

INSPECTION REPORT

BRIDLINGTON SCHOOL SPORTS COLLEGE

Bridlington

LEA area: East Riding of Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 118111

Headteacher: Mr B Davies

Lead inspector: Mr A. Briggs

Dates of inspection: 21st – 24th February 2005

Inspection number: 271737

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

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Terms that may be used in this report

Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are at Key Stage 3, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools after Year 6. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are at Key Stage 4 of their education. Those pupils who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the sixth form, in Years 12 and 13. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for pupils and pupils of all ages at school.

At the end of Year 9, pupils aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the pupils know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, pupils can take the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) qualifications. Sixth form students may take further courses leading to these awards, including the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE), or to those of the General Certificate of Education at Advanced level (A-level). Students may take examinations leading to the Advanced Subsidiary award (AS), equivalent to half the difficulty of the full A-level, which is gained by further study beyond AS standard. Some students may also take Advanced Extension Awards (AEA).

Inspectors judge the standards reached by pupils by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for pupils of the same age nationally. The pupils' achievements reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational value added over time. In this report, similar schools are defined as those having similar standards at the start of each stage of learning.

The Key Stage 3 National Strategy is designed to support schools to address the learning needs of 11-14 year old pupils. It operates across all subjects as a whole-school improvement strategy. It provides a platform for professional development across the school through its emphasis on teaching and learning. It supports personalised learning by promoting an approach in which careful attention is paid to pupils' individual learning styles, motivations and needs. Lessons are designed to be varied and enjoyable within a clear structure.

The combined cadet force (CCF) aims to be a disciplined organisation within a school so that boys and girls may develop powers of leadership by means of training to promote the qualities of responsibility, self-reliance, resourcefulness, endurance, perseverance and a sense of service to the community. It aims to give cadets background knowledge of the methods and conditions of service in the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Secondary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 11-18
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 1165

School address: Bessingby Road
Bridlington
Postcode: YO16 4QU

Telephone number: 01262 672593
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr I Bryce

Date of previous inspection: 27th September 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bridlington School Sports College is bigger than other secondary schools and educates boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 18. The sixth form is smaller than most other sixth forms. The school has 1165 pupils on roll of which there are 137 students in the sixth form; these numbers represent a slight increase on those quoted in the previous report. There are broadly equal numbers of boys and girls on roll. The school serves the immediate area of Bridlington and a small number of villages in the surrounding area within the East Riding of Yorkshire local education authority (LEA). Most pupils come from areas which, overall, are below average in terms of social and economic measures when compared to the national pattern.

Pupils join the school in Year 7 with below average standards in English, mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well above average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is also well above average. Most of these pupils are on the register for moderate learning difficulties. The school is almost entirely white (British/European) and English is the first language for all pupils. In line with many seaside town schools, the school has a large proportion of students who move into the area for short periods of time and then move on.

In addition to being a specialist Sports College, the school received the 'Careermark' award in 2000, Investors in People in 2002 and the Sportsmark Gold award in 2004. Bridlington School and Sports College is committed to the combined cadet force (CCF) initiative and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

Nearly three-quarters of the students continue into post-16 education. Students join the sixth form to follow traditional A-level courses and a small range of vocational courses. Attainment on entry to the sixth form varies year to year, but is generally below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15208	A Briggs	Lead inspector	
9053	V Phillips	Lay inspector	
22423	J Lövgreen	Team inspector	English; English as an additional language
33139	M Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics; sixth form mathematics
4145	C Harrison	Team inspector	Science; sixth form biology
33018	A Lyons	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT); sixth form business education
33135	K Ropek	Team inspector	Art and design
17808	S Orpin	Team inspector	Citizenship; geography
30973	G Hancock	Team inspector	Design and technology
33002	J Woodhouse	Team inspector	History
33242	S Wall	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
30297	G Spruce	Team inspector	Music
12965	S Jeffray	Team inspector	Physical education; sixth form physical education
31372	R Hardwick	Team inspector	Religious education; special educational needs
15832	J Vanstone	Team inspector	Business education; sixth form history
19596	B Treacy	Team inspector	Drama; sixth form English
22985	J Sparkes	Team inspector	

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **poor** standard of education and **poor** value for money. Standards are well below average and pupils badly underachieve. Teaching, learning, leadership, and management are all poor.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Poor teaching expects too little of pupils, so they achieve badly and many do not attend regularly
- Ineffective management results in a very weak focus on priorities and too many inconsistencies in dealing with them
- The examples set by staff, and the care for pupils, are not good enough; the school's ethos is unsatisfactory and personal development is not taken seriously enough
- The school uses its specialist status very well to boost pupils' aspirations and confidence
- There are too many exclusions because poor behaviour and achievement are seen as the fault of pupils
- Pupils do well in physical education, and sixth formers achieve well in several subjects
- The opportunities for extra activities outside the school day are good

Progress since the last inspection has been **poor**. A recent strength of the school is the gaining of Sports College status and this greatly enhances many aspects of the school's work. Good progress has been made on improving the school accommodation but although progress has been made in improving information and communication technology (ICT), provision remains unsatisfactory. Teaching is now much worse, pupils' achievement is poor and management has significant weaknesses. Requirements for religious education in the sixth form and providing a daily act of collective worship are not met. Improvement in the sixth form has been satisfactory.

In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspection Act 1996, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	E	E	E	E
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	D	C	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' achievement is **poor**. Pupils arrive with standards that are below average and by Year 11 their standards have dropped to well below average. The 2004 results of Year 9 tests were well below average, and are not rising as fast as national figures. There are significant areas of underachievement in the school. The achievement of boys and girls is similar. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are identified as gifted and talented underachieve because teachers do not modify work to meet their needs. Levels of literacy and skills in ICT are well below average, while levels of numeracy are below average. GCSE results in 2004 were well below the average for schools where pupils had similar Year 9 results. In the sixth form, standards are below average. Students achieve satisfactorily, given their below average standards on entry.

Pupils' personal qualities and their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **unsatisfactory**. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory in the main school because a small number of pupils are allowed to disrupt the learning of others in lessons where teaching is weak. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are satisfactory in the sixth form. Although the school works hard to improve attendance it remains well below average and punctuality is unsatisfactory in the main school and in the sixth form.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **poor** quality of education. Teaching is **poor** overall because of the high proportion of lessons that fail to reach a satisfactory standard. Teachers generally have low expectations of what pupils can do and are too ready to blame the pupils for weaknesses in teaching. Teaching in physical education is good and a strength of the school; it is here that the best teaching is found. Teaching is good in mathematics, history and music in Years 10 and 11. Pupils achieve best in these subjects. Teaching is particularly weak in science, religious education, business education and citizenship. Marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory and does not tell pupils what they need to do to improve. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory.

The curriculum is **unsatisfactory** because important statutory requirements are not met and many subjects fail to provide a satisfactory education. It is balanced and provides a satisfactory combination of vocational and traditional courses with sound work-related learning. There is a good range of extra clubs and activities, particularly in sport and performing arts. The combined cadet force (CCF) is a particular strength. The good links with the community and with local schools and colleges enhance learning. The community links developed through the School Sport Co-ordinator Partnership are very effective. Provision for the care and welfare of pupils is unsatisfactory because pupils' personal development is not a high priority and arrangements for providing advice and guidance are unsatisfactory. The sixth form curriculum, whilst having some strengths, is also unsatisfactory because the requirement for religious education is not met.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **poor**, although the recently appointed headteacher is improving this feature of the school. The headteacher's evaluation of the school is accurate and highlighted many of the weaknesses identified by the inspectors. Leadership and management of subjects are ineffective. Leadership and management of the Sports College and physical education are very good; they are poor in business education, and very poor in religious education and citizenship. Governance is supportive but unsatisfactory in not holding the school fully to account. The governing body does not meet its statutory responsibilities for citizenship, ICT in Years 10 and 11, religious education in the sixth form and a daily act of collective worship. The sixth form is well led and adequately managed.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally satisfied with the school but have some concerns. They are happy with the arrangements for settling into school and feel their children enjoy school. They feel that their children are making good progress because teachers expect pupils to work hard, but inspectors did not find this to be the case. Parents have serious concerns about the behaviour of some pupils and are not happy about the way that the school keeps them informed and the inspection team generally shared these concerns. Pupils are satisfied with their school but feel much could be improved. Many feel they are not treated fairly by all teachers and the inspectors agree. Pupils are clearly fed up with being bullied and with teachers who allow pupils to misbehave in lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Raise standards of achievement by tackling the root causes, rather than allocating blame
- Improve teaching, ensuring that teachers' high expectations foster a culture of learning, success and celebration to inspire all pupils to want to come to school and do well
- Ensure that all required policies and procedures are in place and implemented consistently
- Ensure managers keep track of performance rigorously, focus sharply on priorities and take speedy and effective action to deal with weaknesses
- Manage pupils' behaviour positively and consistently so that standards rise and exclusions are significantly reduced

and in the sixth form

- Improve students' attendance to school and punctuality to lessons

and, to meet statutory requirements

- Ensure pupils and students have their full entitlement in ICT, citizenship and religious education and have a daily act of collective worship

THE SIXTH FORM AT BRIDLINGTON SCHOOL AND SPORTS COLLEGE

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school has a **satisfactory** sixth form that is cost-effective. Teaching is satisfactory and students learn and achieve satisfactorily as a result. The curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of most students but because there is no opportunity for students to experience religious education it is unsatisfactory. Examination results are below average overall. Students are reasonably positive about the school and behave satisfactorily. However, their attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. The sixth form is well led and satisfactorily managed.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students' progress is well monitored and supported by sixth form tutors
- Effective leadership ensures that the sixth form provides a satisfactory education for students
- Students' views are not listened to enough, resulting in them having little involvement in shaping the future
- Students are often late for lessons and some do not attend school enough

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	English: Satisfactory. Sound teaching and assessment lead to students achieving satisfactorily. Standards are below average.
Mathematics	Good. Teachers have good subject expertise and students achieve well.
Science	Biology: Satisfactory. Standards are average for the current Year 13 and represent satisfactory achievement for those students.
Information and communication technology	There was no focus subject in this area
Humanities	History: Good. The working relationship between teachers and students is good, students enjoy their studies and this leads to students achieving well. Standards are average.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	There was no focus subject in this area
Visual and performing arts and media	There was no focus subject in this area
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Physical education: Good. Teachers have good subject expertise. Standards are average and so, in comparison with their attainment on entry, students achieve well.
Business	Unsatisfactory. Although subject specialists, teachers' low expectations of what students can do, coupled with insufficient reference to the real world of business, result in unsatisfactory achievement and learning. Standards are average.
Health and social care	There was no focus subject in this area
General education	There was no focus subject in this area

The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the school. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Sixth form tutors provide satisfactory support and guidance to students. Advice on courses, careers and what to do next is sound. The sixth form prides itself on being open to all students and

endeavours to give effective support in all courses. There are a good number of extra-curricular opportunities, particularly in the areas of community and voluntary service, in which students are positively and actively involved. Sound careers advice supports career choices and the quality of advice offered in preparation for university entry is satisfactory. Students are not involved well enough in school life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. Effective leadership and sound management have resulted in those responsible for the sixth form working well together. Time given to sixth form management is limited. Decisions about its direction are taken by senior managers that are not involved in the day-to-day management. This results in a lack of cohesion with the rest of the school. Systems for monitoring teaching are used more effectively than in the main school. Governance is unsatisfactory.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are reasonably positive about the sixth form and the support they receive from the sixth form leaders, tutors and teachers. They feel they are encouraged and supported well by the managers. However, although they enjoy being a student at the school, they do not feel there is an adult they could turn to for help. They feel their views are not taken into account appropriately to bring about improvements in the sixth form and in the school's work. Inspectors agree with these views. Students value teachers taking time to offer individual guidance and help when necessary. They appreciate the added dimension the Sports College status offers.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

The vast majority of pupils join the school with standards of attainment that are below average and by the time they leave Year 11 their standards have declined to well below the national average. There is significant underachievement in the school resulting in pupils, in Years 7 to 11, not achieving the standards of which they are capable. Competence is well below average in the basic skills of language, literacy and ICT, and below average in mathematics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are not achieving well enough in many subjects because teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of are too low
- Standards are well below average in most subjects
- Pupils' achievement is poor in science, religious education and citizenship
- Pupils achieve well in physical education and in mathematics, history and music in Years 10 and 11 because of good teaching
- Sixth form students achieve well in many subjects based on their individual starting points
- Pupils' unsatisfactory behaviour and poor attendance play a significant part in their underachievement

Commentary

1. Results in the end of Year 9 national tests in 2004 were below the national average. Results in English rose but results in science and mathematics dropped significantly. Mathematics results are strongest at the highest levels, while those in English are weakest. Pupils made similar progress in mathematics and English to those in similar schools but in science they were below average. Girls performed better than boys did. The school did not meet the targets that it had set for the proportion of pupils reaching National Curriculum Level 5 in each of these subjects. The trend in results over the last five years is below the national picture.
2. The standards seen in Year 9 were well below average. In physical education, standards were average. In all other subjects standards were either below or well below average. Pupils achieve poorly because of poor teaching. Boys and girls achieve similarly. Pupils with special educational needs and those identified as particularly gifted and talented achieve as poorly as their classmates despite the support they receive.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31 (33)	33 (33)
Mathematics	33 (34)	36 (35)
Science	31 (33)	33 (34)

There were 209 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were well below average; they were significantly below the performance of pupils in other similar schools. This is much worse than those noted in the previous report. The proportion of pupils who left with at least one GCSE pass was well below the national average and when compared to similar schools. The school did not meet the targets it had set. The trend in results was below the national trend. Pupils' achievement in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 9 was poor and has been for several years.
4. The standards seen in Year 11 were well below average overall. In relation to their attainment at the beginning of Year 10 and their capabilities, pupils' overall achievement is poor. Pupils achieve well in mathematics, history, physical education and music because they work well in

response to the good teaching they get. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in English, art and design, design and technology and drama. In all other subjects their achievement is either unsatisfactory or poor. Pupils underachieve in ICT and their standards are well below average in Years 10 and 11 because many do not have the opportunity to use computers enough. Standards are not high enough in citizenship because not enough time is spent teaching the subject and much of the curriculum is not covered.

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	30 (30)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	78 (75)	89 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	91 (90)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	26 (27)	35 (35)

There were 205 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. A significant proportion of pupils underachieve because of poor attendance. Pupils with special educational needs and those identified as gifted or talented also underachieve. The main reason for this is because the use of different materials to suit pupils' particular needs is inconsistent; behaviour management is not always secure; and extra support is often lacking in large classes containing significant numbers of pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. Girls and boys usually achieve as well as each other, although girls did better in the 2004 GCSE results. Girls generally work harder than boys to complete coursework. In some subjects, teachers do not encourage the boys as much as the girls, resulting in lower achievement of boys and some disruptive behaviour.
6. Standards of literacy are well below the national expectation. Pupils do not make enough progress in the development of their literacy, ICT and mathematical skills because of an inconsistent approach across the school to improving these skills. Writing skills are not developed enough in many subjects and pupils miss out on opportunities to improve their spelling and grammar because some teachers do not insist on accuracy in written work. Pupils' mathematical skills are below average. Skills of using ICT are generally poor because not enough use is made of computers in lessons.

