

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE CORBET SCHOOL**

Shrewsbury, Shropshire

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123594

Headteacher: Mr R J Thompson

Lead inspector: Dr Faysal Mikdadi

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 258805

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Comprehensive  
School category: Foundation

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2447	Dr Faysal Mikdadi	Lead inspector	Modern foreign languages
9974	Daljit Singh	Lay inspector	
15163	Eric Deeson	Team inspector	Science
31385	Neil Gillespie	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
1517	David Griffith	Team inspector	Citizenship Religious education
31779	Viv Harrison	Team inspector	Design and technology
1240	John King	Team inspector	Art and design
18967	Brenda Loydell	Team inspector	Mathematics
12003	Dr Andrew Marfleet	Team inspector	English
13122	Stephanie Matthews	Team inspector	History
32169	Bob O'Hagan	Team inspector	Geography
23499	Howard Seymour	Team inspector	Music
31159	Clive Simmonds	Team inspector	
18755	Roger Whittaker	Team inspector	Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** school. Pupils are provided with a good quality education within a safe learning environment. Their achievement is good because of the good quality teaching which allows them to learn well. The headteacher, senior staff, teachers, teaching assistants, ancillary and support staff, as well as the governors, all work together to create a very good ethos around the school. The school provides very good value for money.

### THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- Pupils' achievement is consistently good and the value added in Years 7 to 9 is outstanding.
- National Curriculum test and GCSE examination results for 2003 were well above the national average.
- The headteacher's leadership is very good. His vision is shared by staff and governors which is a major contributory factor in creating a very good ethos for learning.
- Parents are very happy with the school.
- The higher attainers, especially the gifted and talented, are not consistently challenged in every subject of the curriculum.
- Provision in English, mathematics, science and ICT as well as for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Pupils' attendance, punctuality, behaviour and attitudes are very good. This is because the teaching, learning, assessment, opportunities for enrichment, accommodation, resources, the care for pupils, support for pupils and links with parents and the community are all good.
- The curriculum offered for pupils in Years 10 and 11 lacks sufficient opportunities to follow vocational courses.

Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory. Curriculum time is now sufficient and lessons have been shortened to a more useful sixty minutes each. Marking and assessment are now good. Continuing professional development is a strength of the school. The spiritual dimension, criticised in the last inspection report, is now satisfactory. However, the school still does not offer a daily act of collective worship. A building programme has just started to give the school new indoor facilities for physical education.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	A	A	A	B..5 0.75 re f 54hool2

science, history and ICT. Teacher assessment results are also well above average in modern foreign languages. GCSE results are well above the national average in physical education and Spanish. Test and examination results are above the national average in art and design, music and religious education. Teacher assessment results are above the national average in physical education. They are in line with the national averages in design and technology and geography.

**Students' personal qualities are very good. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good.** Pupils develop into mature and responsible young citizens because of the opportunities offered to them by the school. Their behaviour is very good. They enjoy very good relationships with each other as well as with the adults around. Pupils' attitudes to learning, their attendance and punctuality are all very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of the students' education is good.** All the lessons seen were at least satisfactory and in four in every five lessons seen, teaching was at least good. The result of this good teaching is that pupils learn well and enjoy their learning. They make good progress and, as a consequence, achieve well. The school has identified its gifted and talented pupils. Although provision for them and for the high attainers is at least satisfactory, they are not always consistently challenged in every subject. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum offered does not include sufficient opportunities for pupils to follow vocational courses although the school plan has college placements for a small number for the coming academic year. Pupils are well cared for within a secure and safe environment. They receive good guidance. Their opinions are listened to although a few claim that their views are not acted upon. Links with parents and the community are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The headteacher's leadership is very good.** He is well supported by senior staff, teachers, support staff, governors and parents in realising his vision of a good learning environment. The result is that pupils achieve well and enjoy their school. Governors fully understand the school's strengths and weaknesses as well as its finances. However, they support as well as challenge senior staff. They do not fulfil their statutory duty of ensuring that the school holds a daily act of collective worship.

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

**Parents speak very highly of the school.** Pupils like their school and are happy to be there. Some parents and pupils expressed concern about the homework timetable not being consistently adhered to in Years 7 to 9. The inspectors agree with their concerns.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

### **THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE ARE TO:**

- Ensure that suitable opportunities are offered to pupils to follow a vocational course in Years 10 and 11.
- Ensure that those pupils identified as being higher attaining, including the gifted and talented, are consistently and appropriately challenged in every subject.

**AND, TO MEET STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS:**

- Ensure that provision is made for all pupils to take part in a daily act of collective worship.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

In 2003, the pupils' National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science were **well above the national average**. The GCSE results for pupils attaining five or more grades A\*-C were also well above the national average for 2003. Pupils join the school with prior attainment that is average and leave it with well above national average attainment. This represents consistently good achievement overall. Standards are well above national expectations in English, mathematics, science, history and ICT and above average in art and design, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. They are in line with the national expectations in design and technology, geography, and religious education although they rise to above average in Years 10 and 11 in religious education. Standards are below average in citizenship.

#### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Standards are well above average in all years in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- National Curriculum test and teacher assessments as well as GCSE results in 2003 were well above the national averages in English, mathematics, science, history and ICT. They were well above average in GCSE physical education and Spanish as well as in the National Curriculum teacher assessment results in modern foreign languages.
- Achievement is rarely less than good. It is very good in English, mathematics, science, ICT and Years 10 and 11 in Spanish.

#### **COMMENTARY**

1. When pupils join the school in Year 7 their prior attainment, based on the National Curriculum Test results at the end of Year 6 is in line with the national average. By the end of Year 9, their National Curriculum Test results are well above the national averages in all the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The National Curriculum teacher assessment results in 2003 were well above the national average in history, ICT and modern foreign languages. They were above the national average in art and design, music, physical education and religious education. These results were in line with the national average in design and technology and geography and below average in citizenship. The value added between the end of Year 6 and the end of Year 9 is outstanding.
2. In 2003, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more grades A\*-C was well above the national average and a modest increase on the last inspection when it was also well above the national average. The proportion gaining five or more grades A\*-G was above the national average. GCSE results were well above the national average in English, mathematics, science, history, ICT, physical education and Spanish. They were above the national average in art and design, music and religious education. GCSE results were in line with the national average in design technology, geography and French. The value added between the end of Year 9 and Year 11 is at least satisfactory although this judgement must be seen against the outstanding value added in Years 7 to 9.

3. The standards of work seen during the inspection were well above the national expectations in all years in English, mathematics, science, ICT and in Year 10 and 11 in history. They were above the national expectations in all years in art and design, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and in Years 7 to 9 in history and Years 10 and 11 in religious education. They were in line with national expectations in all years in design and technology and geography and in Years 7 to 9 in religious education. Standards seen were below expectations in citizenship.
4. Standards of literacy are well above average. In science, design and technology and history, teachers use the National Literacy Strategy effectively to ensure that pupils can write for different purposes as well as for different readers. Most subjects focus on key vocabulary, with the result that pupils' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are well above national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make significant gains in their literacy skills.
5. Standards of numeracy are well above average. In English and history, pupils are competent in using statistical techniques. In science and design and technology, they can manipulate numbers well. Calculations and graphical skills are well used in science and ICT. Pupils can handle numbers well although this is not consistently done across all subjects.
6. Pupils' ICT competence is satisfactory overall. The improvements in computer resources since the last inspection are not yet having a significant impact on each subject although the recent award of Technology College Status has speeded this process up. ICT is used in English where good redrafting and researching take places using computers. ICT is still underdeveloped in science, art and design and design and music. It is improving in mathematics.
7. Pupils' achievement is invariably very good in all years in English, mathematics, science and ICT and in Years 10 and 11 Spanish. It is good in all years in art and design, history, music, physical education and in Years 10 and 11 in French and religious education. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in all years in citizenship, design and technology, geography and in Years 7 to 9 religious education. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. The pupils with English as an additional language are in Year 11. Their achievement is very good. Two pupils with English as an additional language obtained grade A\* in their home language at the end of Year 10. Thmusic,5es e0.1688

Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	98 (98)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best 8 subjects)	42.6 (42.2)	34.7 (34.7)

*There were 128 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Pupils continue to sustain **very good** attendance, attitudes and behaviour and constructive relationships with others, which ensures that most pupils achieve well and work in a stimulating environment. Pupils' positive qualities are fostered by effective social and moral experiences and supported by satisfactory cultural and spiritual experiences, enabling them to serve the school and community with pride and to become mature responsible citizens. The pupils' moral and social development is good and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. The lack of a daily act of collective worship has a negative impact on the pupils' spiritual development.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Very good attendance is consistently sustained and attendance is well above the national average.
- Attitudes to the school are very good and pupils are enthusiastic in everything they do.
- Behaviour, in and out of classrooms, is very good. Exclusions are low and there have been no permanent exclusions in the previous two years. Most pupils are extremely friendly and well mannered.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to show initiative and responsibility outside of lessons, as school librarians, prefects and peer counsellors.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good.

## **COMMENTARY**

8. Pupils like coming to school, because they are encouraged by staff and parents to attend regularly and on time. These expectations are the norm in the school and form a solid and constructive foundation for learning.
9. The school has very high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Most pupils respond by developing good habits and attitudes to work and a lifelong respect for learning. Pupils usually have very good attitudes in lessons; it is rare for these attitudes to be less than satisfactory. Nearly all pupils listen attentively, are keen to answer questions and tackle work enthusiastically, including those with special educational needs. These experiences ensure good achievement and effective moral and social development.
10. Relationships between pupils, irrespective of their racial backgrounds, are based on mutual respect and are conducive to learning. Pupils invest their time wisely and take an active part in activities inside and outside of lessons. A good range of out-of-class activities helps to enrich and extend provision, especially in music, sport, and physical education; this enables pupils to learn, develop themselves as individuals, promote co-operation and prepare for life in the community, but more could be taught to prepare pupils to live in a multiracial community.

