion was of a very high standard. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily, because they pay attention to their teachers and try hard. A significant minority of pupils, however, talk when they should be listening, make little effort to work when asked to, and so fail to achieve satisfactorily. In a minority of lessons, the poor behaviour of some pupils makes teaching very difficult and learning – for those who wish to learn – almost impossible.

126. The geographical knowledge of most pupils in Years 10 and 11 is below average. Pupils have some basic understanding of the concept of globalisation in the production of such goods as jeans. They know the characteristics of such features as hurricanes and the effects they have on people and the landscape. High attainers in Year 11, for instance, explained adequately the causes of a hurricane and labelled accurately a cross-section through it. The lowest attainers have very patchy geographical understanding.

127. Teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory. It is good in Years 7-9, satisfactory in Years

10-11 and satisfactory overall. As a result, most pupils learn satisfactorily. In most lessons, teachers manage pupils effectively. Relationships are generally good, so that pupils want to learn. They do so best in lessons where they are actively involved in what they learn. This worked particularly well where pupils in Year 7, for example, created “mind maps” of their own city, an activity which required them to cooperate in order to be successful. In most lessons, teachers use a range of short, motivating activities to keep pupils focused. A tasting session of Japanese food proved very popular with pupils in Year 9. Teachers often begin lessons with an appropriate, short activity which will enthuse pupils for the work to come or, sometimes, calm them ready to begin work.

128. In some lessons, pupils are left to work through activities without enough guidance or preparation or are presented with over-complex information sheets – both of which lead to frustration and unsatisfactory achievement. Sometimes teachers do not draw together what pupils have learned from an activity before moving on to the next. There are not enough learning support assistants to help pupils with special educational needs effectively enough, especially in classes where there is a large number of such pupils.

129. The department is led well and managed satisfactorily. The head of department has identified what needs to be done to raise standards, but the strategies have yet to have significant impact. The department makes good use of fieldwork in Years 7-9 to prepare pupils for their GCSE work. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory; the department now makes better use of ICT in its teaching.

## **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers successfully set high standards for pupils’ behaviour through firm but friendly discipline.
- Very good relationships mean that most pupils want to work hard for their teachers.
- Teachers use motivating activities that stimulate in pupils a desire to take part and learn.
- Teachers do not often enough ask pupils to give extended answers to questions.

## **Commentary**

130. The overall standard of pupils’ work by the end of Year 9 is in line with that expected nationally. A small proportion of pupils reach very high standards. Many pupils begin Year 7 with standards that are below what is expected nationally. Most pupils achieve well in Years 7-9, because the teaching is good (and sometimes very good). Most pupils enjoy their history lessons, participate with interest and, as a result, achieve well.

131. Most pupils in Years 7-9 have sound knowledge and understanding of past events. The work of higher attainers shows very good knowledge and understanding about the past and a capacity to evaluate well the reliability and usefulness of sources. Their extended writing is of a high standard. The lowest attainers usually have adequate knowledge about the past, but their understanding and ability to explain, rather than describe, events is much more limited. Their ability to use historical sources is severely restricted by their below average level of literacy.

132. Results in the GCSE examination in 2004 were below average for grades A\*-C. The proportion who gained an A\*-G grade or A\* and A grades was close to average. These results were an improvement on those of 2003. More girls than boys gained the highest grades: the proportion of girls gaining an A or A\* grade was above the girls’ national average. Most pupils achieve well. They often perform better in history than in their other subjects. Teachers prepare pupils well for their examinations – for example, through revision classes outside school hours and through careful teaching of examination techniques.

133. The overall standard of work of pupils currently studying for the GCSE examination is below average, although there is a significant minority whose work reaches the highest standards. The majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 have good knowledge of the topics they study and achieve well. This was seen especially in a very good Year 11 lesson in which pupils performed a mock trial about the Reichstag Fire. The work of the highest attainers shows a very good understanding of the causes of past events and an ability to evaluate a range of historical sources, including political cartoons, successfully. They present and argue a point of view well. The work from the lowest attainers lacks depth and detail: although they use sources for information, they often do not successfully evaluate the reliability of sources. This is, in part, the result of their low literacy levels.

134. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and hard work, and ensure that the atmosphere in classrooms is conducive to work. As a result, pupils learn well. Relationships are very good. Pupils like their teachers and respond positively to challenging work. Teachers use a suitable range of motivating activities, in which pupils willingly become involved. The beginnings of lessons are effective in quickly engaging pupils' interest and ensuring they focus on the work to be done.

135. Teachers make good use of paired and group work to develop pupils' capacity to work collaboratively. Topic work over an extended time-period allows pupils to work independently. There are insufficient learning support assistants, but, where they are available, they work well to ensure that pupils with special educational needs achieve at least satisfactorily. Teachers rightly put an emphasis on improving pupils' writing, but they do not often ask pupils to give more than brief, oral answers.

136. The department is led and managed well. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. There is an ethos of hard work amongst staff and pupils that is a good model for the school. Strategies to raise standards are beginning to have an impact. Pupils' progress and achievement are tracked carefully to identify potential underachievement. There is no up-to-date ICT in the department for pupils to use to enhance their learning, although access to centrally provided ICT is relatively easy. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils in Years 7-9 to use resources outside the school, such as museums and historical sites.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most aspects of provision in the subject are good.
- The school fails to make RE provision for pupils in Year 11.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 7-10. Achievement is good in Year 10.
- Results on the GCSE short course are well below the national average.
- Pupils are positive in attitude and gain personal benefit from their study.
- Leadership is good and has created an effective team of specialist teachers.

### **Commentary**

137. By the end of Year 9, pupils' work is at the standard expected by the agreed syllabus. Pupils know about the basic beliefs and practices of Christianity and of the other religions they study. They understand how religious belief makes a difference to a person's life. They relate what they learn to their own lives and reflect on questions that are difficult to answer. They develop their own points of view by considering other views and by giving reasons. Pupils make steady progress during Years 7-9. Their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are positive in attitude and gain personal benefit from their study of different religions. Their consideration of, for example, birth and naming ceremonies and different "rites of passage" contributes well to their personal development.

138. In Year 10, pupils follow the GCSE short course. They show a fair understanding of personal and social issues. They recognise how people may have conflicting values between, for example, the sanctity of life and quality of life. Pupils achieve well, but not so well that they are ready for the examination after only one year of a two-year course. The school enters pupils at the end of Year 10. They have not yet developed the depth or detail of knowledge and understanding of which they are capable. The school's unconfirmed 2004 results appear, as they have been in previous years, to be well below the national average. In September 2003, the school withdrew provision for RE from the curriculum for Year 11. It requires reinstatement to meet statutory requirements.

139. Teaching and learning are both, as at the time of the last inspection, good. Pupils benefit from the specialist teaching, high expectations and the careful planning of learning. Good teaching methods and the effective use of time and resources here lead to good learning. The use of highlighters, for example, to identify important statements in a longer text, helped pupils in Year 10 to develop their skill at reading for meaning and making notes. Teachers are also good at engaging the interest and attention of pupils. In most lessons, they achieve positive attitudes and good behaviour from all pupils. The use of homework is satisfactory.

140. The match of teachers to the curriculum offered is good. The major weakness in Years 7-9 is lack of time. One lesson a week offers pupils less than the minimum time specified in the agreed syllabus. In Year 10, the curriculum is good and pupils achieve well not only because they follow an accredited course, but also because they have a good allocation of time.

141. Leadership is good. It shows clear vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations. Three teachers work well together as an effective specialist team. The head of department provides a good role model to pupils and to other teachers. Management is satisfactory and is improving. The department is about to move towards self-evaluation through evaluating the use of data collected from more systematic assessment.