Sixth form

Students enter the sixth form with below average levels of attainment because the school has an open access policy to encourage students who would not normally consider staying in education to continue. Standards by the end of the sixth form are below average. Students are achieving satisfactorily.

Commentary

7. Results in 2004 were below average and lower than the previous year. Results vary year to year because of the entry policy and the small numbers in the sixth form.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2004

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	86.7 (91.0)	92.3 (92.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	15.8 (23.7)	36.2 (35.6)
Average point score per pupil	212.9 (232.3)	265.2 (258.2)

There were 34 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

8. Of the six subjects inspected in detail, students attain above average standards in mathematics. Standards in biology, business education, history and physical education are average. Standards are below average in English. The standards attained by male and female

students are similar. Students' achievement is good in mathematics, history and physical education and satisfactory in English and biology. Students' achievement in business education is unsatisfactory.

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

Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive but, overall, their attitudes to school and their general behaviour are unsatisfactory. Attendance is poor and punctuality unsatisfactory. Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, is unsatisfactory. All these factors contribute to poor achievement. Improvement since the previous inspection has been poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are receptive to good teaching but frustrated by too many dull lessons
- Many pupils behave well and work hard, in spite of low expectations; a few crave better teaching
- High absences reflect lack of enthusiasm for teaching that fails to meet the needs of all pupils
- High exclusion levels mirror not only the difficulties of troubled and troublesome pupils but the school's failure to manage behaviour and classrooms effectively
- Pupils' personal development is not taken seriously enough as a factor in their success at school

Commentary

9. Pupils show goodwill in spite of much mundane teaching so are happy to have their enthusiasm fired by imaginative activities and are quite capable of persisting with well-explained, worthwhile tasks. Yet the school does not try hard enough to create a flourishing community of enthusiastic learners because it has slipped into the habit of making excuses and blaming pupils for its failure to thrive. It faces similar challenges to other schools who have to cope with significant numbers of needy pupils, a lot of coming and going, low aspirations and unusual patterns of local unemployment, but has not seized this opportunity to make a difference. It lacks a consistent and relentless focus on inspiring pupils to enjoy learning and aim high. As a result, pupils are faced with too many lessons where expectations are low, work is boring and they learn very little, which puts them off school.
10. More pupils are passive and tolerant of lack-lustre teaching than frustrated and angry about being short-changed. Behaviour in lessons is usually good enough for pupils to have a chance of making reasonable progress. This is because pupils are used to the idea that a 'good' lesson is one where they do as they are asked without too much fuss rather than one where they make great strides in their grasp of a subject. Parents are concerned about the link between teaching and pupils' responses, justifiably. One parent wrote: "My child has a special need – inspirational teaching!"

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.6	School data	3.2
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.

11. Attendance is poor despite the school's best efforts to tackle it. Sometimes pupils feel that school has little to offer, so do not turn up at all or avoid certain lessons. They are put off by the lack of exciting work to do, inadequate help with their reading and writing difficulties, and the feeling that some teachers are quick to find fault but slow to praise. The school is not crystal clear about how absence limits achievement and too ready to accept any written explanation as an 'authorised' absence. A few families in difficult circumstances find it hard to work with the school and ensure that their children attend regularly. It is too easy for pupils to

wander in and out of school without robust checks on who is and is not present. Absence and lateness to lessons are accepted too readily and not followed up swiftly enough, in spite of an electronic registration system. Pupils skip classes and dawdle to dreary lessons because success does not matter enough to them as the school lacks a culture of achievement and celebration.

12. Parents are concerned about behaviour. For example, one parent wrote: "One of the main reasons my child does not like school very much is the behaviour of other children in class. He gets very bored and frustrated when others disrupt lessons. So, although he is doing well at school, he could be doing much better." Pupils agree that misbehaviour spoils life at school. They feel that although pupils mess around in boring lessons, particularly religious education and science, and some classroom management is weak, most of the very bad behaviour happens outside lessons.
13. The school does too little to manage behaviour consistently and positively to prevent so many fixed term exclusions. Fights are quite common, especially in summer. Some staff are very quick to exclude pupils from lessons and do not recognise that poor teaching and lack of respect for pupils' ideas might be triggers for disruptive behaviour. The school lacks an agreed, consistent approach to managing pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, which sometimes results in avoidable confrontation. These pupils do well and behave better with skilled, constructive support, particularly from key staff in the learning support unit. Bullying is an issue with pupils, not least as the school has been slow in putting in place an anti-bullying policy plus clear, consistent action to deal with those who intimidate others. Consequently, pupils do not always feel safe and are not confident that bullying is dealt with swiftly and fairly. This has not been the urgent priority it should be.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1159	669	2
1		
2		
3		

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

14. The school has an incoherent approach to fostering pupils' personal development, not least as it sees spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness as 'add-ons' and not an integral part of their achievement and curricular entitlement. Although some good work on social skills happens in physical education and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHE), too many opportunities are missed to enthral pupils and nurture other personal qualities. The first 20 minutes of the school day, called 'guidance', are wasted regularly in meaningless activities such as playing cards. In contrast, in a good Year 8 assembly, a genuine sense of occasion encouraged pupils to feel valued when a police officer gave prizes to those actively involved in community service.
15. Pupils are not always treated with respect, and the example set by a few adults, who are rude and surly particularly at lunchtime, is unacceptable. One or two teachers rely too much on threat or humiliation; for instance, in one lesson a teacher encouraged the class to ridicule two pupils by saying: "Shall we name and shame pupils who scored zero in the test?" This undermines the very good efforts of others to teach pupils how to relate to people, for example through teamwork promoted constantly by staff in physical education, music and the CCF. It results in confused messages about the right thing to do and undermines respect for others and their views. Pupils enjoy school productions and trips but have very limited understanding of life beyond the local area because not enough is done to develop insight and appreciation

of other cultures. The governing body has overlooked its duty to ensure that a race equality policy is in place and used to promote better understanding of diversity.

Sixth form

Students' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory, which helps them to achieve satisfactorily. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. A few highly motivated students, with better developed learning habits than most, behave very well and have every chance of doing well in their studies.

Commentary

16. Students say they enjoy being in the sixth form with their friends because in many subjects the teaching is better and "teachers are more approachable", which motivates them to have a go with work they sometimes find hard. However, many students reach the sixth form without all the skills they need to make headway with advanced courses. They need a lot of help to understand and analyse abstract ideas, which puts pressure on teachers to structure lessons so students do not lose heart and belief in their ability to cope. In some cases, students struggle because teaching is not focused sharply enough on the building blocks needed as a foundation for success, so they become disheartened and start to miss lessons, which makes things worse. They are honest enough to admit that they could have done better, but needed more encouragement, particularly in chemistry and English. Tutors do not do all they could to motivate students. A few individual students take real responsibility for their own learning, read avidly and scour the Internet for all the extra help they can find because they are so keen to succeed.
17. Students feel strongly that they want "more chance to help with changing the school for the better" and that their sense of maturity and responsibility suffers without opportunities to influence school life. The role of 'prefect' is underdeveloped, the idea of using sixth formers as mentors for Year 9 has not been explored fully and students feel unfairly treated because of limited chances to be leaders in school. As one student commented, "we can put 'prefect' on the UCAS form but it doesn't mean anything".

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a poor quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is poor; it is satisfactory in the sixth form. The curriculum is unsatisfactory but opportunities for enrichment are good. The quality of support and guidance for pupils is satisfactory in the sixth form and unsatisfactory in the main school and has a negative effect on personal development. The school works very well with the community through its Sports College specialist status. It works well with other schools and colleges to support pupils' achievement. Links with parents are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching is poor and leads to poor learning and achievement. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Much of the work is too easy for pupils because teachers have low expectations of what pupils can achieve
- Many teachers are quick to blame pupils for poor learning, rather than tackle weaknesses in teaching
- There is too much inconsistency in teaching and in the use of effective teaching methods throughout the school and even within departments
- Teaching is good in physical education; as a result pupils achieve well
- Marking of pupils' work fails to inform them how well they are doing or what they need to do to get better

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed in the main school during the inspection in 121 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (2%)	8 (7%)	37 (30%)	46 (38%)	23 (19%)	5 (4%)	0

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

18. Pupils do not learn enough because nearly one in four lessons is unsatisfactory or worse. Teaching is consistently good in physical education and in Years 10 and 11 it is good in mathematics, history and music. It is unsatisfactory in geography and in Years 10 and 11 in ICT. Teaching is poor in science, religious education, citizenship and business education. There is very little teaching that is of a really good standard.
19. Within this bleak picture, there are pockets of effective teaching. The best teaching in the school can be found in physical education. Here the head of department has analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the department and set about using the strengths to eliminate the weaknesses. Within the department there are examples of outstanding teaching and learning. In these excellent lessons, teachers create an atmosphere where pupils are treated with respect and relationships are very good. Pupils enjoy the imaginative topics they are presented with and respond by working very hard and achieving much better than expected. Although this high quality teaching has been identified by senior managers, it has not yet been shared with the rest of the staff, although plans are in place to do so. In music lessons, teachers treat pupils caringly and create an environment founded on mutual respect and a genuine belief in the care and welfare of individuals. Consequently, pupils respond well to the good teaching in Years 10 and 11 and pupils learn well. Teaching has improved in French and history because of strong leadership.
20. There are two main reasons why teaching is poor. Firstly, much of the unsatisfactory teaching results from teachers trying to teach material that is too easy for the pupils concerned because teachers have very low expectations of what pupils can achieve. One pupil pleaded: "I would like the teachers to push us more." Higher attaining pupils are not stretched enough in many lessons and these pupils frequently become restless and 'switched off'; they then begin to misbehave. This misbehaviour usually takes the form of pupils simply not doing as they are told; they do not disrupt others but will not follow the teacher's instructions. Because many teachers set work that is undemanding pupils' interest is not sustained and they do not achieve as well as they should. For example, in one Year 11 geography lesson, pupils were required to colour in a map for most of the lesson. In a Year 10 business lesson the teacher told the inspector: "the highest target grade is a C and you can't go too fast with this group".
21. Secondly, many teachers are quick to blame the pupils for failings in teaching. For example, in religious education, much of the teaching is mundane and tasks do not capture the enthusiasm or interest of pupils. In these lessons the pupils are blamed for a lack of interest when in fact it is the dull activities that fail to challenge them. This problem is not limited to religious education lessons; several subjects have teachers who blame pupils instead of tackling their own failings in teaching.
22. Part of the problem that teachers have in setting suitably challenging work stems from their poor understanding of how to use assessment to develop effective learning. The only subjects where assessment overall is thorough and constructive are physical education and history. The school has a great deal of data on pupils' standards but teachers do not use this to accurately assess how well the pupils are doing or at what level they should be pitching work for them. The school has an assessment policy but it is not being used. The school has data on pupil progress but this is not used to analyse how well pupils are progressing or to help planning, so targets are based on hunches rather than evidence. Teachers are not made aware of the capabilities of their pupils and so cannot set work that is of a suitable level of

difficulty, instead choosing tasks such as colouring in or copying out pages of information from books. The headteacher has good plans for innovative development but they have yet to have an effect.

23. Marking is inconsistent. Whilst examples of good marking that enables pupils to learn exist, these are rare. Very good systems exist in history, which track the progress of pupils well. In most subjects there are far too many examples of books not being marked and the situation is not monitored. Mistakes go unchecked. There is too little attention to serious and regular errors of punctuation, grammar, and spelling because marking is inadequate. In Years 10 and 11 marking is better than in Years 7 to 9 because examination criteria are used and pupils receive feedback on their coursework. Lower down the school pupils are unclear about their National Curriculum levels and are given very little idea of how well they are doing.
24. Pupils with special educational needs do not on the whole receive the attention to their learning needs that they should. Not enough support is provided to cope with the large number of pupils with special educational needs in the school. Individual educational plans are well written and available to all teachers on the school intranet together with other relevant information. However, they are largely ineffective because they are not used enough by teachers to plan appropriate work for the pupils. There is inconsistency in the way different subjects plan lessons to include appropriate work for the lower attainers. Support assistants in general play a valuable role. Those attached to departments, such as mathematics, develop particular expertise and have a good effect on pupils' learning. In some lessons pupils with special educational needs achieve better than their classmates because they cope well with the low-level tasks set by teachers.
25. Inconsistency is another factor in the weak teaching found in the school. In fact, for almost all aspects of teaching there are examples of both good and poor practice throughout the school. Even within subjects there are great inconsistencies. In religious education, for example, teachers work from two separate schemes of work, have totally different assessment criteria and treat pupils in completely different ways.
26. The methods for teaching literacy in all subjects are poor. Too many teachers fail to do enough to improve pupils' reading and writing skills in lessons. This is a significant factor in pupils' low achievement yet it is not regarded highly enough by teachers. Most teachers are good models of how to summarise discussion and take notes, but pupils are allowed to present untidy and unfinished written work. Even important technical terms which are the key focus of a lesson are not corrected when pupils misspell them.
27. The Key Stage 3 National Strategy has had hardly any impact on teaching and learning. New ideas to tackle this have recently been introduced and consultants from the LEA have provided valuable support and guidance. Despite this, many teachers make tokenistic gestures to structuring lessons with starter activities and clear, shared learning goals but few manage to incorporate a summary to evaluate what has been learned. Pupils are not involved enough in their own learning because teachers do not trust them to work on their own.

Sixth form

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. This results in students learning and achieving satisfactorily. Teachers' use of assessment procedures is satisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed in the sixth form during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2.5%)	4 (11%)	14 (38%)	17 (46%)	1 (2.5%)	0	0

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

Commentary

28. Teaching is more consistent in the sixth form and teachers have higher expectations of their students than in the main school. In the subjects inspected in detail, the quality of teaching was good in mathematics, physical education and history. In English and biology it was satisfactory but in business education it was unsatisfactory. Teachers generally have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach and a good understanding of the requirements of the examinations. Lessons are usually well planned and contain very examination focused activities.
29. Assessment in the sixth form is better than in the main school and is satisfactory. The small group sizes in the sixth form allow teachers a clearer understanding of the level at which the individual students are working, and teachers share this information effectively with the students. Work is generally marked regularly and the examination board criteria are applied. Particularly good systems in history provide a good role model but procedures do not exist to replicate this practice. Targets are set but national systems are only now being adopted.

The curriculum

The curriculum is unsatisfactory throughout the school and in the sixth form. There are many weaknesses that mean not all pupils are prepared well enough for further study. The opportunities for activities outside of lessons are good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. The quality and quantity of resources and accommodation are, overall, satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very good range of innovative opportunities in physical education
- Activities offered to pupils beyond the school day, such as sports activities and the CCF initiative, are good and enhance learning well
- The school does not meet statutory requirements for citizenship, for ICT in Years 10 and 11 and a daily act of collective worship is not fully provided. The school does not meet statutory requirements for religious education in the sixth form
- There is a good programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE)
- The Key Stage 3 National Strategy is not yet sufficiently improving pupils' experiences of learning and the new status of Sports College is not yet having a positive impact on the curriculum beyond physical education

Commentary

30. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are offered a broad and appropriate range of subjects, although the planning for science does not provide sufficient investigative work. In geography, the absence of schemes of work means that some teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, such as analysis, explanation and comparison. All pupils study French and most study Spanish, although provision in the latter is limited by the time allowed to study. In music there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their composition styles and skills. Some groups in science are too large for the practical nature of the subject. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow a satisfactory range of subjects, with some chosen from option groups that generally reflect their interests. Innovative courses are being developed, some of which are the result of effective recent links with other schools and the local college. These include vocational courses such as health and social care and leisure and tourism, and work-related activities such as the 'Boat to Throat' initiative (learning experiences related to fishing and catering) and engineering.
31. The curriculum in business education is poor and does not benefit from business links. In religious education the curriculum is inconsistently taught because there are two separate schemes of work. Those pupils who do not choose ICT as an option in Years 10 and 11 have to rely on other subjects to cover the statutory entitlement. This does not work, and nearly half the pupils in Years 10 and 11 fail to get enough use of computers. The current timetable is

being reviewed to reduce the number of GCSE courses offered and improve the range of alternatives offered to pupils.