11. There are good opportunities for pupils to show initiative and responsibility both in and outside of lessons such as the 'buddying system'. These experiences enable pupils to be mature, successful, keen learners and to become responsible adults who make a positive contribution to their community.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	5.3
National data	7.2

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	1.1

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

**Ethnic background of students**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Other
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Chinese
Parent/student preferred not to say

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Number of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
589	21	2
36	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
53	33	2

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

Overall, the quality of education is **good**. Consistently good teaching means that pupils invariably have a good learning experience and as a result they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress whilst the few with English as an additional language make very good progress. Assessment strategies, including marking, are good. Pupils are well cared for and they are encouraged to achieve within a very good learning ethos.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Overall, the quality of teaching is **good and often better**. Every lesson seen was at least satisfactory. Pupils learn well and they benefit from good assessment strategies.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and more often it is at least good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently very good in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- Assessment strategies are good.
- Although provision for pupils identified as gifted and talented is satisfactory overall, they are not consistently challenged.

## COMMENTARY

12. Teaching is good overall. It is good or better in four out of every five lessons. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory. This is an improvement on the last inspection.
13. The quality of teaching seen was very good in all years in English, mathematics, science and ICT. It was good in art and design, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education in all years and in Years 10 and 11 in geography. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in all years in citizenship and in Years 7 to 9 in geography. This good quality teaching invariably helped the pupils to learn well and to enjoy their lessons. The good quality teaching and learning are main factors contributing to the pupils' good achievement.
14. Overall, assessment strategies are good. Teachers mark consistently and constructively. In Years 7 to 9, advice to pupils on how to improve their work is satisfactory whereas in Years 10 and 11, it is good. This means that teachers are able to respond to individual needs satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9 and well in Years 10 and 11.
15. Systems for monitoring pupils' progress are good. Advice and help to pupils are based on close monitoring of their work. They receive good support where needed. All pupils interviewed felt they always received help when it was needed. This monitoring also leads to pupils being set realistic but challenging targets although those pupils identified as gifted and talented are not always appropriately challenged. Teachers receive a significant set of data on prior attainment which helps them to understand what each individual pupil's potential may be.
16. Some parents and pupils expressed concerns about the fact that the homework timetable in Years 7 to 9 is not consistently adhered to. Inspectors agree with this concern. In Years 10 and 11, this does not apply, as coursework in these years is set over a long period, with pupils knowing the deadlines from the beginning of the course. The quality of the homework set is invariably good and it helps to extend the pupils' learning.

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 107 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (1%)	34 (32%)	54 (50%)	18 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

## THE CURRICULUM

The school curriculum is mainly **broad and balanced**. There is a good range of opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation is satisfactory and resources are good.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- There is very good provision for students with special educational needs.
- The curriculum for 14- to 16-year-old pupils is largely academic and does not include any vocational opportunities.
- There is insufficient focus on increasing the school's identity, given its status as a technology college.

## **COMMENTARY**

17. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 caters well for the different needs of particular groups of pupils and is broad and balanced. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have access to a range of academic courses and the timetable is arranged to enable each pupil to study their preferred choice of subjects but there are no vocational courses. There are sound work experience arrangements, and careers guidance is preparing the pupils well for employment or further study.
18. The allocation of time to English, mathematics and science is satisfactory. There is

Edinburgh award. Provision after school is limited by a lack of transport facilities for some pupils but there are sporting fixtures and a gym club. Pupils take part in a wide range of sports in school and they are encouraged to join local clubs in orienteering and other outdoor pursuits. The school organises visits to the law courts, museums, theatres and art galleries and pupils have many opportunities to develop their interest in the arts. Most departments offer lunchtime revision courses for Year 11. There are good opportunities to take part in specific events, for example science week, the maths challenge and drama and music productions.

## **CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

The provision for pupils' care, support and guidance is **good** and valued by most pupils and parents. Pupils learn in a safe and secure environment and effective strategies are in place to ensure their welfare and wellbeing. There are satisfactory systems in place, which ensure that pupils can voice their opinions, but these could be developed further.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The work of the staff ensures good care and support which form a secure foundation for learning and the good relationships with pupils.
- The good induction programme ensures that pupils make a smooth transition from the primary school.
- Not all pupils are happy with the work of the school and year councils.

## **COMMENTARY**

28. With effective support from most pupils, staff provide a consistent and caring learning environment which sets very good standards of discipline and encourages mutual respect, effective communication, co-operation and self-discipline. These arrangements evidently promote, develop and ensure trusting relationships within the school and the wider community.
29. Work in the school and year councils is static. It could be developed to ensure that pupils' innovative ideas are supported by the school to improve existing recreational and social provision and to enable them to voice their opinions in a more consistent and purposeful manner.
30. A significant number of pupils in Year 7 reported that the support, advice and guidance they received on induction into the school early in Year 7 enabled them to settle into the school effectively and become confident and motivated learners. The present arrangements please parents.