142. Achievement in Years 7-9 remains satisfactory, as at the time of the last inspection, but achievement in Year 10 has improved. Attainment on the GCSE short course, however, has not improved and results remain well below the national average. Overall provision since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory, owing to the absence of RE in Year 11.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most pupils achieve well as a result of the good quality teaching they receive.
- Good assessment procedures underpin good planning and learning throughout the department.
- A strong team of teachers and technicians ensures that pupils work safely.
- Insufficient classroom support for pupils with behavioural problems impedes pupils' achievement.

### **Commentary**

143. The overall standard of work, on entry to the school, is below average in the use of hand tools and drawing. By the end of Year 9, attainment is average overall. This rate of progress represents good achievement. Pupils' attainment is average in making things and in their knowledge and understanding of tools and processes. It is above average for higher attainers in the use of computers and in designing. The standard of written work is often below average.

144. By the end of Year 11, although the 2004 GCSE results were a little below average, the current overall standard of work is average. The best practical work is to be found in manufacturing, food and textiles. The standard of coursework is average: good research, design and development work is often spoiled by poor spelling and a limited range of sentence constructions. Pupils use computers well – as, for example, for design, nutritional analysis and the presentation of data. Inadequate resources prevent pupils from using computers for manufacturing purposes.

145. Achievement in Years 7-9 is good overall. It is sometimes unsatisfactory. In a Year 7 food class seen, for example, 12 pupils with identified special educational needs (including eight at *School Action Plus* stage) had no support staff to help them. Their constant interruptions and need for attention lowered the achievement of other pupils. One identified gifted pupil was marginalised. She easily completed the work set, acted as a good role model and peer mentor for another girl (who, as a result, achieved well), but marked time herself.

146. Year 8 pupils achieved very well in their ICT lesson, using two-dimensional design. They were actively involved in all the numerical decisions made, discussed ideas with one another and, towards the end of the lesson, were encouraged to close their eyes – to apply what they had learned to the new work planned for the next lesson. Motivation was exceptionally high and behaviour excellent. In this lesson, pupils with special educational needs were well supported by their peers or by an older pupil who had been recruited for this purpose.

147. By Year 9, pupils in electronics, food and graphics achieve best in practical tasks and satisfactorily in written work. The “behaviour for learning” approaches, when applied consistently, work well. A suitable, new assessment and recording sheet is beginning to be used successfully to smooth the transition from one teacher to the next in the rotational arrangements for the subject.

148. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is good overall. The best achievement is in the practical food sessions where pupils work independently; most enjoy the experience. Ingredients are to hand, recipes are understood and processes are carried out with military precision. For one boy who lacked confidence and weighed his ingredients incorrectly, the teacher was on hand to talk him through the process. His second attempt at producing a white sauce turned out better than everyone else’s!

149. The one girl in an otherwise all-boy manufacturing group achieves as well as everyone else. Metal is shaped accurately by hand or on the lathe. Components are assembled efficiently, as pupils make (for example) the chassis for an electronically powered model car. Those girls in a Year 11 textile class who attend regularly achieve well because of the high expectations of their teacher, the support given and the resources available.

150. Teaching and learning are always at least satisfactory, usually good and often very good. Two lessons were outstanding. One of these was a very interactive learning experience for Year 8 pupils, using ICT. The other was a Year 10 food lesson, where the pace of the learning was as rigorous at the end as it had been at the start of the session. In both these cases, attitudes and behaviour were excellent. Most staff teach interesting lessons. As a result, the majority of pupils listen attentively and act on instructions. Year 7 pupils confirm that this subject is “fun”. Occasionally, the lesson start is disorganised and the pace of learning is slow. When this happens, pupils lose interest and behaviour deteriorates.