32. The programme for PSHE is well planned and valued by pupils. There are good opportunities for drug and sex education, and visitors are used effectively to enhance pupils' experience. Although PSHE provides some good experiences where pupils learn about some aspects of citizenship, there are too few other opportunities and no plan to ensure the requirements of the National Curriculum for citizenship are covered.
33. The specialist status of the school has greatly benefited physical education, where sports development is having a positive impact. All pupils can gain a qualification through the broad range of courses offered and strong links are being developed with primary schools and the local community. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities provides well for those pupils who are gifted or talented in physical education.
34. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is otherwise unsatisfactory. Mentoring in physical education and extension work in history show how a few departments are aware of what needs to be done and have strategies to get things under way. Plans for future work are imaginative and good, but will depend on the increased awareness and co-operation of teachers.
35. The match of teachers and support staff to subjects is satisfactory. In most subjects staff are suitably qualified, but staffing is unsatisfactory in science, history and business studies. Although support staff do their best, there is not enough of them to adequately deal with the large number of pupils with special educational needs. There is not enough technical support in art and design. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory. In English, art and design and music, the accommodation is very good, and it is good in mathematics and history. However, business education lacks a business-like base room and there are poor athletics facilities in physical education. English is very well provided with ICT equipment and there are good resources in art and design, music, physical education and drama.
36. At the time of the previous inspection the library was a strength of the school. This is no longer the case: it is now unsatisfactory as a support to learning. It is housed in two imposing rooms which continue to celebrate the traditions of a school way of life long gone. Shelving and fireplaces are delightful and fascinating, but they are also old, inflexible, and limiting. There is great potential for the library to be turned into the learning resource centre which the school has planned. Banks of computers await installation but inadequate wiring has stalled this important initiative. Funding for the library, book stock and borrowing rates are well below those usually found. The library is orderly and well-maintained, with few old or tatty books. Despite being open and staffed all day there is little use during lesson time, and only half of the subject departments take any interest in what the library could and should offer to pupils.
37. Provision for out-of-school activities is good. Sports feature prominently and a very wide range of sporting activities is offered, much to the appreciation and pleasure of the pupils. The school has a very strong combined cadet force (CCF), involving pupils in army, navy and air force related activities such as residential trips at home and abroad; this is a real strength of the school's enrichment activities and is valued highly by the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the annual musical production and have opportunities to join the school's concert band and choir. Revision classes are held regularly for older pupils prior to examinations.
38. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory. The provision for ICT in Years 10 and 11 still does not meet requirements and more subjects are weaker than at the time of the last inspection.

Sixth form

The sixth form curriculum is unsatisfactory because the school does not meet statutory requirements for religious education for all students. There is a good range of out-of-school activities

which enhance the learning experiences of students. Whilst some vocational courses are offered, the take-up by students is low.

Commentary

39. The quality and range of learning opportunities in the sixth form are appropriate to the needs of most students. The school offers a broad and developing range of courses and works effectively with the local community to ensure that alternatives are available. A good course is provided in science, and mathematics students are able to gain a free-standing qualification in addition to a further mathematics course. In art and design students benefit from visits abroad and in physical education there are good opportunities for sports activities. The school organises the range of subjects to meet the wishes of students, but for some subjects, such as geography and performing arts, this results in classes that are very small and in consequence, the quality of learning is diminished as students miss the stimulation of discussion with a larger group. The current timetable also causes some difficulties for those students studying science who attend lessons at lunchtime and miss out on their lunch break.
40. A good range of enrichment opportunities enhances the sixth form curriculum. A wide range of sporting opportunities is offered and over half the sixth form students take part regularly. Students are actively involved in the school's annual production and visits are arranged to theatres and musical events outside school. External speakers visit the sixth form regularly to discuss matters of general world interest and to spark debate and reflection. Sixth form students are also involved in the combined cadet force activities and gain valuable leadership experience in working with younger pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Guidance and support, including advice on how to do better subject by subject, are unsatisfactory because care is not seen as part of a relentless drive to raise standards and achievement. The school does not care well enough for pupils because of gaps in everyday safe-keeping. Guidance on courses and careers is satisfactory. The school does not take enough account of pupils' views nor act swiftly enough to deal with their concerns. Improvement in quality of care has been poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The contrast between the caring approach of some adults and abrasive behaviour of others undoes the school's efforts to offer high quality care to everyone
- The school does not do enough rigorous checks to ensure that all procedures relating to pupils' safety and well-being are securely in place and used in full
- The school gives too little priority and too many excuses for inadequate care of pupils at lunchtime
- Pupils do not have a clear enough idea of how well they are doing or how to improve their work
- Pupils' views are not taken seriously enough to help change the school for the better

Commentary

41. The school does not meet its aim to create a caring environment in which each pupil is valued as an individual because it has not taken enough care to achieve positive, consistent examples of the conduct and everyday courtesies it expects. It is not thorough enough in checking that everyone treats pupils with respect. This leads to abuses such as: "You need to understand that I control your life because I mark your work. You need to be nice to me otherwise I will be nasty to you – I mark your work, exams are important and you won't do well unless you play the game". This supports pupils' perceptions that they are not treated fairly. In contrast, the care shown towards sick, troubled and sad pupils is often of high quality, resulting in them feeling very secure, however difficult their personal circumstances.
42. The school is spread over a wide site and requires diligent supervision to ensure that pupils are where they should be and not getting up to mischief. Although it is hard to keep an eye on

every nook and cranny, managers do not insist that staff patrol 'hot spots' and have a presence in key areas. This low-profile staffing contributes to incidents where trouble escalates outside lessons because not enough staff and responsible older students are around to set an example and nip problems in the bud. Sloppy attention to arrangements for protecting children from harm, including required guidance on Internet access, does not safeguard them fully. Pupils' welfare is compromised by a chronic lack of urgency and command of priorities such as the need to update all staff about new legislation and the implications for child protection arrangements.

43. Pupils complain bitterly about the way they are treated at lunchtime with nowhere to go in bad weather and oppressive efforts to keep them out of the building even when they have passes to allow access to rooms to practise their music or eat their sandwiches. They have just cause for feeling badly treated as their welfare has been ignored for too long while the school frets over constructing new forms of shelter.
44. The repercussions of poor guidance and assessment are seen in lack of specific, well-targeted advice for pupils on exactly what to do to achieve more. Staff do not mark work regularly or set out clearly the steps pupils need to take next, so some groups have little idea of how to improve their work. A blanket approach in many lessons, where pupils of all abilities do equally well or badly, spreads into generalised guidance such as 'work harder' rather than advice that is fine-tuned to individual need. Particular teachers give up time willingly to offer help and encouragement to pupils, but others are less accessible and helpful.
45. Not all adults listen with respect to pupils, which convinces them that their views are not valued. The school council has met intermittently rather than often enough to influence what happens. Rightly, pupils do not feel that they have a real voice in bringing about improvement, particularly with issues such as uncaring lunchtime arrangements, locked toilets, standards of behaviour and fair treatment.

Sixth form

Sixth form students are reasonably pleased with the care and the guidance they are given, which are satisfactory. Advice on courses, careers and what to do next is satisfactory. Students do not feel that they are involved well enough in school life. They are right. Their views are not sought, heard and used effectively to bring about improvements in the sixth form and in the school's work.

Commentary

46. Students appreciate the support and respect offered by sixth form leadership, which they feel has too little time and back-up to give even more guidance. They value "helpful teachers who are willing to give up their own time" to explain work further, particularly individual history and mathematics staff. A few teaching groups are too big to allow easy one-to-one guidance. One or two teachers offer less help and are more elusive.
47. As sixth form accommodation is too small and some study bases poorly equipped, students sometimes find a lack of help to work independently, especially as individuals are at different stages of developing their capacity to study well. As might be expected, Year 13 students are more mature and supportive of each other than Year 12, so respond better to study opportunities and use more initiative to seek help. About one in three students feels that guidance on post-16 courses was 'not very good', so welcomes changes in arrangements for this. Induction for those new to the sixth form is sound so students settle in quickly.
48. Sixth formers regret that the school council is not meeting after an issue about prefects arose over two months ago, which has been left unresolved. The council has the capacity to raise issues such as trying to introduce Year 12 prefects, and sixth form mentoring roles and responsibilities. It has achieved some successes such as measures to deal with smoking in toilets, but is not used as effectively as it could be, nor are sixth formers given a real chance to set the tone and shape the school ethos for the better.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a satisfactory relationship with parents. Its links with the community and other schools are good. The partnerships it has as a result of its specialist status as a Sports College are very good, with some outstanding features. Improvement overall has been satisfactory, with some very good recent developments in building bridges with sports clubs and staff, locally and further afield.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Sporting links are strong, widespread and of great benefit to those involved, particularly pupils in the school who thrive when given inspiring experiences to boost their self-esteem and achievement
- Many parents have modest expectations of the school, so are reasonably satisfied with what it does for their children, whereas others are more critical, with good reason
- A good network of community links, many based on long-standing relationships and traditions, helps groups of pupils to enjoy enriching experiences that prepare them well for adult life

Commentary

49. Specialist Sports College status has inspired the energetic management team responsible for building partnership links to explore and implement imaginative strategies focused on enthusiastic participation in fitness and sporting activities. As a result, highly productive and carefully managed links exist with partner schools, local sports clubs and other key organisations. Impressively, those leading all these developments have undertaken regular, rigorous evaluation of their work to ensure that programmes meet people's needs well. They are laying firm foundations to drive up achievement in school. They harness expertise in the community and within school relentlessly. For example, they source sparkling individual teaching to stimulate pupils' learning and exciting dance workshops to enrich experiences for youngsters and adults in the wider community. Major successes include whole school days and weeks with subject and sporting themes, including the Olympics, and for 2005, Wimbledon. These stimulate a rare, genuine sense of personal achievement: "Even Year 11 sported medals proudly!"
50. Some parents are former pupils and involved in very active 'Old Students' organisations, which support school prize giving, events and scholarship funds admirably. Parents are comfortable about coming into school to talk to staff because they are used to visiting for productions and sporting events. However, they find that their calls are not always returned or specific concerns followed up promptly. One parent stated: "We are not confident that any action will be taken". Parents have justifiable concerns about the bad behaviour, including violence, of a small number of pupils. Other key concerns are post-registration truancy, the restrictions of the private funding initiative (PFI) on pupils' school-based experiences and shabby, old buildings. They believe that the school took its eye off the ball, systems were not watertight and improvement has been too slow. A parent stated: "Too much time was spent on PFI and Sports College status, forgetting it's a school with people in it".
51. Parents value the school's traditions, its success in sport, activities such as 'Rock Challenge' and local festivals, but are uncritical of rates of progress. This is partly because they are not clear about just how well their sons and daughters are doing. Information on progress, though usually easy to read, does not tell parents whether their child is doing well enough, given the pupil's age and capabilities, or spell out what the child must do to learn more and make better progress. In some instances, reports do not meet requirements if staff absences or changes result in blank spaces under key subject headings.
52. The school's lively network of links with its local community and partner schools and with other schools, colleges and organisations further afield has been extended very helpfully by its role as a specialist Sports College. The school taps into wider expertise to enrich pupils' experiences and strengthen their learning, not only in sport, particularly through leadership

awards, but also in work-related activities such as the 'Boat to Throat' project for older pupils. The CCF does exceptional work to develop pupils' personal qualities and their breadth of experience. Relationships with the local science specialist school are gaining in strength and are seen to be a way to improve learning opportunities for pupils. Partly as a result of these links, pupils and students move to new courses and into work confidently.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership in the main school is unsatisfactory, and management is poor. The new headteacher is providing a satisfactory sense of direction. Governors are supportive, but they have not had sufficient clear information to allow them to be aware of standards in the school, nor its overall effectiveness. They do not ensure the school meets all its statutory responsibilities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Poor management has failed to effect necessary improvement
- Some senior managers and departmental heads are doing a good job
- Communication is poor: this is a significant factor in inhibiting progress
- The headteacher has a sound awareness of what needs to be done
- The governing body has had little impact on the school's performance

Commentary

53. Over the last six years the school's standards, and its expectations of what pupils can and should do, have fallen well behind those of similar schools. A culture of hoping for improvement rather than planning to make it happen has developed. Managers, governors and teachers alike have wrongly assumed that pupils' attitudes, rather than the quality of teaching, inhibit achievement. Under-performance has been excused rather than challenged. Over the past four terms there has been a gradually-developing awareness that things must change. The recently-appointed headteacher has a sound understanding of what needs to change and where things are already going well and has set up several new initiatives. The debate about the school's future direction is now more open and realistic.
54. The governing body is supportive of the school and appreciative of its traditions, but it has not been a driving force for improvement. Until recently it has not been given, nor has it thought to ask for, the right sort of information to help it check and compare the school's performance. Hence results, standards, behaviour and teaching quality have lagged well behind those of similar schools. Much time and effort has necessarily been diverted into the amalgamation of the previous two school sites, and the new building developments. Attendance at important meetings is unsatisfactory – a concern to some governors. Most governors appreciate the clear information about the school's performance which is now being made available to them.
55. There is a growing confidence amongst some governors that they are now able to support the school, not just by taking an interest in what it does, but by asking those questions which will help it to do better. The headteacher has been set clear targets. Governors have a sound understanding of financial issues. The governing body has not ensured that all pupils get their legal entitlement to the required citizenship course, and that pupils not taking GCSE ICT still get a sufficient experience of it.
56. School development planning is thorough and shows awareness of what needs to be tackled, but crisp targets to measure progress are few. Several new initiatives have been started but have yet to have an effect. Self-evaluation of how the school is performing is accurate and honest but too much management time and energy is still spent on building and accommodation issues. The relationship between the school's educational concerns and its private funding partner's priorities poses difficulties. There is unresolved friction between the two in some areas such as rewiring and redecorating the old building and school and community use of the sports hall. There have been some good developments, not least in some recent appointments, and in the concept of pastoral managers to relieve time for

teachers to teach and senior managers to spend time on tasks other than the discipline and welfare of pupils. However, the management of behaviour is poor. Systems are not working. A very high proportion of pupils is excluded from school because managers have not ensured staff teach in ways that capture the interest and meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers are quick to blame pupils and exclusions are sometimes used too readily. Records show that a few pupils have even been excluded for truancy.