## **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY**

Links with parents and with the community are **good**. The school enjoys an **effective** partnership with most of its parents and the wider community. These arrangements ensure support for teaching and learning and enable pupils to become mature and responsible members of the school and the wider community.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The good work of the PTA supports learning inside and outside of school.
- Most parents who attended the parents' meeting or reported through questionnaires perceive the school in a positive light and appreciate the work of the school, and their views are rightly valued by the staff and governors.

- The effective links between the school and the community enhance teaching and learning and help pupils to become responsible citizens.

## COMMENTARY

31. Most parents are pleased with the good quality of information provided by the school, particularly the use of pupils' planners and annual reports, which enable the school and parents to support pupils' learning, address any concerns quickly and efficiently and help parents to monitor their child's academic progress. The good turnout at consultation meetings further cements parent and staff relationships.
32. Most parents support the work of the school by ensuring that their children attend regularly, complete their homework and support social events in school, such as sports events and performances, which help to raise the confidence and self-esteem of pupils.
33. The work of the parents' and teachers' association also supports pupils' learning and their personal development. By hosting social events, the association raises funds to purchase equipment and support the learning of pupils. It also helps parents to form a constructive relationship with their school and community, which in turn ensures that pupils and parents are valued and have a sense of belonging.
34. The school has good links with the Connexions service and employers in the community and it uses these effectively to enhance pupils' work experience, support the community and enable pupils to make informed choices about future training and employment. However, the partnership with further education colleges is underdeveloped in enhancing opportunities for vocational education in Years 10 and 11.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of the headteacher's leadership is **very good**. The leadership of key staff is good. Governance is good. School management is effective.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The headteacher's leadership is very good and it has had a direct impact on the good quality of education provided for the pupils.
- Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and they offer effective support and challenge to the senior managers. They have not fulfilled their statutory duties of ensuring that the school offers its pupils a daily act of collective worship.
- Teachers, teaching assistants, technicians and other staff work effectively together and maintain very good relationships, all of which contribute to the pupils' good achievement.

## COMMENTARY

35. The headteacher is a very effective leader who is well liked and respected by pupils, staff and parents. He has been effectively supported by the governing body and by senior staff in setting up a good learning environment. The result has been a united staff all working together to ensure that pupils are appropriately challenged. The headteacher and his senior team have articulated the school's vision well and have ensured that all work to realise it. The school's recent acquisition of Technology College Status is beginning to show results, with a significant improvement in the resourcing of ICT.

36. Governance is good. Governors spoken to during the inspection showed a high level of understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They showed very good knowledge of what the school needed to focus on at this stage of its development. Governors maintain very strong links with the local community and consequently they understand the parents' aspirations for their children. There is ample evidence that governors are capable of challenging senior managers whilst supporting them. They do ask difficult questions and insist on receiving convincing answers. Governors fail to fulfil their statutory duty of ensuring that the school holds a daily act of collective worship.
37. Subject leadership is very good in mathematics, science and ICT. It is good in English, art and design, design and technology, history, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education. Leadership is satisfactory in citizenship and geography. Subject management is very good in English and good in mathematics, science, art and design, history, ICT, modern foreign languages and physical education. It is satisfactory in citizenship, design and technology, geography, music and religious education.
38. Senior staff give good support to subject areas. Through a rigorous monitoring system, senior managers identify areas which need particular support and then ensure that this support is forthcoming. Any subject where National Curriculum test results, teacher assessment results or GCSE results are relatively lower than the best is automatically given clear targets for improvement which are directly linked to the support made available. The monitoring programme is quite sophisticated and it paints a realistic picture of each subject area's performance.
39. The leadership of the special educational needs provision is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has a clear vision and a sharp focus on relevant priorities. The result is that provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they consequently make equally good progress as other pupils. The SENCO maintains good links with partner primary schools, which enable effective and early identification of special educational needs. Progress is checked on regularly, which means that provision is constantly updated to an emerging range of needs. Teaching assistants, who receive consistent updates and training, are very good. They support pupils effectively, using well-structured individual education plans (IEPs) and helping pupils achieve the clear targets set. Pupils, parents, teachers, teaching assistants and relevant external agencies are consulted on IEPs, targets set and on progress. The result is that pupils are well cared for. Support is invariably sympathetic. The special educational development plan is good and allows for pupils to have considerable opportunities to manage their own learning. There is insufficient use of ICT in special educational needs provision, as is the case across other subjects.
40. Financial management is very good. Best value is applied well. The governors linked to this area of the school's work have a very good command of financial planning and management. Given the good quality education the school provides, this means that the school gives very good value for money.
41. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory. The total curriculum time has been increased and is now in line with national recommendations. The length of lessons has been reduced to sixty minutes instead of the seventy minutes judged to be too long during the last inspection. Marking and assessment are now good. The continuous professional development of the staff is good. The recommendation that the

school improve its indoor physical education facilities is currently being implemented with a new building programme which has just started. The spiritual dimension has improved and is now satisfactory. However, the school still does not hold a daily act of collective worship for all of its pupils.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,181,339.68
Total expenditure	2,128,921.94
Expenditure per student	3,103.39

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	162,650.51
Balance carried forward to the next year	215,068.25

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4**

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

##### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Standards are well above average.
- Achievement is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.