151. Teachers, supported ably by both technicians, have to work very hard where large numbers of pupils with behavioural problems are present and no trained classroom support is provided. Pupils with existing problems who are believed not to have eaten healthily at lunchtime often interrupt lessons during the afternoon by opening classroom doors and generally making a nuisance. Homework is an area for improvement. Too many pupils object to doing it and teachers have not resolved this problem satisfactorily.

152. The new leader of the subject is very well respected. He has provided a long overdue boost to staff morale and pupils’ motivation. Leadership is very good. There is a very clear vision for the subject and a corporate sense of identity. Management is good. Currently, there are a number of

issues, either within or outside the control of the department, that place a ceiling on achievement, standards and the further improvement of behaviour. The rotational “carousel” arrangements for different aspects of the subject do not yet have adequate continuity and progression, but the new recording system is promising.

153. Some equipment is inadequate. The food department lacks different coloured chopping-boards for meat and other products. The sewing machines in textiles regularly break down. The subject is not networked for computers and has very limited access to computer-aided manufacture. Improvement since the last inspection has, however, been good: pupils make better progress, the electronics course has improved and teaching is considerably better. Access to ICT is still limited.

## **Engineering**

154. Three lessons were sampled – one in Year 10 and two in Year 11. Pupils’ attitudes were satisfactory in Year 10 and very good in Year 11. Pupils’ behaviour and motivation mirrored the teaching. In the Year 10 class, a slow start led to a lack of attention and silly behaviour. A rigorous pace and high expectations on the teacher’s part, backed by the engineering expertise of the technician, encouraged the Year 11 boys and one girl to achieve very well. Achievement in shaping metal by hand or machine and in assembling components is very good. Portfolios of work are of a good standard, but occasionally spoiled by careless spelling. Standards are average, but have the potential to improve. These pupils are catching up work, following staff absence and a succession of supply teachers with little background in manufacturing. The technician ensures that the metal-working lathes are carefully serviced and run smoothly.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The 2004 GCSE results were well below average.
- Pupils in Years 7-9 underachieve as a result of the unsatisfactory teaching they receive.
- Teaching is very good in Year 10: pupils achieve very well.
- The assessment of work, including marking and feedback to pupils, is too generous.
- There are health and safety weaknesses in the pottery area.

### **Commentary**

155. By the end of Year 9, the overall standard of pupils’ work is below average. This is the standard of work in two dimensions and in pupils’ knowledge and understanding of artists’ styles of working. Standards are slightly higher when working with clay or such other three-dimensional materials as card and plaster-impregnated bandages. Teachers’ assessments are too generous.

156. By the end of Year 11, the overall standard of work is average. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and the quality they aim to achieve. Sketchbooks (although just recently introduced) are appreciated by pupils and used well for personal research and observational drawing. Recent GCSE results show a downward trend – from below average in 2002 to well below average in 2004. Pupils performed significantly worse in 2004 in art than they did in nearly all their other subjects.

157. Achievement in Years 7-9 is unsatisfactory overall. Year 7 pupils do what they are asked to do by their teacher, when (for example) painting a sunset or creating a collage of a jungle scene. They have little understanding, however, of what the plants they are representing look like or the “awe and wonder” of experiencing a sunset. Many of them enjoy cutting out coloured tissue-paper

to represent leaves, but many have low motivation – as is evident in the amount of social chatter and, on one occasion, the use of a mobile phone.

158. Year 8 pupils struggled when reading worksheets and resource photographs – for example, of sculpted heads from different cultures. Few pupils linked this information about materials, constructional techniques and surface decoration to their own clay sculptures. Pupils enjoy working directly with clay. Girls are better motivated and learn more independently than boys, even during practical sessions. Year 9 pupils underachieve because they are bored by the tasks set. Five weeks spent making a perspective drawing from newspaper images is not the best preparation for painting an urban scene. It is not surprising that few pupils take notice of the wall displays of paintings by artists. Their own experiences of art give them little understanding of the quality to be aimed for.

159. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is satisfactory. Work in folders shows that pupils are catching up after staff absence and lessons taken by temporary teachers. Pupils speak highly of their present support and particularly the after-school sessions currently available to them. They use ICT well for research. Girls are more motivated and achieve better than boys. Boys who have chosen to focus on Surrealism for the examination have little understanding of what the term means or the implications it has for their own work.

160. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 7-9, satisfactory in Years 10-11 and unsatisfactory overall. Teachers lack experience of best practice in art for Years 7-9. As a result, these pupils receive an inadequate experience of drawing from observation and using sketchbooks for research and experimentation with materials. The best teaching was seen in a Year 10 lesson. Here, well-planned strategies not only enabled pupils to create abstract images of faces, but also helped pupils to understand why artists like Picasso worked in the way that they did.

161. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The teacher who is temporarily in charge is making satisfactory progress in changing the culture of under-performance that has dominated art work for too long. Visits to local galleries have been appreciated by Year 10 pupils and raised their awareness of what is possible. The presence of dry clay and inadequate cleaning in the ceramics room are causes for concern. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory: achievement and progress in Years 7-9 are no better, standards are still too low and there has been little improvement in management procedures.

## **Drama**

Provision in drama is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' subject knowledge is extensive.
- Standards are below average in Years 7-9.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress well in Years 10 and 11.
- The department successfully insists on high standards of behaviour.

## **Commentary**

162. Drama is taught to all pupils in Years 7-9 and is offered as an option in Years 10 and 11. The overall standard of work throughout the school is average, but it is below average in Years 7-9. In the GCSE examination in 2004, a third of the pupils who took the examination obtained grades in the A\*-C range. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school.

163. Pupils in a Year 7 class swiftly consolidated their knowledge and understanding of terminology, (such as "monologue") before working on tableaux. Quickly moving the lesson on, the teacher checked pupils' understanding of such key terms as pitch, tone and pace before setting up small-group activities to explore how monologues work and how they can be changed. Although the

teacher established high expectations, the social immaturity of some pupils and the persistent chatter by four pupils undermined the standard of work for other pupils.

164. Year 10 pupils were highly motivated and worked independently of their teacher, as they developed interpretations of characters in different scripts. An activity to help pupils to improve their vocal skills, by careful control of their breathing, moved quickly on to consolidate their understanding of the power of body language. During the very effective groupwork that followed the interventions of the teacher, pupils critically and thoughtfully reviewed their interpretation of language – as, for example, demonstrating how the sentence “They don’t need that” may be emphasised in different ways.

165. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout Years 7-11. The quiet enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers are a strength of the department. The head of department had been in post for just over a term at the time of the inspection; the quality of leadership and management are satisfactory. Assessment is well used in Years 10 and 11, and the department is reviewing the use of national criteria for Years 7-9. Drama was not reported on at the time of the last inspection and it is not therefore possible to assess how the subject has changed since 1998.

### **Media studies**

166. Media studies is offered as an option in Years 10 and 11. In the 2004 GCSE examination, just over a third of the 64 candidates gained a grade in the A\*-C range. The overall standard of current work is average.

167. Three lessons were sampled during the inspection. In these, teaching was good and pupils achieved well. In the Year 10 lesson seen, the teacher’s use of a pupil’s front-page design as an evaluation tool, using digital projection, enabled pupils both to assess critically the use of key features (such as font size, use of space, strap-lines and headlines) and review their own use of these features. In a Year 11 class exploring advertising campaigns, the teacher extended pupils’ understanding of media terminology well by producing a list of key words that low-attaining pupils in particular found helpful in improving their own work. Whilst most pupils understood the elements of poster advertising, they found the creation of their own posters challenging.

### **Music**

Provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In the best lessons, pupils make good progress.
- The overall standard of pupils’ work, in all years, is below national expectation.
- There is much unsatisfactory teaching which results in poor achievement by pupils.
- Considerable low-level disruption hinders pupils’ learning and achievement.
- Year 11 pupils make good use of the department’s new provision for ICT.