57. Pupils, parents and teachers have appreciated the headteacher's initial priority of being seen about the school, and taking an interest in what happens in lessons. Some other senior managers are not visible enough. Little has been done to see how management time is used and what benefits it brings. The decision-making process can be laborious and frustrating, with too much debate and too little clear direction and carrying out of decisions. Issues of importance like literacy and citizenship have been ignored. Checking what goes on in departments depends on the quality of senior line management. At present it is far too variable. Oversights result, for instance the situation in Years 7 and 8, where what is taught to the 'Basic Skills' groups has not been checked properly. The need to examine why pupils have not done well enough in examinations, and which departments and teachers do best and why, has lacked rigour; important difficult decisions have been shirked. Although some good work has been carried out by the local education authority consultants, there is very little formal monitoring of teaching and learning beyond the annual performance management single observation. As a result, mediocre and poor teaching has become too prevalent, and normal responsibilities like the frequent and regular setting and marking of homework have been allowed to deteriorate to an unacceptable level. A good initiative is the recent focus on teaching and learning across the school, which is promising but in its very early stages.
58. Communication is a major weakness, and adds to inconsistency. Teachers get frustrated when they get (or fail to get) information, too much of which is late or unclear. For example, departmental organisation of specimen books to be submitted during the inspection was late and haphazard. This happened because clear requests were not consistently passed on to heads of department. Some aspects of school life are disorganised. Managers spend too long on simple messages and low-key tasks, some of which are duplicated. There are examples of very good systems, like that for assessment in history.
59. The leadership and management of subjects are unsatisfactory. Several departments have significant weaknesses in how they are run. There are some real strengths such as the very good leadership and management in physical education. Other subjects have effective aspects of leadership and management such as in English, mathematics, history, music, art and design and modern foreign languages. These are models for the school of what can be done by managers at various responsibility levels, but most teachers are unaware of these pockets of good practice. Aspects of management in science, geography and ICT are weak. The leadership and management of religious education are very poor and have resulted in a breakdown of communication within the department. Leadership and management of citizenship are very poor because there is no person responsible for the subject.
60. Leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory. Managers work hard to provide the maximum help possible with inadequate resources for the significant numbers of pupils who need extra help. Very good quality information is maintained on the school intranet. Statements of special educational need are well organised and meet statutory requirements. Reviews are held and, with difficulty, information is collected from subject teachers. The teaching assistants are well led and managed. Almost all are improving their range of skills through training. However, there is too little monitoring of the impact of teaching on the learning and progress of the children with special educational needs.
61. The learning support unit is well led and managed. Good progress has been made recently and members of staff are eager to expand and improve the service they offer including innovative parenting skills work. They are self-critical and committed to making a difference to the education of children in challenging circumstances.

62. Performance management is satisfactory. All training courses for staff are closely linked to the school's improvement plans, but information from training is not successfully shared amongst staff. Support staff have satisfactory access to training. Due to funding priorities, there has been a reduction in the number of courses provided at a time when new ideas are desperately needed. Training for senior managers, teachers and assistants in behaviour management and in child and adolescent development is rare. All newly qualified staff are given a programme of activities to help them integrate more easily into the life of the school and they feel well supported.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4 390 838	Balance from previous year	110 032
Total expenditure	4 229 375	Balance carried forward to the next	161 463
Expenditure per pupil	3633.48		

63. The systems for financial control are effective and appropriately audited. The business manager and the governors operate tight controls on spending. Action has been taken to implement the recommendations identified in the recent audit report, but there is still some way to go. The fabric and resources of the school have been improved. Over the last financial year the sixth form has been subsidised by the main school, but this results in satisfactory achievement for a broad range of students.

Sixth form

The sixth form benefits from good leadership and satisfactory management. This is leading to its popularity, expansion, and relative success. Governance is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

64. The sixth form is a growing and relatively successful part of the school. Students value the experience and facilities, and an increasing number are applying to university. They speak highly of the way they have been encouraged and supported, not least because of the role model of hard work and commitment provided by the head of sixth form. Good leadership has seen an expansion of the curriculum, whilst continuing the philosophy of trying to get all students their first choice subjects. Changes to the way that potential sixth formers are advised about their subjects mean that course choices have become more appropriate. There have been far fewer cases of students changing and dropping courses.
65. Whilst the overall organisation of the sixth form is good, the effectiveness of its management is limited by a lack of cohesion with the rest of the school. Time given to sixth form management is limited. Decisions about its direction are taken by some who are rather distant from it. There is too little rigorous examination of post-16 performance at subject level. Priorities elsewhere in the school mean that the sixth form agenda too often gets marginalised. Financial control during the expansion of the sixth form has been good. Governors value the sixth form and have encouraged its development. They are largely unaware of its performance, and have not ensured that all students experience a course in religious education, as they should do. The sixth form is cost effective.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning (WRL)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils take part in a work experience programme
- Little monitoring or evaluation of the quality of work-related learning is undertaken
- Very limited links with local business exist
- Good and effective links with the Connexions service support work-related learning

Commentary

66. Careers education is included as an integral part of the school's personal and social education course. Through the programme all pupils are introduced to the world of work and acquire information to make informed options choices, make decisions about career pathways and learn about the skills needed to be successful in the workplace.
67. All pupils undertake a period of work experience outside school and are required to fill in a log book to reflect on and evaluate their experiences. Work experience is supported by an effective feedback programme on return to school to add further time for reflection and evaluation of its usefulness.
68. Effective links with the Connexions service exist to support WRL. All pupils receive a Connexions careers interview and guidance on career progression. The school also works effectively with the Humber Education Business Link Organisation with whom an audit of pupils' knowledge and understanding of WRL has been undertaken.
69. A range of vocational GCSEs is offered such as leisure and tourism, engineering, health and social care and technology. In addition, some pupils follow a National Skills Profile Course in Year 10 and 11, which adds significantly to the pupils' WRL; this is almost exclusively for lower attaining pupils. The school identifies a need for further development of vocational subjects in the curriculum and to define clearer pathways for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
70. There are very limited links with local business and industry, which obviously limits the extension of WRL outside school. However, several pupils benefit from the local fishing industry scheme of 'Boat to Throat' and the school's involvement with the combined cadet force extends many pupils' experience of WRL.
71. A curriculum audit has taken place to identify the contribution of subject areas to WRL but the quality of provision has not been monitored or evaluated fully. Work with the Humber Education Business Link Organisation has led to the development of an action plan but a specific and detailed development plan has yet to be drawn up. No school policy for WRL has been finalised, although the school recognises the need for this.
72. Leadership and management of WRL are satisfactory overall. Managers are knowledgeable and keen for developments and improvements to take place. They have a clear perspective of what needs to be done. No one person has overall responsibility for WRL; rather, it is managed by a team but this has no discernible detrimental effect. However, there is a need to develop closer links with local business and to produce a clear statement of policy and development plan for the future with specific success criteria to enable effective evaluation and monitoring.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

In addition to the focus subjects, a Year 10 media studies lesson was sampled. Knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching resulted in pupils learning precise media terms well. They were then able to use these to discuss and analyse how effects were created, by comparing extracts from two Disney films. Achievement was good. One lesson of Spanish was seen in which learning was very good because of the very effective and demanding teaching the pupils received. As this was only their second lesson, it was not possible to judge standards but the pupils were making good progress.

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan interesting and relevant lessons, and manage classes well
- Results and standards by Year 9 have not been high enough
- Skills are well taught, using a good range of methods. The Literacy Strategy is well used
- Younger pupils are not expected to write at length often enough, and the marking of much written work is too limited
- Oral work is a successful feature of many lessons

Commentary

Examination results

73. Results in the 2004 national tests, taken at the end of Year 9, were well below the national average. There was a marked decline from the previous year, and pupils generally did not do as well as they should have. Pupils attained better results in English than they did in science, but made more progress in mathematics. At GCSE, results were below average. Pupils made the same progress in English as in other subjects. This represented satisfactory achievement as the school entered a higher proportion of pupils for both language and literature than many similar schools did. In the language examination an unusual feature was that boys did relatively better than girls.

Standards and achievement

74. Pupils join the school with below average standards in English and poor literacy skills. They make good progress in speaking. Younger pupils tend to be enthusiastic but over-colloquial when giving answers; older pupils become more confident and careful speakers, and about half can give extended answers in formal English. Whilst listening skills are satisfactory, the ability to listen closely so that ideas can be thought about and developed is more limited. Achievement in reading is satisfactory. By Year 9 pupils can understand the meaning and purpose of a range of texts, and most understand how writers give impressions to the reader about character, relationship or atmosphere.

75. By Year 11 about half the pupils can see deeper meaning or significance in what they read, and are able to compare ideas from different texts. Written skills develop more slowly, and there is evidence of past underachievement in these in the work of younger pupils. Few write good extended pieces, and spelling remains a problem for many. Higher attaining pupils write neat, well-structured pieces and use punctuation and sentence variety well. Average attainers write too briefly and give too little thought to style, structure, and what effects they are trying to create. What lower attaining pupils write always makes sense and shows some understanding, but work is often vague and not sufficiently related to the task in hand. Most pupils display a reasonable range of vocabulary. The inconsistent attendance of up to a quarter of pupils affects their progress, particularly in writing.

Teaching and learning

76. Learning and achievement are satisfactory because lessons are always well planned and organised. There is some good teaching, but less than typically found. Teachers think carefully about the skills pupils need to learn, and plan for a good variety of methods in each lesson. The purpose, direction and stages of each lesson are fully explained. Group discussion is regularly and well used. Whole-class discussion is less successful because some teachers ignore fringe inattention or minor misbehaviour and allow quiet answers which many pupils cannot hear. Data projectors are very effectively used for illustration of texts, and to focus and summarise ideas. Classes can be large, and behaviour is well managed with an expectation of co-operation, mutual respect and clear guidelines and routines. As a result confrontation is very rare. In some tasks, both written and oral, pupils are not guided sufficiently as regards the purpose, length, and skills needed. When this happens learning lacks focus and urgency. Whilst marking of GCSE coursework is good, the marking of the work of younger pupils is too variable, and some is very limited. Younger pupils are not expected to write at length often enough, and learn bad habits when their drafting books are not checked sufficiently. Too many of these books show past carelessness and disorganisation, but teachers are now making improvements on this issue. Written homework remains sporadic.

Leadership and management

77. Effective and agreed systems are now in place so that routines and expectations are consistent. Day-to-day management of the department works well. There has been good evaluation of where improvement can be made, and an awareness of how this can be done. A major concern is that 'Basic Skills' classes for younger pupils with special educational needs do not guarantee that pupils are learning what they should in English, and this is currently beyond the control of the English department. Accommodation and resources are very good. ICT is very well used by teachers, but pupils do not use it enough.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

78. Pupils join the school with well below average literacy skills. The development of such skills is a key priority for progress. After good initial work, literacy has been ignored and forgotten as a whole-school initiative. There is neither co-ordination of it, nor check on it. Departments have been left to their own devices and the initiative has fizzled out. Much tokenistic work takes place, but most teachers have little awareness of the potential which literacy has to help pupils' understanding. Fewer still see their responsibility for developing pupils' literacy skills in their own subject. "That's an issue for the English department" is the regrettable response of some teachers. Specialist terms are well explained by teachers but strategies for getting pupils to learn and use them are limited. Some class discussion takes place but ideas are usually teacher-led and too many brief, unexplained answers are accepted. 'Key words' are displayed in many classrooms but are rarely used or referred to. A major re-think is needed if literacy is to be successful as the main tool for unlocking pupil potential.

Modern foreign languages

French is the main foreign language taught to all pupils in Years 7 to 9. Nearly all pupils in Year 11 study French to GCSE but in Year 10, French has become an optional subject and only a small

number of pupils chose it in September 2004. German was the second foreign language but is being replaced by Spanish; about half the Year 9 pupils are taught a short introductory course in Spanish for approximately seven weeks.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Very good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective leadership is providing clear direction and a firm foundation for improvement
- Teachers have good subject knowledge but rely too heavily on English in lessons
- Pupils sometimes rely too heavily on written prompts when speaking French
- Several lessons are mundane because of dull teaching, resulting in a slow pace of learning
- Good, respectful relationships between teachers and pupils promote good attitudes and behaviour

Commentary

Examination results

79. GCSE results in French in 2004 were well below average. Pupils performed much worse in French than in their other examination subjects. Boys and girls performed equally badly.

Standards and achievement

80. In the lessons observed achievement was generally satisfactory but scrutiny of pupils' written work showed significant underachievement over time as a result of prolonged and disruptive staffing difficulties, which have now been resolved. By Year 9 pupils have a reasonable breadth of vocabulary at their disposal and are starting to use a variety of tenses, although many pupils are struggling for accuracy. Pupils speak and read with good accents but an over-reliance on written prompts and frameworks hinders their creative and independent use of spoken French. Although GCSE results in 2004 were well below average, standards observed in Years 10 and 11 were higher but still below average. Although pupils' achievement in lessons was generally satisfactory, over time achievement is unsatisfactory because of the previous staffing difficulties and disruption. By Year 11 pupils can use a variety of tenses in their written work with confidence, particularly the higher attaining pupils, but the range of vocabulary at their disposal is limited. Pupils have good listening skills but, as lower down the school, oral skills are weaker and, in order to produce more complex sentence structure, pupils rely heavily on written prompts

Teaching and learning

81. Teachers know the subject well but use English too readily in lessons; this does not present a good role model to the learners and limits language acquisition. Although well prepared, too many lessons are conducted at a rather leisurely pace and fail to keep the pupils motivated for the full 60 minutes. Pair work was used very effectively to practise new language in most lessons. Relationships between teachers and pupils were invariably good and respectful, promoting the pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour, even when the teaching lacked sparkle. Teaching does not give pupils sufficient opportunity to speak French creatively or independently and encourages them to rely on written prompts and frameworks; as a result, oral skills are limited. Teaching is starting to benefit from limited use of ICT and good examples were observed such as the use of a French website to book train tickets. However,

ICT remains an area to be exploited in teaching to add more interest and variety. Marking of pupils' written work is very inconsistent in quality from teacher to teacher. At its best it is informative and rigorous; at its worst it is limited to ticks and crosses with few informative comments to let pupils know what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

82. The new leadership is dynamic and ambitious. It presents a very good role model and is providing clear direction for future improvement. Effective support, guidance and encouragement are promoting effective and forward-looking teamwork. Management is satisfactory. Thorough and useful schemes of work are now in place and departmental policies and procedure documents are being developed. New direction and impetus are being given by the introduction of Spanish as the second foreign language. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet fully in place to identify areas of weakness or allow the sharing of good practice. Detailed analysis of results and effective use of data are used to set targets and track pupil progress. Marking is of inconsistent quality across the department. Trips abroad are organised to France and Spain and will help not only to motivate the pupils but support the Sports College ethos by including sports-related activities. Unlike the previous inspection, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are now positive and no instances of unsatisfactory teaching were observed during the inspection. Standards remain below average because of the recent and prolonged staffing difficulties, but achievement is now improving because of improved teaching, leadership and management.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers aid pupils' achievement by planning lessons clearly and having a good understanding of mathematics
- Computers are not used sufficiently as a resource to consolidate or extend pupils' learning
- Higher attaining pupils in some lessons are insufficiently challenged to achieve their potential
- Good leadership is resulting in a team which is working hard to raise standards

Commentary

Examination results

83. Results in the 2004 National Tests at the end of Year 9 were well below average. They were lower than those in 2003. The GCSE results in 2004 were in line with the national average and were higher than those in 2003.