44. Pupils respond well to the teachers' skilful questioning but are sometimes rather passive in lessons. They listen carefully to the teacher and to other pupils. Opportunities for paired discussion work are frequent and, when given the opportunity to participate in group presentations, they show a high level of speaking skills. Pupils behave very well in lessons, and their consistently positive attitudes to learning contribute significantly to their very good achievement.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

45. The quality of English teaching is very good throughout the school. This, together with the very mature attitudes of the pupils, is why achievement is very good. The teachers are all very experienced practitioners who know their subject well. Their understanding of the demands of the tests and examinations pupils have to sit ensures that their learning is reflected in results. Pupils are introduced to a wide variety of texts and are equipped with the skills of eliciting ideas and information from them, either by skimming and scanning or by close reading. Analytical skills are developed so that pupils are able to write effectively about literary and non-literary texts, the latter including film and media forms. Teachers employ a variety of methods, some drawn from recent strategies, but there is scope for more pace in some lessons and a sharper focus on learning objectives.
46. Written work is marked thoroughly, and pupils are given every opportunity to improve on their work. They have clear targets. Self-evaluation is encouraged, in reading and oral work as well as in writing.
47. Pupils make good use of paired discussion, although there is only a limited amount of working in groups. When given opportunities to learn independently, pupils respond well, although dependency on teachers sometimes prevents excellence being achieved. They make good use of ICT, whether in redrafting written work or in researching material to present in class or in writing. Leaflets and reviews of a very high standard are produced using computers, often on the pupils' own initiative.
48. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are helped to face questions about mortality, human rights, moral and social dilemmas, and the beliefs of others, as well as being given greater insight into the culture of this and other lands.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

49. The department is well led and very well managed. The quality of teaching and learning is very well monitored and assessment procedures are securely in place. Data on pupils is used intelligently to track progress and to enhance it. Pupils are grouped to maximise their learning, but with a flexibility that allows for change when and where this is needed. Resources are used well, with acetates as well as paper versions of texts being incorporated in many lessons. Televisions and video players are available in all the English classrooms. The accommodation now available for English is very good: teaching rooms are grouped together in a new building and include a separate office and a stock room. Teachers make full use of the computer room by booking it in advance. The library is also used for English lessons, and provides a valuable resource. The head of English is ready to take the department forward and to build on the good progress that has clearly been made since the last inspection.

## **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

50. Standards of literacy in the school are above average. The quality of teaching, not least in English, ensures that few pupils have any difficulties accessing the taught curriculum from the time they join the school. The provision for those with special educational needs ensures that they are also helped to achieve well. Some departments, including science, design and technology and history, use aspects of the National Literacy Strategy effectively. At best, this involves pupils learning how to write for different purposes and different audiences. Other departments offer little more than key vocabulary. Literacy is not approached in a particularly formal way throughout the school.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The GCSE examination results have improved from below average at the last inspection to being in line with the national average in 2003.
- The GCSE performance in Spanish was very good in 2003.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Teaching strategies lack opportunities for pupils to work independently and in groups using the foreign language more frequently.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	French: good Spanish: very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

### COMMENTARY

#### EXAMINATION RESULTS

51. The 2003 National Curriculum teacher assessment results at the end of Year 9 were well above the national average in modern foreign languages. French GCSE results in 2003 were in line with the national average. Spanish results for the small number of pupils entered in the same year were well above the national average. This shows a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when GCSE examination results were below the national average. The modern foreign languages GCSE examination results are relatively weaker than results in other subjects in the school although the higher-attaining pupils attain the same high results as they do in other subjects.

#### STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT

52. Standards seen in both languages are in line with the national expectations in all years. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 learn how to listen to the foreign language at native speaker speed and to elicit the main points from the speaker. They are able to construct simple sentences using an increasing store of vocabulary. Many can use fairly complex sentences in role play involving ordering food and drinks, talking about themselves and giving their opinions about films, music and other media events. By Years 10 and 11, pupils are able to extend their vocabulary further and to use more complex sentences. Higher-attaining pupils can speak fairly fluently, showing a clear command of the modern foreign language. They fully understand the languages spoken at native speaker speed. Lower attainers can use simple sentences to construct a short and largely accurate

written passage. Overall, pupils' listening and speaking skills are better than their reading and writing skills.