### **Commentary**

168. GCSE results have been well below national expectations for a number of years. Since 2001, for example, only two pupils have achieved a grade as high as C. Recruitment for GCSE courses has been persistently low and in some years there have been no candidates. In the current Year 10, however, there has been a significant increase in numbers. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have considerable interest in music and many play instruments, but standards are still below expectation.

169. The overall standard by the end of Year 9 is below average and achievement unsatisfactory. In Years 7-9, standards vary considerably. In one Year 7 class, the standard of singing was good – very enthusiastic, well focused and very well directed. Pupils were competent, too, in using

technical language. Too often, however, pupils lack basic musical skills and, consequently, achievement is poor. Their keyboard skills are unsatisfactory. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils, but pupils identified as talented do not attain as well as they should.

170. Teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 7-9, good in Years 10-11 and unsatisfactory overall. In a Year 7 lesson seen, the teaching was very good. Pupils learned a lot. The teacher had prepared well, communicated very clearly with pupils and varied the pace of the lesson most effectively. The pupils sang with enthusiasm at a standard that was unusually good. Similarly, in a Year 10 lesson on composition, very good preparation by the same teacher and an ability to pace the lesson in an interesting way very positively stimulated pupils' interest and achievement.

171. In the majority of lessons, however, much of the teaching was unsatisfactory. In these, pupils made little progress and often showed considerable apathy to learning. Several of these lessons were inadequately planned, with little thought for lesson structure or the detail of activities. The pace of lessons was often slow. Pupils did not have clear targets to achieve. Too often the persistent, low-level disruption led to poor learning and was an effective barrier to progress. In one session, even though the planning was satisfactory, the teacher found great difficulty in delivering the lesson content against continual misbehaviour.

172. Departmental leadership and management are unsatisfactory. This is because of complacency and lack of sufficient urgency and determination to raise standards and to ensure that all pupils receive a worthwhile musical education. Much of the unsatisfactory teaching and learning is the result of inadequate planning. This weakness was identified six years ago in the previous report. Although some attention has been given to an overall scheme of work for Years 7-9, there is little connection between it and individual lesson plans or pupils' work. Assessment remains weak: pupils have insufficient knowledge of their own standards or how to improve. Nor is assessment an integral part of planning. There is a lack of vision for the place of music in the school. Music makes little impact. Far fewer pupils than usual, for example, learn to play musical instruments at school. There are no school ensembles of any significant size or standard.

173. Departmental resources for teaching and learning have improved significantly since the last inspection. Considerable investment has been made in ICT for music and Year 11 pupils use the available program capably. Accommodation remains a problem: not all classes take place in specialist rooms, keyboards are inefficiently organised and much time is thereby wasted.

174. There have been some improvements since the previous inspection, but overall progress has been unsatisfactory. Better resources have resulted in more appropriate activities. Singing is much improved. Access to ICT in music is much better. On the other hand, although schemes of work have been developed, too much poor planning and unsatisfactory teaching still result in overall standards that are below expectation and represent significant underachievement by pupils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject performs well against other subjects.
- Much practical work is of a good standard.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils have good attitudes to work and behave well.

### **Commentary**

175. By the end of Year 9, the overall standard in most practical activities is average. It is best in gymnastics and swimming. Year 9 girls, for example, have reached an above average standard in gymnastics. A whole class produced well-executed, basic vaults from springboards. Floorwork

included such advanced movements as the round off / back flip. Year 9 boys have good soccer skills, as observed in a lesson about goalkeeping techniques. Pupils achieve well from the standards they have on entering the school.