Standards and achievement

84. The below average standards observed in lessons across Years 7 to 9, were found to be at variance with the well below average standards attained in the 2004 Year 9 national tests. The latter were due to staffing problems experienced leading up to the tests and the element of weaker teaching over time. By Year 9 standards are below average and pupils achieve as expected, having started Year 7 with below average standards. By Year 9, higher attaining pupils have sound algebraic skills. They can find the nth term of a quadratic sequence and solve well using trial and improvement methods. However, the lower attainers have well below

average shape, space and measures skills. Whilst they are aware of the angle sum in a triangle, they are unsure what a right angle is. Standards by Year 11 are average. The lower attaining pupils, however, have much weaker data-handling skills. Whilst they can produce a basic pictogram, they struggle to show fractions of quantities or interpret the data correctly. The higher attaining pupils have above average shape and space skills and are able to use Pythagoras' Theorem and trigonometry to calculate lengths in three-dimensional problems. Overall, this represents good achievement for a cohort which entered Year 10 with below average standards.

Teaching and learning

85. Teachers aid pupil achievement by planning lessons clearly and having a good understanding of mathematics. However, apart from the aim or objective, this planning is rarely relayed to the pupils in terms of lesson content and expectations of what is to be achieved. Consequently in the weaker lessons this results in a drop in pace as pupils become unsure what is expected of them. The use of the 'three-part' lesson structure gives pupils a variety of activities that assist their learning. Teachers use starter activities, to get pupils learning, but the finishes do not sum up what has been learnt sufficiently. This is especially the case in Years 7 to 9 where a higher proportion of weaker teaching takes place. In these weaker lessons an overall compliance by pupils to the requests of the teacher results in at best satisfactory learning taking place. Higher attainers in Year 10 are well challenged in their study of extra-curricular GCSE statistics. However, in the majority of lessons teachers have low expectations of what pupils can and should do. Work is not sufficiently matched to the individual needs of the pupils, with higher attainers in particular often given work that is too easy. Pupils working collaboratively together is not a feature of most lessons; however, in one Year 10 lesson on Pythagoras' Theorem, this was effectively used as pupils worked well to find the relationship between the sides of a triangle. Helpful marking does take place, but it is not consistent and leaves pupils unclear on how well they are doing in terms of grades or levels and what they should do to improve. Homework is used to extend pupils' learning, especially through the use of past examination papers in Year 11. However, the consistency, level of challenge and presentation are variable.

Leadership and management

86. Leaders are good role models for both staff and pupils. Leadership is underpinned by a good vision for improvement and this results in teachers working hard as a team to raise standards. Schemes of work are in place, but do not provide enough detail to sufficiently support teachers. Monitoring of both teaching and of pupils' work takes place and this helps teachers to raise standards. In lessons, computers are rarely used by pupils to consolidate and develop their understanding of mathematics. Use of computers as an aid to teaching is inconsistent. Pupils are assessed through tests, but there are not enough opportunities to link assessment to key objectives to let pupils know how well they are doing. Assessment data is not sufficiently monitored to enable pupils' achievement to be measured or targets substantiated. Pupils' self-assessment of their learning is embryonic and consequently has not yet assisted in raising achievement. Departmental self-review does take place and results in a pertinent development plan. Links with the local primary feeder schools are strong and assist the pupils' move to the school. Very good extra-curricular activities take place with a chess club, sessions for revision and homework as well as time very freely given to pupils on a 'drop in' basis for general support.

Mathematics across the curriculum

87. The teaching of mathematics as a basic skill across the curriculum subjects is unsatisfactory. Pupils' standards of mathematical skills in these other subjects are below average overall. The mathematics department has delivered a training session, carried out an audit of provision and offered support to the other subjects on the teaching and learning of mathematics. However, the development of mathematical skills rarely features in their lessons. Little has been done by departments, since the initial training several years ago, to embed numeracy sufficiently across the curriculum, in order to fully support pupils.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **poor**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Poor	Poor
Teaching and learning	Poor	Poor

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Poor
Progress since last inspection	Poor

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' GCSE results in 2004 were much worse than they should have been
- Teachers often do not expect enough of pupils; activities are too easy and pupils do not learn enough during lessons
- The new head of department has a clear understanding of the improvements that are needed and the department has made some progress in the short time since she arrived
- There is not enough monitoring of, and support for, teaching, to ensure that all lessons are at least satisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

88. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 9, results were well below the national average. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were also well below average. Pupils did significantly worse in GCSE science than they did on average in their other subjects. Results fell significantly, between 2003 and 2004, in both the Year 9 tests and GCSE examinations.

Standards and achievement

89. The standards seen in pupils' work generally reflect those indicated by the 2004 test and examination results. In all year groups, some pupils gain standards that are around, and occasionally above, average for their age. For example, some pupils in Year 9 make good use of their understanding of conduction, convection and radiation when designing their insulated containers. However, most pupils gain standards that are below, and often well below, average. These pupils have only limited recall of topics they have studied earlier. They find it difficult to say precisely what they mean when answering spoken or written questions. Weak literacy skills add to their problems when trying to write accurate descriptions or answers.
90. In Year 9 and Year 11, pupils do much worse in tests and examinations than might be expected, given their test results when they entered the school. Hence their achievement is poor. The most important cause of this poor achievement is the poor quality of teaching that pupils receive. However, there are other important factors. Many pupils' attendance at school is poor. Their absences result in gaps in their notebooks and corresponding gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Many pupils have been taught by several different supply teachers over the last few years, their progress has been disrupted and some have developed unsatisfactory attitudes towards science.

Teaching and learning

91. Teachers have secure knowledge of their subject and generally provide appropriate information and explanations for pupils. Some teaching is satisfactory and, occasionally, good. For example, in a good lesson for Year 7, the teacher asks probing questions to check pupils' understanding of density; pupils work quickly on their experiment and eventually succeed in calculating the density of various solids.

92. Nevertheless, in the majority of lessons, there are significant weaknesses in teaching and learning. In particular, many teachers do not expect enough from pupils; they provide activities that are too easy, the pace of the lesson is slow and pupils do not learn as much as they should. There is often a lack of emphasis on the main points that pupils need to learn and remember. In a few lessons, teachers are not successful in managing pupils' behaviour so that the poor behaviour of some pupils is allowed to disrupt the learning of the whole class.
93. Many teachers do not set homework regularly so that pupils do not get enough opportunities to extend and reinforce their learning. Teachers' marking of pupils' written work is unsatisfactory overall. Although some teachers give useful indications of how the work could be improved, much of the marking is cursory, teachers fail to notice important mistakes and pupils' misunderstandings remain uncorrected.

Leadership and management

94. The new leadership of the subject is characterised by a good understanding of the weaknesses in the department and the department has quickly produced clear and sensible plans for raising standards. Some improvements are already having an impact, notably the successful implementation of elements of the National Strategy for Science and improved arrangements for investigative coursework in Years 10 and 11. However, there are difficulties. Teachers in the science department have not previously been accustomed to working as a single team and it is taking time to gain everybody's co-operation. Moreover, the various initiatives that have been introduced in most science departments over the last few years had not been adopted here, so there remains much work to be done. The department has suffered from staffing difficulties and there is still one post being filled by successive temporary teachers.
95. The current management arrangements for the department are inadequate. Changes in personnel have meant that there is, at present, only one other person in this large department who has a post of responsibility. A new appointment has been made but the teacher has not yet taken up his position. Hence, at this time, there is an overall shortage of personnel to take responsibility in the department. There is not yet enough monitoring of lessons or pupils' work, together with appropriate remedial action, to ensure that all pupils experience at least a satisfactory quality of teaching. Since the previous inspection, GCSE examination results have fallen from below average to well below average. Teaching was good at that time and it is now poor.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught as a specific subject in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 examination courses are offered in GCSE ICT. Around half of pupils in Years 10 and 11 take this option. Pupils not following an examination course rely on their other subjects to cover the National Curriculum requirements but this is overall unsatisfactory.

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Management does not ensure all aspects of ICT are covered and results in many Year 10 and 11 pupils underachieving because they are not taught the requirements of the National Curriculum
- In the best lessons pupils achieve well because of good guidance and support
- Improved teaching is leading to rapidly rising standards for pupils taking examination courses in Years 10 and 11
- The adoption of the National Strategy for Years 7 to 9 is raising pupils' competence in ICT
- The planning for individual pupils' needs within some lessons is not good enough because teachers do not always match the work accurately
- There is too little use of ICT by subjects across the curriculum

Commentary

Examination results

96. In 2004 results in the GCSE examination were very low (in the bottom five per cent of the country).

Standards and achievement

97. The recent implementation of the National Strategy for Years 7 to 9 has led to pupils now beginning to achieve well but there has not yet been time to make up for years of unproductive teaching. Therefore, whilst pupils in Year 7 achieve well, pupils in Year 9 have significant gaps in their ICT ability and understanding and underachieve despite the recent improvements in teaching. Higher attainers can access software confidently and can move information from one application to another. Lower attainers are very dependent on teachers for guidance and struggle to cope with formulae and interrogating databases because work is not always matched to their needs. Pupils are familiar with the use of the Internet and simple word processing but their achievement is restricted by their poor literacy skills that often prevent them from entering information accurately. The wide variation in ability levels in classes are not tackled adequately and it is rare that support is given for pupils with special educational needs beyond the efforts of the class teacher.
98. In Years 10 and 11 standards are rising rapidly for pupils following an examination course. Whilst most pupils who opt for the GCSE course in ICT achieve well, there are many pupils in Years 10 and 11 who badly underachieve because they do not have ICT lessons and so do not cover the requirements of the National Curriculum.

Teaching and learning

99. Teaching and learning, whilst satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9, is often good. However, assessment of pupils' work is unclear and does not give pupils sufficient guidance on how well they are doing or how to improve. Marking is inconsistent. In Years 10 and 11, pupils who opt for an examination course are taught well, but pupils' achievement is restricted by their lack of previous knowledge. As half the year group are not taught ICT, the overall effect is that teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Specialist teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject, and as behaviour is well managed they pass it on to pupils well. Pupils are well prepared for examinations through good preparation for coursework. Teachers are good at circulating the class throughout the lesson to monitor progress and to challenge pupils further. Lessons do not take enough account of the needs of learners for whom reading and writing are a problem or those who are very experienced users of computers. The greatest problem is that classes include large numbers of pupils with special educational needs and there is no support for their learning beyond that supplied by the class teacher.

Leadership and management

100. Leadership of the department has begun to implement the national strategy and there is now a team of specialist teachers to deliver the curriculum. Inexperienced teachers are supported

well at departmental level and the drive for improvement in GCSE results has led to improving achievement and rapidly improving standards. There has been considerable financial investment in resources and a good team is being created. The leadership of the school and department have worked well together and considerable progress has been made on an ambitious and well thought out 88-point transformation plan drawn up by the current departmental leadership. There has been really good progress in the last year. Plans are in place to attend to the lack of ICT provision in Years 10 and 11 from September 2007.

101. Management has weaknesses. The planning of the use of ICT in other subjects in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory and not enough guidance is given for teachers to ensure they are meeting the ICT requirements. Since the previous inspection standards have risen but improvement has not been good enough as around half the pupils in Years 10 and 11 are still seriously underachieving through lack of provision.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

102. Provision of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 many pupils have large gaps in their ICT knowledge and skills because they do not get enough opportunities to build on the skills they gained in Years 7 to 9. There is increasing use of data projectors by teachers and this is having a positive effect on teaching and learning. Whilst there are good examples of ICT use for learning, such as a French lesson using the French railways website to find journey information and in most design and technology lessons, the opportunities for pupils to use ICT is rare and is too often limited to word processing. The overall experience of pupils is not monitored well enough and significant subjects such as science do not deliver the required aspects of the National Curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory	
Management	Unsatisfactory	
Progress since last inspection	Unsatisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is inconsistent and results in many pupils underachieving
- There is some good and very good teaching which enables pupils to achieve very well and consequently their attitudes to their work and their behaviour are good in these lessons
- Although relationships between teachers and pupils are generally good, they are not consistent. The assessment of pupils is unsatisfactory so too many do not know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
- Although there have been considerable staff difficulties, there has been too little action to improve teaching

Commentary

Examination results

103. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were below average. The proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades was far lower than the national average.

Standards and achievement

104. By Year 9 most pupils have a basic knowledge of global issues such as the interdependence of different countries for economic activities, and they have learned in detail about countries such as Ghana. A few higher attaining pupils are able to compare the development of different countries through the use of line graphs showing economic data, and referring to several countries such as USA, Singapore, South Korea and Brazil. However, some low attainers have little understanding of how to compare or explain, so much of their work is copied or limited to simple description. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory, particularly where they are not being challenged sufficiently or being given sufficient help to understand. By Year 11, pupils' standards and achievement vary depending on the quality of teaching they have received. Where teaching has been better, pupils have a very good understanding of environmental issues such as deforestation and they can compare the timber industries of less and more economically developed counties such as Sarawak and Finland, explaining differences and implications. However, where teaching is weaker, their understanding is less secure and they do not understand key terms such as rainfall distribution.

Teaching and learning

105. There is considerable variation in the quality of teaching and too much is less than satisfactory. In the very best lessons, the teacher's very good geographical knowledge, careful planning of tasks and guidance to small groups are really effective. For example, in a Year 11 lesson comparing logging in Sarawak and Finland, the lesson began with a quiz to help pupils think about global responsibility. The lesson then progressed briskly to a comparison of two case studies. Through the teacher's very high expectations and enthusiasm for their learning they were inspired to become 'geographers' and behaved remarkably well. However, too often lessons lack sufficient variety and are poorly planned with limited teaching strategies so pupils become too dependent on answering the teacher's simple unchallenging questions and are not thinking for themselves. In one Year 11 lesson about ecosystems, the task set was much too easy, requiring pupils to simply copy from a book and colour in a map of the world. Although generally pupils' attitudes and behaviour were satisfactory, they misbehave much more when teaching is dull and work set is too easy.
106. The assessment of pupils' work varies and while some is carefully marked with useful comments, in other classes pupils' work had not been marked for several months and there was little comment from the teacher. As a consequence, some pupils have some understanding of how to improve their work, while others do not. Where books have not been marked for some time, pupils show less care in the presentation and quality of their work because they know the teacher will not look at it.

Leadership and management

107. There have been considerable difficulties over recent years resulting from frequent staff absence diverting time from improving the subject. However, there has been too little action to arrest the decline in teaching and achievement. Although pupils' work and teaching have been monitored, the outcomes have made little difference to developing teaching. The curriculum is unsatisfactory because there are no schemes of work to support teachers' planning, so pupils' work does not always build on their previous learning and there is insufficient emphasis on the development of their skills and ability to answer more complex questions. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT to help them learn, and for the development of their skills of literacy and numeracy. Standards, teaching and management are all worse than at the time of the previous inspection.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are improving because of improved teaching in Years 10 and 11
- The clear and manageable assessment system enables pupils to know how well they are working and what they must do to improve
- A significant number of pupils do not do as well as they should as a result of frequent changes of teachers
- Teachers match the work well to the needs of most pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11
- Data is not used well enough so the department does not fully understand how well it is doing

Commentary

Examination results

108. History is a popular subject and numbers studying at GCSE are increasing. In 2004, results were average. This is part of an upward trend over the last three years. Girls did better than boys.

Standards and achievement

109. By the end of Year 9, a significant number of pupils do not achieve as well as they should do due to frequent changes of teachers who are sometimes non-specialists. Pupils can identify reasons for events and changes and establish links between them, such as identified in a Year 9 lesson on the causes of the First World War. Higher attainers can evaluate sources and identify those which are the most useful. Lower attainers struggle with their writing and find aspects of the course very difficult. By Year 11, pupils are able to give detailed explanations for events and changes. They can work out the strengths and weaknesses of historical sources of evidence which can then be used to reach and support conclusions. This was seen in a Year 11 lesson on the impact that Lenin had on early twentieth century Russia.

Teaching and learning

110. Staffing difficulties over the last two years have meant that some younger pupils have had frequent changes of teacher resulting in lower than expected achievement. The permanent specialist teachers in the department have good subject knowledge so that pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Lessons are generally interesting and varied, which helps pupils make progress.
111. Occasionally, not enough time is given for pupils to reflect on their findings and check their understanding. Lessons rarely end with a review of the work covered. Pupils of all abilities are included in lessons because teachers match resources well to cater for their needs. Work is marked and graded and often includes detailed and helpful comments. Pupils are aware of the levels they are working at and what they have to do to improve so they can move towards the next level. Opportunities to use computers are planned in schemes of work but there are limited opportunities to use them in school. Overall the pupils have a satisfactory attitude to work.

Leadership and management

112. The new leadership has the necessary motivation and vision to move the department forward. The process of improvement has already started. Schemes of work have been improved and effective assessment systems have been produced. Staffing problems are restricting the pace

at which these new plans are introduced. Data is not used effectively to analyse the performance of the department. Opportunities for Years 10 and 11 pupils to learn independently are limited and do not prepare pupils for the requirements at advanced level. Since the previous inspection, results have improved and the needs of lower attaining pupils have been met by providing more interesting and appropriate work. Pupils still do not have enough access to computers; visits are rare and staff training is unsatisfactory.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **poor**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Well below average
Achievement	Poor	Poor
Teaching and learning	Poor	Poor

Leadership	Very poor
Management	Very poor
Progress since last inspection	Very poor

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Prolonged weaknesses in leadership and management have resulted in a decline in all aspects of the subject
- The great majority of pupils have a strong dislike for the subject because many lessons are boring and pupils are often blamed for weaknesses in teaching
- Marking of work does not always tell pupils how well they are doing or how to get better
- Inconsistent teaching within the department means that some pupils do better than others depending on which teacher they get

Commentary

Examination results

113. All Year 10 and 11 follow the GCSE short course. Results in 2004 of the small number of pupils entered for the examination were well below average.

Standards and achievement

114. Although some lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory or better, pupils have been underachieving for some time and their standards are too low. Examination of their work showed that some pupils hardly make any progress at all. Too many lessons failed to allow pupils to build on their prior knowledge of religious education. For example, in a lesson on pilgrimage, after some promising initial oral work, pupils did too little to develop their written account of Muslim experience because the teacher had really low expectations of what they could do. By Year 11, pupils have not learned enough because of the consistently weak teaching. Pupils in a Year 10 lesson on crime and punishment made insufficient progress because the work was too easy and so they became bored, chatted to each other and ignored the teacher. Overall, pupils know too little about the religions they study and their personal responses to issues of spirituality lack depth. The GCSE results in 2004 show that a significant number of pupils underachieved because they were not entered for the examination, even though they had followed the course for two years.

Teaching and learning

115. Although some good practice exists in the department, too many lessons suffer from poor classroom management, work that is too easy and a lack of respect for pupils. In the better lessons, good planning which required pupils to work at a good pace led to more sustained concentration and interest. In these lessons pupils were treated with respect and they responded by working hard. Pupils who were spoken to during the inspection had, on the whole, very negative attitudes to the subject that are not being overcome, because they find

the subject boring and some of the teachers unpleasant and unfair. Homework is set but because some teachers do not mark it, pupils rarely do it. Routine marking is variable in quality, is inconsistently applied in the department and most is of no use in telling pupils how to improve. There is not enough work in the Year 10 and 11 books to enable pupils to fulfil their potential at GCSE, although there are some signs of improvement in pupils' work to build on. There is evidently too little being done to prepare pupils for the demands of examination questions.

Leadership and management

116. The department is in a bad way. Professional relationships have broken down to a point where much needed collaborative work to update practice in teaching strategies and effective assessment for learning is not happening. Until recently there has not been a scheme of work. Now there are two different ones. Management have produced one that is not a useful working tool because it does not relate sufficiently to the particular needs of the school or help enough in planning good lessons. A very good alternative model does exist within the department but has not been adopted. The departmental handbook is very poor and has consequently not been used by all teachers. There is too much inconsistency in the application of the marking policy and too little attention to the need to inform the pupils of how well they are doing and how they can improve. Lesson planning within the department is inconsistent; one teacher produces detailed plans that take into account the learning needs of all pupils, the other produces plans that lack focus and contain little of value. There is no effective monitoring or quality assurance or proper attention to the development of common classroom management strategies. The departmental self-review describes the department as effective which is not supported by the evidence of the inspection. A culture of blaming children and social influences for the poor attitudes to the subject is a significant barrier to improvement.

117. All aspects of the subject are now considerably worse than at the time of the previous inspection. The decline in standards, teaching, achievement and leadership and management needs to be tackled as a matter of urgency. The subject is having a negative impact on the overall ethos of the school.

TECHNOLOGY

In addition to the focus subject, a Year 10 engineering lesson was seen. Pupils made satisfactory progress using various instruments to measure objects with the aim of comparing levels of accuracy. Very good relationships between teacher and pupils were evident and teaching was satisfactory.

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers know their subject well and practical activities are particularly well taught
- Good use is made of ICT in all aspects of design and technology and is leading to improved standards of presentation

- There has not been enough monitoring and evaluation of the department's performance and as a result there are many inconsistencies in practices across the department
- Some of the teaching is uninspiring and poorly planned and as a result the work set is mundane and too easy

Commentary

Examination results

118. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2004 were below average. Boys do much better in design and technology than they do in most of their other subjects but girls do much worse.

Standards and achievement

119. By Year 9, pupils' designing and making skills are below average; however, this represents satisfactory achievement given pupils' attainment on entry to the school. They use a variety of tools and equipment competently and with confidence in all material areas. Pupils' designing skills are not as good as their making skills because teachers concentrate on teaching practical skills. In addition there is no consistent planning for the subject as a whole. As a result, as pupils move from project to project they do not always build upon the knowledge and skills learnt earlier and are therefore not achieving as much as they could do. By Year 11 standards of designing and making are below average. This represents satisfactory achievement since Year 9. Pupils produce well-made products using a range of materials. Good use is made of ICT in all subjects and is leading to improved standards of presentation. Computer-aided design is particularly well used in electronics for the design of circuits and printed circuit boards. Despite a determined effort to improve literacy using strategies such as key words in projects, standards of literacy are poor overall. Pupils achieve well on the engineering course; they are highly motivated and their understanding of materials and processes reflects the overall good teaching they receive.

Teaching and learning

120. In Years 7 to 9 pupils benefit from knowledgeable and committed teachers. Lessons are usually well paced and have clear learning objectives; the best lessons are characterised by thorough teaching with an emphasis upon correct technical vocabulary. Occasionally pupils do not learn as much as they should do because the teaching is uninspiring and the work set is much too easy. The assessment of pupils work is unsatisfactory, largely because there is no consistent approach throughout the department. Whilst work is marked regularly the comments given by teachers do not tell pupils what they need to do to improve and teachers are not using the results of assessments to inform their planning or meet individual pupils' needs. In Years 10 and 11, teachers know their subject well and plan focused lessons. Pupils' coursework is carefully monitored and assessed. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are generally good; they enjoy making products, show interest and take pride in their work. The quality of making is often very good, particularly in resistant materials where pupils take great pride in their work. However, skills of analysis and evaluation are insufficiently developed.

Leadership and management

121. The day-to-day leadership and management of the department are competent and there have been many improvements since the previous inspection. However, whilst many policies have been successfully translated into effective practice, the monitoring of teaching and learning has not been thorough enough; as a result there are many inconsistencies in teaching practices and there is significant ineffective teaching. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 has not been planned carefully enough. As pupils move through the course they receive a fragmented experience that lacks coherence.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

The inspection focused on art and design, music and drama.

Art and design

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Art and design is a popular subject with many pupils choosing it as an option in Years 10 and 11
- Teaching is founded on secure specialist knowledge and examination results are steadily improving
- Pupils display positive attitudes towards art and design and are keen to participate in extra-curricular activities
- Assessment and target setting are weak and marking is inconsistent and lacks rigour
- Computers are not used enough, particularly in Years 7 to 9

Commentary

Examination results

122. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were well below average. The trend over the last three years shows that results are gradually improving.

Standards and achievement

123. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with attainment that is well below average. Their achievement is satisfactory during Years 7 to 9, learning new skills and using different media in both two and three dimensions. Pupils understand and discuss the work of different artists and cultures. They are able to record their work using digital photography. In Year 9 research sheets showed good drawing and design skills and further development of basic artistic elements, such as colour and tone. The GCSE course is popular and attracts pupils with a wide range of abilities, many of whom have achieved standards that are below average. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 develop a clear understanding of the GCSE assessment objectives and prepare well for their examination topic at the end of the course. High attainers confidently draw a still life from observation using a range of drawing and painting media. They adapt their work using tone and colour into the style of different artists such as Braque, Cézanne and Picasso. Lower attainers lack the practical skills normally found. Pupils connect their work meaningfully with that of other artists and they annotate and discuss a wide variety of artwork. ICT is used by pupils for research purposes but little else. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed well in lessons.

Teaching and learning

124. Teachers are knowledgeable and make their subject interesting and relevant to the pupils who are keen to learn and display positive attitudes. Many pupils work in the department at lunchtimes and after school. Pupils are given a breadth and depth of experience in the use of both two and three-dimensional media. Year 9 pupils were observed making paper maquettes in an African mask-making lesson, which was very well planned and resourced. Teachers clearly display information using a data projector. Gifted and talented pupils are encouraged to develop their work further by carrying out more in-depth analysis of artists, procedures and materials. Teachers adapt work to meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs. Sketchbooks are used across all years, and homework is a valuable extension to class work. However, marking of books is inconsistent, and does not always inform pupils as to how

they can improve. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are not always clear of their levels and the targets they should be working towards. In Years 10 and 11, assessment is more focused and relates closely to examination assessment objectives, but not all pupils are clear as to their predicted GCSE grades. Pupils' learning experiences are enriched by visits to art galleries and attractive displays of work in the department area.

Leadership and management

125. There is a clear vision for the department and its future, including the need to develop further the use of ICT and improve assessment procedures. Some departmental documentation is out of date and schemes of work lack detail. Assessment is not used consistently as a means of raising achievement and creating challenge. Since the previous inspection, accommodation, the use of ICT and effective research by pupils have all improved.

Drama

Provision in drama is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Practical work is a relative strength
- The department makes a good contribution to the extra-curricular life of the school and so enriches the cultural life of a number of pupils
- In Years 10 and 11 pupils' written work is of a low standard
- The marking and assessment of pupils' written work are unsatisfactory

Commentary

Examination results

126. In 2004, results in GCSE drama were well below the national average.

Standards and achievement

127. Pupils' standards on entry are below average and they do not improve these standards through to the end of Year 11. There is some variation in GCSE results from year to year according to the prior attainment of the pupils who opt for the subject. In Years 7 to 9 all pupils study drama. In Years 10 and 11 it is offered as an option. By the time they reach Year 9, most pupils are willing participants in drama lessons. They appreciate the need to work co-operatively in groups, where they allocate responsibilities and decide upon the best way to communicate with an audience. In their performances, most pupils appreciate how characters are presented in stories or scripts and offer views on how they might be portrayed in a dramatic form. Higher attainers show a good insight into how plots might be used to develop characters. Lower attainers struggle to remain in character and concentration levels are poor which prevents them from attaining high enough standards. Most pupils use freeze-frames and facial expression to convey characters in their improvisations.

128. In Years 10 and 11 pupils further develop their skills. In their practical work they perform slightly more demanding scripts and further their understanding of production techniques reasonably well. Their performances become crisper and better co-ordinated but their written work is what really lets them down. Pupils' practical work is of a significantly higher standard than their written work. This difference is particularly pronounced in Years 10 and 11 since

assessment at GCSE level involves written tests and coursework. Much of the written work seen was of a low standard. Some of the work was too brief. It was often poorly expressed, contained many errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar and was not redrafted to improve its quality.

Teaching and learning

129. Although teaching and learning are overall satisfactory, some good teaching was also observed. A small proportion of the teaching was unsatisfactory. The teaching is at its best in practical lessons. In the more effective lessons, the learning objectives were explained clearly to pupils, who understood what was expected of them and so worked co-operatively. Pupils concentrated well when the work was varied and they were provided with the opportunity to collaborate with others to prepare and present short scenes. Teachers provide good oral feedback on pupils' performances and this helps them to improve specific skills. When teaching is less effective or unsatisfactory, the tasks set do not sufficiently take into account pupils' needs, the pace is too slow, discipline becomes less effective and pupils behave inappropriately.
130. Whilst some of the written work in Years 10 and 11 is of the level that might be expected, a significant proportion of it is not. In general, the expectations of teachers and pupils are too low. Marking is inconsistent. The most effective seen provides an accurate assessment and gives an indication of strengths and weaknesses. The least effective overlooks many errors, does not require pupils to redraft their work, provides little or no feedback on the quality of the work and does not make use of the relevant assessment objectives.

Leadership and management

131. The subject makes an important contribution to the extra-curricular life of the school. Teachers work co-operatively within the performing arts team and management has produced some valuable schemes of work that guide the teaching of the subject. Leadership recognises that improving the quality of pupils' written work is essential if standards are to be raised.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is effective and results in pupils' good achievement
- Teachers do not always clearly identify the learning aims for a lesson or share these with pupils
- Teachers treat pupils with respect and foster good relationships which result in positive attitudes and good behaviour from pupils
- Clear and committed leadership and management have resulted in an improved curriculum
- The department supports a range of extra-curricular groups which perform to a good standard

Commentary

Examination results

132. In 2004, 11 pupils were entered for GCSE. Six gained A*-C grades. These results are below the national average. However, the grades achieved by pupils in music are similar to those they achieved in other subjects.

Standards and achievement

133. By Year 9 pupils perform simple rhythms and melodies from notation. However, they struggle with more complex rhythms and have difficulty composing music to a given structure. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in relation to their capabilities. Girls generally achieve higher standards than boys. By Year 11, pupils' composing skills are weak and they have a very limited theoretical knowledge. However, teaching, which makes good use of music technology and which focuses on musical learning, results in pupils achieving well.

Teaching and learning

134. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is good. Teaching makes strong links between the development of technical skills and musical expressiveness and pupils are fully involved in making musical decisions about their work. Consequently even the simplest of compositions are musically effective and pupils feel that they have achieved something worthwhile.

135. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Music lessons involve pupils in performing, composing and active listening. Music software is used effectively in whole-class teaching and results in good learning about music practices from a wide range of styles and cultures. However, lessons do not always have clear learning aims and on these occasions teaching lacks direction. Because pupils are not always clear what it is they are meant to achieve when working in groups they do not always learn as much as they should. Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils with special educational needs. Teachers treat pupils with respect and a genuine care for their development and learning. In response pupils work hard and have a good attitude to learning in music lessons. In the one instrumental lesson observed, teaching was excellent.

Leadership and management

136. Leadership provides a clear vision of the future development of the department and a good role model for other staff and for pupils. A comprehensive rewriting of the scheme of work has recently taken place and this now provides well for the needs of pupils. Thorough end-of-module assessments take place but the department does not make enough use of assessment information in its planning. The department supports a wide range of extra-curricular groups which perform to a high standard. There is an annual production of a stage musical which involves large numbers of pupils and which is well supported by the local community. There is now sufficient curriculum time allocated to music, and accommodation and resources have improved significantly.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

The judgements apply to physical education as a core subject and as a GCSE examination subject.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Dynamic leadership provides a clear vision focused on raising standards
- Sports College status offers the potential for the physical education department to become a role model within the school
- Pupils achieve well because of consistently effective and on occasions excellent teaching
- Boys cannot study dance in Years 7 to 9

Commentary

Examination results

137. GCSE results in 2004 were average.

Standards and achievement

138. By Year 9, boys achieve very well in gymnastics, and girls in netball. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, and achieve at the same rate as their classmates, well illustrated in gymnastics. In Year 11, standards remain average, but this reflects good achievement because pupils study new courses that lead to accreditation, and teaching is consistently good. GCSE pupils achieve very well in basketball. In the theoretical aspects, pupils show a sound understanding of nutrition and the components of a healthy diet. Most pupils demonstrate competence in the use of ICT to present their findings. In dance, standards are below average, and most pupils are underachieving. Standards in extra-curricular sport are often high, reflected in the success of talented pupils in district, county and regional competitions in a range of sports.

Teaching and learning

139. Enthusiastic, supportive and on occasions inspirational teaching motivates pupils and creates a good climate for learning. This is evident in the high levels of participation, pupils' dress and good behaviour in lessons. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are generally good because they feel valued and teachers treat them with respect. However, a minority do not take learning seriously, and this leads to underachievement, as seen in dance. Very good teaching combines pace and challenge to ensure pupils are physically and cognitively involved in interesting, well-planned activities that match their abilities and enable them to learn very well. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is not rigorous enough, and there are insufficient demands on the pupils to do better. The expectations of teachers and pupils are often not high enough in relation to standards of work. Consequently, second-best work and low levels of concentration are accepted, and teaching lacks a consistent focus on quality and improvement. Assessment procedures are good. Pupils know how well they are doing and what to do to get better.

Leadership and management

140. Very effective leadership provides clear vision and strong direction for the department, evident in the attainment of specialist Sports College status and the successful implementation of development planning. The department not only meets but exceeds its attainment targets. Rapid staff changes have recently taken place, and the acting head of department is maintaining continuity, and managing the department well. An extensive extra-curricular programme provides very good opportunities for all pupils, especially the talented, to excel. There are very good links with other schools, the community and sports clubs through the School Sport Co-ordinator Partnership. Community developments are hindered by the lack of much-needed improved outdoor facilities, which are planned but have not yet materialised. Innovative curriculum planning enables all pupils to follow accredited courses in Years 10 and 11, but dance is not yet available for boys in the Years 7 to 9 curriculum. The school is successfully meeting the aim of the national strategy with all pupils receiving at least two hours a week of physical education. Specialist Sports College status has been gained since the previous inspection, and the department is a driving force in developing teaching and learning throughout the school.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

The main focus for the inspection was the business studies course. The school also offers vocational courses that provide pupils with specific skills and an insight into the requirements of the workplace. In a Year 10 health and social care lesson, teaching and learning were satisfactory and pupils demonstrated sound knowledge of the structure and functions of parts of the male and female reproductive systems. Work in their books indicates that have a good understanding of various methods of contraception.

Business studies

Provision for business studies is **poor**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Not applicable	Well below average
Achievement	Not applicable	Poor
Teaching and learning	Not applicable	Poor

Leadership	Poor
Management	Poor
Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable

Main weaknesses

- Lessons lack pace and challenge, resulting in poor learning
- Teachers give poor feedback so that pupils do not understand how to improve their written work
- Pupils' learning is not enriched by links with the outside business world
- Courses offered are too limited to cater for the needs of those pupils who opt for the subject

Commentary

Examination results

141. Results in the 2004 GCSE examinations were better than in previous years although too few pupils were entered for there to be a statistically reliable comparison with the national average. The 2004 results were an exception to the consistently well below average standards of recent years but they still represented unsatisfactory achievement by those pupils.

Standards and achievement

142. Standards are currently well below average and pupils underachieve in relation to their prior attainment. Standards of literacy are lower than normally seen and underdeveloped analytical and reasoning skills prevent the great majority of pupils from gaining the grades expected of them in examinations. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11, when asked to do calculations on model balance sheets and profit and loss accounts, do so accurately. Such pupils are much fewer in number than expected and the level of understanding displayed by a high percentage of pupils is, at best, insecure. Pupils have inadequate access to computers so their ICT skills are insufficiently developed through their business studies. A barrier to achievement is the lack of vocationally based courses that would match the needs of the great majority of pupils.

Teaching and learning

143. Teaching is poor because teachers have low expectations of what pupils can achieve. Lessons move at a slow and undemanding pace as in a Year 10 lesson when an hour was spent on tasks that would, more appropriately, have taken a quarter of that time. Similarly, Year 11 pupils, having been shown how to complete a profit and loss statement on the board, were then given the same example (the teacher having wiped off the actual answers) to work out, rather than having their grasp of the concept tested by working a different example. This lack of challenge to pupils is also evident, over time, in the written work they are required to complete, a great deal of which is routine and requires little in the way of extended writing

calling for reasoned thinking and explanation. Teachers do not systematically tackle the low standards of literacy that are commonly evident in pupils' writing, and that is an obstacle to better examination results. Spelling and grammar errors are not consistently highlighted and corrected in marking. There are few instances of analytical comments in written feedback on work, so that pupils are often unclear about what to do to improve. There are, additionally, too few structured opportunities in lessons for pupils to develop effective speaking skills in reporting back and justifying their views to the whole class. Pupils' lack of enthusiasm for the subject is rarely, to their credit, displayed in poor behaviour but in lack of animation and periodic inattention in lessons.

Leadership and management

144. There is little vision for the improvement of standards. Explanations of why there are no links with local businesses to enliven and enrich pupils' learning are unconvincing, as is the reason why the purely academic GCSE course, rather than the more practical vocational course, is offered. Pupils' negative attitudes to completion of the course work that would be required features in the reasons and this illustrates how blame for inadequacies in provision is attributed to pupils' attitudes rather than to poor planning and teaching. The subject was not reported on in the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The focus subject was citizenship. A small number of personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons were observed and statutory requirements are met. In a Year 8 lesson on drug education, teaching was good and pupils made good progress in understanding the problems of drug addiction in society. Links with citizenship were effective and the contribution of the visiting speakers was a particular strength.

Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **poor**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Achievement	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Teaching and learning	Poor	Poor

Leadership	Very poor
Management	Very poor
Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable

Main weaknesses

- The lack of a leader means that the subject has not been adequately implemented, so there is little teaching of citizenship taking place
- Some aspects are being covered well through the programme for PSHE
- The assessment of pupils is very poor as very little learning has been assessed.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

145. It was not possible to judge standards and achievement as too little teaching has taken place. However, in one Year 9 PSHE lesson, where some teaching of citizenship was taking place, the pupils had a very basic understanding of discrimination and disability, suggesting they are below national expectations.

Teaching and learning

146. Pupils know they are taught some aspects of citizenship during their PSHE lessons, but there is little teaching through other subjects. As part of one Year 8 PSHE lesson, the pupils learned

about the implications of drug taking and other forms of anti-social behaviour on society as part of a lesson about drugs, the risks and consequences. The lesson involved two visitors from the local police force who were used effectively and who made a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils were interested in the relevant material and had planned questions to ask, so they were actively engaged and thinking carefully about the issues. Although this was an example of good teaching, the contribution to citizenship overall was limited. There are no assessment procedures or records and although reports were produced for Year 9 pupils, none have been produced for other year groups.

Leadership and management

147. As senior management have chosen not to appoint a subject leader, there is no planned programme to ensure that the programmes of study are covered. Despite a well-produced, comprehensive and thorough audit there is no plan for the implementation and development of the subject. Neither are there procedures for monitoring and evaluation to ensure that subject contributions identified in the audit are taking place. There are some good opportunities for pupils to experience citizenship outside the school day, such as Rock Challenge (an anti-drugs opportunity provide for young people by the police), and representing the school at local meetings such as sexual health and drug forums. The subject was not reported on in the previous inspection.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, six subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

Most sixth form subjects were not reported on in the previous inspection report so a judgement for improvement since then has not always been given.

The tables below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2004.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	3	67	78	0	22	13	29
Biology	5	60	64	0	10	60	64
Chemistry	2	50	70	0	13	10	23
Communication studies	4	100	87	50	25	48	33
English language	7	71	85	0	16	17	29
English literature	4	50	86	0	17	15	30
Design and technology	5	20	73	0	14	8	24
General studies	3	100	74	0	17	27	26
Geography	4	50	76	0	20	18	27
History	1	0	82	0	21	0	29
Information technology	3	33	67	0	9	7	21
Mathematics	4	75	60	0	14	18	21
Other social studies	3	100	68	0	15	33	23
Physics	2	0	66	0	15	0	22
Sports studies	3	100	72	0	12	20	23

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	5	100	98	20	50	72	87
Biology	4	100	97	0	40	65	79
Chemistry	2	100	98	0	50	60	86
Communication studies	8	100	99	50	40	93	84
English language	11	100	99	18	36	76	81
English literature	4	100	99	25	45	65	86
French	1	100	99	100	53	100	89
Design and technology	2	100	98	0	35	80	78
General studies	14	93	95	7	31	53	73
Geography	4	100	99	25	46	70	85
German	1	100	99	0	50	80	86
History	7	100	99	0	46	60	85
Information technology	4	100	96	0	26	55	71
Mathematics	8	100	97	50	57	90	90
Music	3	100	98	67	37	87	80
Other social studies	1	100	97	0	43	60	82
Physics	2	100	97	50	45	80	83
Sports studies	2	100	98	0	31	70	75
Business studies VCE	4	75	92	0	24	45	68
Health and social care VCE	1	100	94	0	25	40	70
Art and design VQ	6	33	95	0	45	20	82

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on English literature, but lessons in English language and film studies were also sampled. In the Year 13 English language lesson, the number of students taking the subject was very low. Standards seen were in line with the national average. Teaching, learning and achievement were satisfactory. Particular features of the work were the willingness of all students to contribute to the discussion, the respect they showed for the views of others, and their lively interest in judging how well theories about language could explain their own real-life experiences. In the Year 13 film studies lesson use of correct technical terms and good quality discussion helped students to achieve well. They learned to understand how character and relationship had an impact on themes, and could relate these to the culture of post-Franco Spain.

English literature

Provision in English literature is **satisfactory**.

	Year 13
Standards	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most students are willing to participate in class discussion and are interested in how social issues are presented in literature
- Teachers possess good subject knowledge and challenge students and lead them to think more deeply
- Students have not developed, nor been by teachers required to develop, independent learning skills to the extent that might be expected
- Some of the teaching does not sufficiently take into account the range of prior knowledge in the group

Commentary

Examination results

148. In 2004, the number of students taking the subject was too small to be statistically significant, so their overall performance cannot be meaningfully compared to the national average. However, of the four candidates, one gained a higher (A or B) grade and the other three gained a pass grade in range C to E. This would be in the broadly below average category.

Standards and achievement

149. By the time they reach Year 13, students are generally willing to take part in group or whole-class discussion in order to improve their own understanding and to try to communicate effectively. Even so, there is considerable variation in students' skills. Higher attaining students are articulate, use an appropriate technical vocabulary and draw upon wider reading to place their observations in an appropriate literary or social context. However, the majority of students are middle and lower attainers, and they usually express themselves more briefly, sometimes in too colloquial a way and often find difficulty in elaborating their ideas in response to questioning. These features are also found in students' written work. Higher attainers produce well-structured, well-illustrated essays and take account of the relevant assessment objectives. The written work of lower attaining students tends to be descriptive or narrative rather than analytical. Most students take an interest in how social issues are presented in literature. Many students rely upon their teachers to generate ideas and to provide them with additional reading. The result is that they become somewhat passive recipients of learning

and do not develop their own tastes in reading, or the capacity to undertake their own research, to the extent that might be expected.

Teaching and learning

150. Some of the teaching is good. When teachers know their subject well and pass on their knowledge effectively, students are given a deeper understanding of literature and its social context and this, in turn, leads them on to further speculate about what they are learning. When the purpose of the lesson is clearly defined and students are given the opportunity to be active in their own learning by, for example, participating in well-structured group work, they are ready to think for themselves and their enthusiasm increases. When teachers have a good knowledge of the assessment objectives, and use these to assess students' work thoroughly and accurately, students know what they have to do in order to improve. In less effective lessons, teachers do not sufficiently take into account the wide range of attainment in the group. This can result, for example, in students being provided with some information and ideas, almost entirely orally, and asked to complete a task, but not being shown how to do it. In such circumstances, higher attainers can produce satisfactory work, but lower and middle attainers struggle to find the appropriate language. Teachers are conscientious in providing students with additional reading to widen their understanding but, in general, are less effective in creating opportunities for students to undertake their own research. The result of this is that some students can become relatively passive.

Leadership and management

151. At the time of the inspection, the head of department was absent. However, colleagues were working well together as a team and the leadership and management of the department were satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

152. Standards of literacy in the sixth form are below average, but have improved. Access to the Internet has stimulated reading for research, but a number of students are still reluctant to read widely to set learning in a wider context. Even more read uncritically, and are unable to weigh up which information or point of view is the more relevant, stimulating, or justified. Class discussion is often lively and thoughtful but some teachers do not realise the value of brisk, focused academic debate. The greatest weakness is in written work where vague writing with too many errors does not best demonstrate some students' abilities. Increasingly, however, students are being taught to justify and reference their work and to write to the point of the topic in hand.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers' good level of knowledge leads to clear explanations of concepts which motivate students to achieve their potential
- Effective leadership results in teachers working hard as a team to raise standards
- Schemes of work have not been developed to support teachers sufficiently

Commentary

Examination results

153. In 2004, the results at A-level were above average but were slightly lower than those in 2003.

Standards and achievement

154. Student achievement is good given their attainment on entry to the course, which is broadly average. The quality of students' written and oral work is generally above that expected for both Year 12 and 13 students at this stage in the course. In pure mathematics, students demonstrate a good understanding of partial fractions and use this well when developing a greater understanding of binomial expansion as a result of the good specialist teaching they receive. However, lower attaining students do struggle to select which type of integration to use when answers are required in a certain format. In decision mathematics, students have developed above average graph and network skills. Students understand the degree of a vertex, as well as odd and even vertices; however, students do get confused in their work on Eulerian trails.