176. Standards of practical work, by the end of Year 11, are average, but above-average work was again seen in swimming and badminton. Nearly all Year 10 boys and girls swim well. This was seen in their pursuit of the Bronze Medallion Award, where all have the necessary techniques. Year 10 boys progress well in badminton. They all work hard to improve their skills. The more talented players have the range of strokes and understanding of tactics to play to a good standard. Very clear improvements in execution of the smash were seen during a lesson. One boy from Year 10 is currently ranked the top British Under-16 player in badminton.

177. Since 2002, GCSE examination results have shown a marked improvement. In 2004, the proportion of candidates gaining grades in the range A\*-C was above the national mean and double the percentage of 2002. The department has made a concerted effort to gain these improved results and has succeeded, despite not having a teaching room for the subject. Some written work is of a good standard, at the appropriate level and well presented. Only a few pupils, however, use ICT to enhance their work. The *Junior Sports Leadership* course, running in Years 10 and 11, effectively helps pupils to improve their communication skills. In all years, pupils with special educational needs perform well in lessons. Special equipment is provided for those who need it. Teachers are well aware of these pupils' needs.

178. Teaching is good (and occasionally very good). Lively, vigorous teaching ensures that pupils have good attitudes and behave well in lessons. In some lessons, very good cooperation and collaboration by pupils were notable features and enhanced considerably what was learned. Lessons are well prepared. Teachers identify their learning objectives carefully and share them with pupils. They have, successfully, high expectations of pupils.

179. Departmental leadership is good and has created a united team of teachers. There is a clear vision for the development of the subject. Management is good. The department runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Documentation is sound. Assessment procedures, however, require improvement to produce continuous monitoring of pupils' progress and achievement.

180. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. More pupils (particularly girls) now take examination courses. A wide range of extracurricular activities provides good opportunities for pupils to compete in sport. Some pupils achieve well in sport at district level.

### **Leisure and Tourism**

181. A Year 11 class in this optional, applied GCSE course was sampled as part of the vocational programme offered. The lesson was satisfactorily taught. Pupils worked individually on the design of promotional material as part of their module on marketing. The speed and quality of work varied widely, reflecting the wide range of ability within the group. Attainment was below average overall. Most pupils had good ICT skills, although some Internet searching was haphazard. The teacher worked sympathetically and supportively with individual pupils, but did not always observe pupils who were not on task. Overall achievement was unsatisfactory: pupils were not sufficiently stretched by the pace or depth of the work to perform to their optimum level.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS**

### **Business education**

Provision in business education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results have improved over the last three years and now rank among the best in the school.
- Well-designed lessons are supported by good-quality resources.
- Pupils do not work with sufficient independence in class.
- Pupils' oral and written work require further improvement.

### **Commentary**

182. Results in the GCSE business and communications course, which has been offered at the school since 2000 and which attracts about one third of the year group, are average. Pupils usually achieve or exceed their target grades. The average points score for the subject is above average for the school. About one in five candidates do better in this subject than in any other.

183. Overall attainment in current work in Years 10-11 is average. Standards of achievement in class are satisfactory. Pupils work at least at the level predicted for them. The wide range of ability in each group is reflected in the reasonable quality of work produced. The best written work is very good, showing a high level of ICT skill, including the use of presentational software, and a thorough grasp of the subject. The quality of written answers and the layout of word-processed work do not always match the sophistication of the designs in the accompanying charts and diagrams. Feedback from staff is regular, but often lacks specific targets for improvement.

184. Teaching is good. Well-planned lessons are backed up by good-quality presentational and paper-based resources. A suitably wide variety of activities both develops skilfulness and (for most pupils) maintains interest. Extension tasks are well used to enlarge pupils' understanding, but not always to stretch them to perform beyond their current standard. Teachers sometimes find it quite difficult to draw pupils' attention away from monitor screens to check on progress or to prepare for the next piece of work.

185. The layout of rooms and the size of classes do not aid communication generally or the maintenance of good order on the few occasions when it is an issue. The atmosphere in lessons is generally relaxed but disciplined. Pupils and teachers get on well. Pupils comment favourably on the help they receive from their teachers.