Teaching and learning

155. There are good relationships between students and teachers which promotes confidence in the students. The teachers' good level of knowledge leads to clear explanations of concepts. Teachers give strong support when students ask for clarification and this allows students to improve their understanding well. Lessons are planned well with clear aims of what students are expected to achieve. Students participate well in discussions, with good answers to questions, and volunteer their own questions articulately. However, there are often too few opportunities for them to take a more active role in the lesson and to work in together in pairs or groups so that they can learn from each other. The day-to-day marking and assessment of students' work are generally good. The better marking indicates clearly to students what they need to do to improve. Overall, students have a good understanding of mathematics and make effective use of past work when introduced to a new topic. Outside of lessons teachers give very freely of their time to further enhance the students' learning.

Leadership and management

156. Leadership is rooted in effective consultation and collaboration amongst teachers. There is a clear vision for improvement and consequently teachers are keen to raise standards in mathematics. The department though has not yet developed strategies for raising attainment, particularly by bridging the gap between GCSE and AS-level. However, there is a good match of teaching staff to the curriculum. The wide range of topics within the mathematics curriculum provides students with good opportunities to study new areas of the subject ensuring that interest and motivation are maintained and extended. However, schemes of work have not been developed to fully support teachers. Similarly, ICT has not been sufficiently incorporated into lessons either as a teaching aid or as a learning resource to further raise student achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

157. Unsatisfactory use is made of mathematics across the curriculum. The standard of students' mathematical skills in other subjects is below average. Training, support and an audit for numeracy have taken place with the departments but numeracy has not become sufficiently embedded into their schemes of work or lesson planning. Consequently students' standards of numeracy are not being raised across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Biology was the focus of the inspection. A-level physics and chemistry were sampled. One Year 12 physics lesson was seen. Teaching and learning were satisfactory and students showed competency in the use of formulae related to the topic of energy conservation. These students have positive attitudes to their studies and are building on firm foundations laid at GCSE level. Two chemistry lessons were seen, one each in Years 12 and 13. Teaching and learning were

satisfactory in Year 12 and good in Year 13. In both year groups students demonstrated good practical skills in the handling of apparatus and chemicals and accurate recording of observations. They have a mature and positive attitude to their studies.

Biology

Provision in biology is **satisfactory**.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory
Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some teaching is good and provides students with an interesting range of activities to reinforce what they need to remember
- Students enjoy the subject, particularly the practical work, and work hard in lessons
- In some topics there is not enough formal, assessed, written work to give students a clear idea of how well they are doing
- The arrangements for the leadership and management of the subject are inadequate because there is no biologist with responsibility for raising standards in the subject

Commentary

Examination results

158. Four students took A-level biology in 2004. All gained pass grades but none gained the higher grades A or B. The number of students was too small for any meaningful comparison of their results with national averages.

Standards and achievement

159. Standards vary significantly from year to year, depending on the standards on entry to the course of the students who choose to study biology. Over the last few years, students have generally gained the A-level results that might be expected from their GCSE results at the end of Year 11. Hence, their achievement has been satisfactory.

160. In the current Year 13, standards are broadly average. Higher attainers give good, detailed, extended answers to the teacher's questions on the sources and impact of pollution of the environment by heavy metals. Other students' answers are shorter but show appropriate understanding of the issues. In Year 12, the 23 students began the course with GCSE grades that were below average for students embarking on an AS-level biology course. Some of their spoken answers reveal weaknesses in their knowledge of GCSE topics. Nevertheless they coped satisfactorily with the main features of the ventilation cycle. In both Year 12 and Year 13, students' current grades are in line with target grades, based on their GCSE results, and so their achievement is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

161. In both Year 12 and Year 13, students experience some good teaching. For example, Year 12 students enjoyed an imaginative and demanding 'starter' that tested their ordering of the phases in mitosis and they later taught each other about vegetative propagation and cloning, successfully reinforcing their understanding of these topics after they had heard the teacher's explanation. However, in other lessons, although teaching is satisfactory, there are weaknesses, including a lack of variety in the activities provided and too much use of the textbook. Students do use ICT occasionally to research topics and to present their findings;

they make some use of data loggers, particularly in fieldwork. Nevertheless there is scope for more use by students of ICT to introduce them to a wider range of learning techniques.

162. Students' attitudes to the subject are satisfactory. They concentrate well in lessons and work hard. Students particularly enjoy the practical aspects of the subject. However, some students do not put as much effort into their individual study. In some topics teachers do not set enough formal written tasks, particularly examination questions that can be marked and returned to students so that they gain a clearer idea of how well they are doing. Both groups had a series of supply teachers prior to the appointment of one of their current teachers. They have found that some of their teaching has not been precisely matched to the requirements of the examination papers. For example, one teacher covered photosynthesis in great detail but did not spend enough time on other topics.

Leadership and management

163. At present, two teachers share the teaching of A-level biology; one is an experienced teacher of the subject and the other is new to teaching biology at this level. Overall responsibility for leadership and management of biology currently lies with the head of science, who has been in post for around two terms. The arrangements are working satisfactorily at present but the head of science has many other responsibilities and is not a biologist. The management structure in the science department does not currently meet long-term needs in relation to raising standards in A-level biology. The library stock for A-level biology is inadequate and does not provide a sufficient range of sources of information for students.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

This was not a focus for the inspection.

HUMANITIES

The focus of the inspection was history. Also sampled were courses in geography, law, psychology, and religious education. A Year 12 geography lesson saw students achieving satisfactorily in planning fieldwork. The teacher had planned the lesson carefully. However, the achievement of the two students was limited by the inevitable lack of a variety of ideas and opinions in such a small group, and their reliance on the teacher. Therefore, teaching was satisfactory. In the law lesson seen in Year 12 students of a wide range of backgrounds and abilities were achieving well to reach standards close to those expected. They learned well and gained good understanding of the legal aid process because the effective teaching was focused on taking them through this carefully and expectations of what they could do were high. In a Year 12 psychology lesson, students were achieving well and working at levels close to those expected at this stage of the course. However, the variability in their independent learning skills, ability to work collaboratively and experience of critical analysis of an argument meant that the teaching had to be very good to ensure that everyone had a good chance of making progress. The very good teaching ensured students learned about the effects of stress well because teaching used a lively mix of activities very skilfully to take them through key points successfully, step by step. In the Year 12 religious studies lesson there was a studious atmosphere. Good relationships and lively debate enabled students to look at and understand the cosmological argument of Aquinas. Students achieved satisfactorily as a result of the sound teaching.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching produces challenging lessons that move at pace and lead to students achieving well
- Students work well independently and relish the frequent opportunities to bounce their ideas off each other in group discussions
- The analysis of students' previous attainment and the setting of realistic targets for their future achievements are rigorous
- Students like the subject very much and the numbers opting for it have increased greatly in the last few years

Commentary

Examination results

164. Results in the 2004 A-level examinations were well below average but this was a one-year fall from previous results that were in line with the national average, and still represented satisfactory achievement.

Standards and achievement

165. Students in Year 12 adjust quickly to the more challenging demands of AS-level work. The great majority produce writing that critically analyses source evidence, evaluates different views and reaches well-supported conclusions. Almost every student continues to the A-level course and, in Year 13, most of them demonstrate above average investigative skills. They become confident independent learners who produce written work that reflects clear thinking and a critical self-evaluation of the quality of work they are producing. They bring this constructive critical approach to bear when working together in lessons, and this greatly benefits the quality of all their work.

Teaching and learning

166. All students benefit from knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching. Teachers plan their lessons well, including in them a range of individual and inter-active activities that challenge and stimulate their students. As a result, students learn well and achieve well in both Years 12 and 13. At the end of a Year 12 lesson, for instance, one student said that he could now attempt an evaluation of Henry VIII's foreign policy because that lesson had so well clarified the topic. Similarly, a good lesson in Year 13 ensured that students gained good understanding of how several eminent historians came to differing conclusions about events and the motives of principal historical figures. This lesson achieved the objective of sharpening students' awareness of the need for careful planning and the inclusion of concise and relevant supporting evidence in examination answers. Teachers are well versed in the requirements of examinations, their assessment of written assignments is accurate and the marking is detailed and thorough. The monitoring of student achievement and progress, through frequent assessment and student target setting, is rigorous. Students' attitudes towards the subject are very positive and they greatly enjoy the lessons.

Leadership and management

167. The subject is managed well and clear leadership provides vision and direction. Well-structured documents that contain thorough schemes of work and guidance for staff are in place. The recently introduced strategy for monitoring and evaluating student achievement is innovative and is serving as a model for whole-school development in assessment for

learning. The maintenance of good standards through the period of changes to post-16 examinations means that good improvement has been made since the previous inspection.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

This was not a focus for the inspection. The course in product design was sampled. Students were working on their major projects. Learning and achievement were satisfactory as a result of the challenging discussions, good relationships and overall sound teaching.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

This was not a focus for the inspection. Lessons in art and design, music, theatre studies, and performance studies were sampled. In art and design students worked very well and reached above average standards in their personal investigations. Enthusiastic and supportive, very good teaching was matched by the mature and confident approach of the students. Good questioning was central to the success of a music lesson. As a result of the good teaching, students gained a good understanding of the principles of how a specific musical atmosphere could be created using music technology. Only five students are studying the theatre studies course which makes performances difficult. In a Year 12 lesson, the four students present were designing a stage set for a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Standards were below average but students achieved and learned satisfactorily because of their positive attitudes and the satisfactory teaching. The Year 13 performance studies lesson had only five of the six students present which made the group work based on *Oh What A Lovely War* difficult. Students achieved satisfactorily as a result of sound teaching but the pace of learning was too slow because the teacher did not push them hard enough. Standards were below average. Students' practical skills were much stronger than their theoretical understanding of performance techniques.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus area for this inspection was physical education.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 13
Standards	Below average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative teaching enables students to achieve better than expected
- The very effective leadership provides a clear vision of the standards required
- There are very good opportunities for enrichment and extra-curricular activities
- Examination techniques are not focused on soon enough to ensure that students are fully prepared for AS examinations

Commentary

Examination results

168. Two students took the GCE A-level examination in 2004, and they both gained a pass grade.

Standards and achievement

169. Year 12 students achieve well. They show a sound knowledge and understanding of discrimination in sport, and provide appropriate examples from their experience. In Year 13, standards are below average, but this represents good achievement in relation to their starting point on entering the sixth form. A stimulating discussion on the characteristics of leadership enabled students to draw on their own knowledge and first-hand experience effectively. Students use the specialist language of the subject well.

Teaching and learning

170. Students benefit from enthusiastic, knowledgeable teaching. Very good planning is a feature of all lessons. A range of teaching strategies is effectively used to involve students in decision making, problem solving and investigative research. Students' attitudes are good; they contribute readily, work hard and present convincing arguments to support their ideas, well illustrated in a discussion of leadership styles. Year 13 students' performance in their AS examination indicates that an increased focus on examination technique would be beneficial, at an earlier stage.

Leadership and management

171. Leadership is committed to driving standards up and improving the quality of learning within the subject. The monitoring of the subject's performance is central to management. The use of assessment data in setting individual targets and estimating progress is good. Students appreciate the good support and guidance they receive. Year 13 students were full of enthusiasm following a visit to Sheffield University. The sixth form enrichment programme enables all students to maintain an active lifestyle every week. There are also opportunities to gain the Community Sports Leader Award, and participate in an extensive extra-curricular programme. Sixth form students assist with extra-curricular activities, and help younger students in lessons. Very good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. GCE A-level is now well established, and overall standards have risen.

BUSINESS

The focus of the inspection was on AVCE Business. The one-year GNVQ intermediate course was sampled. There were only two students in the lesson and both were working towards a merit grade. The lesson outlining the requirements of the next unit to be studied was very teacher dominated and students were passive recipients of information. Teaching was accurate and the business vocabulary of students was extended.

Business education

Provision in AVCE business is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory
Leadership	Poor
Management	Poor

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is hampered by the low expectations of students
- The subject is staffed by specialists who focus teaching on course assessment requirements
- The subject is insufficiently grounded in the real world of business
- Lessons are too dominated by teachers, resulting in weak independent learning

Commentary

Examination results

172. In 2004 too few students took the examination to make meaningful comparisons. Of the three students who took the subject, two passed. In 2003 results were above the national average.

Standards and achievement

173. During the inspection standards were in line with course expectations. Students could identify different forms of market research and were aware of bias. They were able to carry out business analysis such as 'SWOT' and 'PEST' for a major soft drinks brand. Computer work was used to show the results of research diagrammatically. Students applied marketing concepts such as Ansoff's matrix and the Boston matrix. Whilst most students begin the course following successful completion of a GCSE course in business studies others have no previous experience of the subject. They all progress at too slow a pace and the existing knowledge and understanding of students are not recognised. For example, Year 12 students spent three hours building up a basic understanding of theory of demand and supply. The teacher failed to appreciate that six out of eight students had studied this for GCSE and were bored and frustrated.

Teaching and learning

174. Some students are positive about the teaching they receive and all agree that teachers are approachable and give students good support. Their work is assessed accurately and students are told what they need to do to improve. However, students are frustrated by the low expectation of what they are able to do and how long they need to complete tasks. Teaching observed was often sound. The strength of one lesson lay in the clear focus on the requirements of the unit specification. Students were successfully guided through the assessment requirements and were prepared for their independent work on assignments. However, boys particularly lack self-motivation and although a small range of resources was made available nobody took advantage of them. In another lesson Year 12 students were introduced to demand theory. Accurate teaching built up the model systematically but there were insufficient checks to ensure that students understood each step or to discover an appropriate pace. In all lessons observed there was an over-reliance on teachers talking through everything. Overall, teaching is slow and ponderous. One student described it as "patronising", taking a long time to go over very simple ideas. Teachers' expectations of the ability of students are far too low.

Leadership and management

175. The subject is not keeping up with developments. Business links are insufficient to bring the subject alive. Accommodation is unsatisfactory as a business-like base does not exist. Resources are inadequate and the subject area does not have its own budget to improve the situation. Computers are not used well enough. Students word process assignments and research companies on the Internet, but the wealth of resources for business learning is not used sufficiently. Although the department has a data projector, this is not used. There is no formal monitoring of teaching and learning beyond the annual performance management single observation, although teachers do preparation work in their colleague's teaching room. The subject is staffed and run by part-time teachers who are subject specialists. The part-time nature of the staffing results in communication problems at times. However, planning of which teacher teaches which unit is sound and builds upon their identified strengths. The most unacceptable element of the department's leadership is the lack of awareness of what is involved in courses that students have previously studied, for example falsely believing that the fundamental concept of demand and supply is not covered at GCSE.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

This was not a focus for the inspection. One lesson of general studies was sampled. Learning was very good because of very effective teaching. Students debated and made notes on the role of censorship in society, with particular reference to film. A clear presentation by the teacher and very good choice of resources stimulated lively discussion, and a very good understanding of the main issues.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	4	6
How inclusive the school is		6
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4	6
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	6
Overall standards achieved		6
Pupils' achievement	4	6
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)		5
Attendance	5	6
Attitudes	4	5
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4	5
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		5
The quality of education provided by the school		6
The quality of teaching	4	6
How well pupils learn	4	6
The quality of assessment	4	6
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	5	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		5
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4	5
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	3
The leadership and management of the school		6
The governance of the school	5	5
The leadership of the headteacher		4
The leadership of other key staff	3	5
The effectiveness of management	4	6

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