186. Learning is good. Pupils work at least to their predicted levels and, in some cases, make good progress in lessons. They are familiar with the computer programs at their disposal. Many could, however, work at a greater pace and do more for themselves. There is a tendency to ask the teacher to answer simple questions – as, for example, on spelling. Pupils are often quite reluctant to take part in extended question-and-discussion sessions, preferring rather to work on individual tasks with a computer.

187. Leadership and management are good. An experienced leader supports two recently recruited teachers well through common planning, cross-moderation of work and regular reviews of performance. All three also teach ICT. The department has appropriate plans to improve the weaker aspect of pupils' theoretical work. Classroom work is well supported by suitable departmental policies and by well-developed resources that are available on both a website and a hard drive on the extranet. Useful feedback sheets are used to evaluate pupils' work. Classrooms have enough computers and relevant, up-to-date displays. There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

## Study Support course

188. A Year 11 lesson was sampled. This vocationally oriented course involves extended work placements and weekly college sessions, in many cases leading to a national vocational qualification. The lesson seen focused on the preparation of *curricula vitae* and personal statements before the pupils undertook interviews for post-16 training. Both teaching and learning were good. The teacher and a learning support assistant kept pupils (whose attention span was, in most cases, short) well focused on their tasks. A combination of clear instructions and questions, a business-like approach, a brisk pace to the lesson and a sympathetic response to individual needs made this a good lesson. Pupils displayed satisfactory attitudes and made reasonable progress.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

### Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new subject leader has a clear vision for the subject, which is securing improvements.
- Good use of members of the local community makes the subject interesting to pupils.
- Learning is too variable because of variations in the quality of teaching.
- Parental reports for pupils in Years 9 and 10 do not meet statutory requirements.

### Commentary

189. Available evidence indicates that pupils' achievements are satisfactory by the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. The overall standard of work is a little lower than often seen by the end of Year 9, but average by the end of Year 11. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils, because teachers are aware of, and respond to, their needs. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve as well as others, because they play a full part in activities. Gifted pupils achieve as well as other pupils, because the work provided extends their learning appropriately.

190. Pupils in Year 11 understand how courts punish offenders and the purposes of punishment. They also appreciate the responsibilities they will shoulder when they learn to drive. In most lessons, pupils are willing to put forward their ideas. Because they use very short sentences and rarely give an answer of more than one sentence, however, pupils frequently fail to convey the depth of their understanding. This is also noticeable in their written work. Pupils do not listen well. They listen attentively to teachers, although not always to other pupils, but often fail to grasp more than one point.

191. Teaching is satisfactory, leading to satisfactory learning. Frequent use of local examples (including making good use of members of the local community) leads to pupils wanting to learn, because they readily appreciate the relevance of what is being studied. A good example was seen when Year 7 pupils were very interested in a talk on drugs given by a police officer, attracted by the many anecdotes he included from his experiences. A feature of lessons is the infectious enthusiasm that teachers display for the subject, so helping to sustain pupils' attention. Some staff who teach only the occasional lesson of the subject are not skilled in summarising what pupils have learned. Occasionally, teachers do not ensure that pupils are aware of an opposing view. In a significant minority of lessons, pupils' unsatisfactory behaviour is not dealt with quickly and effectively, thereby disrupting learning.

192. When other subjects make a contribution to the teaching of citizenship, pupils are not always made aware that this is happening. Pupils' work is regularly marked, generally with helpful comment. Parents of pupils in Year 10 do not receive an annual report for the subject. Parents of pupils in Year 9 are not informed of the level of achievement reached by their child.

193. At the time of the inspection, the head of the subject had been in post for only a few months. During this time, he has formed very clear plans for the subject and begun to implement them. He has made a good start on the task of monitoring the quality of teaching and recognises the need to disseminate good practice.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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