53. Pupils join the school with relatively little knowledge of either foreign language. By the end of Year 7, they are perfectly competent in understanding and responding to ordinary day-to-day instructions. They make good progress so that by the end of Year 9 they are able to take part in relatively complex dialogues. Their reading still suffers from weak pronunciation skills. Their written work is legible despite some persistent grammatical errors. These begin to disappear in Year 10 and by Year 11 pupils have again made good progress. Their achievement between Year 7 and Year 11 is good.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

54. The quality of teaching overall is good. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory and mostly better. Teachers plan their lessons well. They invariably start the lesson by telling the pupils what the lesson is about and what they are expected to learn. The result is that the pupils know what is expected of them and respond well. They are keen to do well and to join in. There are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to work in pairs or groups using the foreign language. There is generally too much teacher control of lessons with the pupils simply responding. Teachers use effective questioning strategies which elicit responses from the majority of pupils. Marking is regular and consistent. Pupils appreciate the praise that they receive and understand what they need to do next in order to improve their work further.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

55. The quality of leadership is good. The head of department works closely with his colleagues. The department has worked hard at analysing its performance. Senior managers have supported the department in order to improve its average results because these are relatively lower than the results in other subjects in the school. The measures taken are beginning to show sufficient improvement to make the higher targets for 2004 achievable.
56. The quality of management is good. The department is well organised and all necessary paperwork is in order. Resources are well looked after and pupils now all have a textbook each. This has also led to an improvement in the quality of the homework set. Although the accommodation is in old mobile classrooms, the teachers have done a good job in making them colourful, with displays of pupils' work and other attractive language prompts.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Standards are consistently well above national averages and achievement is good.
- Teaching is very good overall, with some excellent features.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, and their presentation of work is excellent.
- Accommodation and ICT resources are improving through the very effective leadership and management of mathematics.

- Numeracy across the curriculum needs further monitoring.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Good

## **COMMENTARY**

### **EXAMINATION RESULTS**

57. Standards in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above the national average. The average points score was equal to that of similar schools but with a very high proportion of pupils gaining Level 6 or above. Results in the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 were well above national averages in 2003, although slightly lower than in 2002. Consistently, the proportion of pupils with grades A\* and A has been 20 per cent, well above the national average, with 100 per cent GCSE passes each year. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' results by the end of Year 9 or Year 11.
58. Pupils have average attainment on entry and exceed national averages by the end of Years 9 and 11, showing very good achievement. In lessons, standards are well above national expectations overall, but vary between years. The smaller groups of lower attainers organised this year for Years 7 and 8 allow intensive help for the less able or less confident pupils. Teaching assistants in all years provide excellent additional help for low-attaining pupils or those with special educational needs. Good links with primary schools help the successful induction of pupils but practical learning methods are limited, with little access to computers at present. Good work habits develop from Year 7, through tightly structured lessons, understood routines, and regular meaningful homework. The presentation of work in pupils' books is excellent, reflecting their positive attitudes to mathematics, good behaviour and their wish to achieve.

### **STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT**

59. In all year groups pupils are challenged to think for themselves, and to discover patterns, such as in a Year 8 middle ability lesson using diagrams to find the rule for multiplying fractions. This built on previous knowledge and understanding about fractions, and is typical of pupils being able to develop concepts from previous learning. It was also seen in a Year 9 middle set embarking on simultaneous equations after extensive work on simple equations. Number skills are taught very well, and interestingly developed to competence in algebra. Discussion between pupils in pairs was a feature of a successful Year 9 lesson on algebraic equations although structured discussion and group work were rare. Data handling is emphasised; a low ability Year 7 group constructed correct bar charts and pie charts, and pupils in a Year 10 top set were developing the use of standard deviation and other advanced techniques for their GCSE coursework. Investigational skills are developed well, often linked to shape and space topics in individual projects. Graphical calculators and computers were also seen to be effective in developing understanding, such as the connection between algebraic equations and curves.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

60. Teaching is very good, with all lessons at least good and some excellent features in most, but with inconsistencies in the quality of the marking of pupils' work. All teachers have good subject knowledge, and a good range of experience. Challenge and a strong work ethic are features of all teaching and learning, with a good match to pupils' prior attainment and aptitudes. There are some very effective starter sessions and plenaries, but with a limited range and variety of teaching and learning activities at present. Very

good questioning techniques and clear explanations help pupils learn, and whole-class discussion is handled successfully. Pupils are encouraged to explain their own methods and reasoning, and consequently learn from each other. Teachers know their classes well and circulate, helping individuals successfully, giving them verbal encouragement and leading them to develop understanding. Ongoing verbal assessment is very good. Regular rigorous tests and half-term assessments give pupils an idea of progress by grades, following the school's assessment procedures. Files are kept of pupils' tests and projects, and the achievement of individuals is monitored closely.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

61. Leadership is very good in this effective department, with vision, a shared sense of direction and commitment among the team of experienced specialists. Curriculum changes have been managed effectively, and schemes of work are being developed with appropriate coverage of all attainment targets. However citizenship is not yet in place and the spiritual and cultural dimensions of mathematics are not emphasised sufficiently in practice. Thorough analysis of results aids monitoring and evaluation of the department. Accommodation is good, with a suite of rooms, but is in a state of flux at present because of imminent building work to provide ICT resources, a better office and resources workroom. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is good.

## MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

62. Competence in mathematics is good. Number skills are well taught by the specialist teachers in the mathematics department, and are used effectively in some subject areas. History lessons on the spread of cholera demonstrated good use of numeracy and knowledge of statistics. Bar charts and other statistical techniques were used effectively in English lessons. Pupils were competent in the mathematics needed for science and design and technology. Information and communication technology lessons developed and used calculation and graphical skills well. In many other subjects, numeracy was underdeveloped or neglected, although pupils' skills were such that they were always able to respond to any demands, and did not impede learning in any subject.
63. Whole-staff training sessions have been held, and the mathematics department has a clear and comprehensive policy which is well used. Some departments have numeracy policies but this is not standard.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The standards of pupils' work in science have improved since the previous inspection, and the department adds value throughout Years 7 to 11, because of the very well led, well managed, hardworking and caring team of teachers.
- Teaching is of very high quality, though lessons do not depend on specific learning objectives.
- As yet, the pupils make little use of computers to improve their learning, the presentation of their work, or their enjoyment of science.

	Year 9	Year 11
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Standards seen	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

## COMMENTARY

### EXAMINATION RESULTS

64. The results of the 2003 National Curriculum Test were well above the national average. More than 90 per cent reached the target of Level 5 (compared to fewer than 70 per cent over the whole country), and more than 75 per cent reached or surpassed Level 6 (the national figure was below 40 per cent). Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with above average levels. They work very hard, enjoy the subject (many say science is their favourite subject), and are well stretched. That is why the proportion of each Year 9 group reaching Level 5 or higher has increased over the years, and at a rate faster than nationally.
65. Each summer, every Year 11 pupil enters the science double award at GCSE. The results are well above the national average. Three-quarters or more of all pupils reach or pass the target grade C, and a quarter or more reach the top grades of A\* and A. Boys' results are much the same as those of girls, this being better than the national picture where girls outperform boys. There has been some improvement since the previous inspection in 1998, though there are no obvious trends over recent years.

### STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT

66. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 work very hard, enjoy the subject, and are well stretched. As they pass through the school, most gain a very good grasp of scientific knowledge and skills. Many become clear thinkers and scientific problem-solvers. In almost all cases, for instance, a strength is drawing graphs (including, usually, being able to choose the right kind of graph in a given context and to explain why). Many pupils also become unusually good at interpreting graphs, and often do this with great enthusiasm. Examples are graphs of death rates in the Great London Smog of 1952, the growth and decay of a population of pondweed, and the changes in an object's speed as it moves in different, complex ways.
67. Whilst the pupils' work with words and numbers is also above average, few are at home wi

68. The high achievement and high standards of work in science apply to all the pupils. Boys do as well as girls. Pupils with special educational needs also do as well as the others – in some cases, better. Only those who find science relatively easy fail to be stretched, although they maintain good attitudes to the subject.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

69. The quality of all pupils' learning is very high throughout the school, particularly because of their great enjoyment and motivation. Very good teaching has much to do with this, and during the inspection, all lessons seen were good, mostly very good, or even excellent. Special strengths of the teaching lie in the teachers' excellent relationships with the pupils and in their detailed and near-perfect knowledge of their specialist areas, and their good grasp of how to teach the more difficult aspects. Most lessons are marked by just the right pace to keep the pupils focused without losing understanding, and by a good variety of different types of activity. These embraced a good balance of theory and practice, a range of audio-visual techniques, whole-class discussion and tackling worksheets of various kinds. Though pupils often work on their own, they do not, however, do so with skill and focus. Even by Year 11, their independent learning and working skills are not as good as they could be and real productive discussion in pairs or small groups is also rare.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

70. The leadership of science is very good. Its management is good. The teachers facilitate the pupils' high standards of work which are higher than those in other subjects. The teachers are all experienced as well as knowledgeable, work well with the many classroom assistants (particularly important as so many classes are around thirty strong), and support each other appropriately. Technical support is very good too, though it is surprising that the technicians do not join departmental meetings or contribute in lessons more frequently.

71. A big change for the school is the recent granting of Technology College Status. As yet, this has had little impact on science, one of the most important subjects in such a college; however, the new computer suite will make a big difference and the headteacher is planning to rectify the large classes. Not only can large classes reduce the quality of learning, they can threaten safety in the smaller rooms. Otherwise, the accommodation is fairly attractive, though some floors are over-worn and the quality of what is on display varies greatly from place to place.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards seen in the ICT lessons are well above the national average.
- Very good teaching throughout the department by skilled experts leads to very good learning in lessons.
- Strong leadership ensures that standards are improving.
- Cross-curricular ICT is underdeveloped.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Very good

## COMMENTARY

### EXAMINATION RESULTS

72. In 2003, the National Curriculum teacher assessment results at the end of Year 9 showed that pupils were working at levels well above the national average, with over four-fifths gaining Level 5 or higher. All pupils were entered for a GCSE qualification in ICT in Year 11. The full course GCSE results were well above the national average, with an overwhelming majority gaining grade C or higher. The success rate in the GCSE short course was above the national average. Standards observed in lessons were well above national expectations because of the very good teaching.

### STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT

73. Many pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of ICT. All pupils are aware of their progress and are encouraged to aim higher. Their progress is rigorously monitored and checked against targets. Considerable learning takes place in lessons, due to the fast pace and high targets set by the teachers. Pupils are enthusiastic and skilled in using advanced ICT skills. They are able to work independently and are confident in learning new skills such as the use of advanced features in desktop publishing. The achievement of pupils in discrete ICT lessons is very good although their

76. The technicians and ICT teachers have an excellent working relationship with the ICT co-ordinator. They meet regularly to review progress and are always keen to improve learning opportunities. The technicians are competent and respond rapidly to the needs of the department, repairing faulty equipment promptly and ensuring good network security and software installation. There are 160 networked computers and this is in line with the recommended national ratio in secondary schools. The ICT suites and library computer facilities are used frequently and are only just sufficient to meet demand.
77. Improvement since the last inspection is very good with a much improved assessment system of pupils' work. Control technology is now well provided for.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

78. The utilisation of ICT is underdeveloped in most areas across the school, particularly in art and design, science and modern foreign languages. Plans are already in place to improve the provision in some subjects, but there is still much to be done. Across the curriculum facilities are growing, particularly in design and technology where computer resources are very good. Computers are available at lunch times and after school for pupils to attend supervised sessions.

## HUMANITIES

### GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The achievement of pupils is satisfactory.
- In Years 7 to 9, the demands on talented pupils lack rigour but, with good teaching, they make up ground in Years 10 and 11.
- In Years 7 to 9, homework is not challenging but in Years 10 and 11, pupils produce coursework of a high standard.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

## COMMENTARY

## EXAMINATION RESULTS

79. On entry to the school, pupils' geographical knowledge and skills are in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress over the next five years. By the end of Year 9, standards are in line with national expectations. The subject is a popular choice at GCSE and last year's results were in line with the national average.

## **STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT**

80. The standards of work seen during the inspection reflected a similar picture of satisfactory achievement. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' geographical knowledge and understanding are better than their application of geographical skills. In Years 10 and 11, pupils produce coursework of a high standard, but perform relatively less well in written examinations. The achievement of boys is similar to that of girls.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

81. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. In classrooms, relationships are consistently good and pupils have very positive attitudes towards the subject. The subject knowledge of teachers is strong and they provide valuable support and guidance to individuals when they need help. They use class questioning with skill to check pupils' learning as well as a range of practical activities to consolidate learning. However, in Years 7 to 9, lessons rely too much on textbooks and worksheets and sometimes lack clear learning objectives. As a result, work is not always well matched to the varying needs of pupils in mixed ability classes. In particular, the demands made on talented pupils lack rigour and challenge and this is reflected in their relatively lower levels of achievement. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are grouped into sets, which enables higher attainers to make up lost ground. Homework is not set regularly in Years 7 to 9, and tasks are not generally planned to extend classroom learning. Classroom assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs in Years 7 to 9, helping them make notably good progress.
82. Teachers have good data concerning pupils' progress and work is marked regularly, with helpful suggestions for improvement. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have a sound appreciation of their level of performance and are given targets, but throughout Years 7 to 9, they do not have clear targets for improvement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

83. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Committed to improvement and displaying high aspirations and a clear sense of purpose, the head of department has introduced a number of changes, such as a geography website, better revision programmes and thinking skills in Year 10. The staff team works co-operatively but meetings are too infrequent to allow corporate planning and the sharing of good practice. Examination and other data are used to aid evaluation, but the monitoring of teaching, learning, homework and assessment is underdeveloped and departmental documentation is not sufficiently comprehensive to support non-specialist teachers. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

Provision in history is **good**.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching, learning and achievement are good and pupils have positive attitudes to their work.
- Standards are above the national average in Year 9 and well above in Year 11.
- Pupils' work is well assessed but information is not used to provide tasks that challenge all pupils in mixed ability classes.
- Management and leadership are good, with clear strengths in curriculum development.
- Skills in literacy and numeracy are developed well but computer use is limited.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Good

## COMMENTARY

### EXAMINATION RESULTS

84. School assessment shows that standards at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above the national average, indicating good achievement, given average attainment on entry. GCSE results in history were well above the national average in 2003 with girls attaining particularly well. The trend is for standards to be at least above the national average and more pupils are reaching the highest grades.

### STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT

85. Standards in Year 9 are above the national average because the majority of pupils have good literacy skills and are able to research and write about history well. The highest-attaining pupils are producing written work that is really impressive. Achievement overall, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is good. No lessons were seen in Year 11 but analysis of work and the departmental targets indicate that standards are well above the national average and that many pupils should achieve the higher grades at GCSE. Standards in the present Year 10 are above the national average and boys and girls are achieving equally well in all year groups.
86. Attitudes to the subject are good in class although not all pupils complete set tasks or course work. Pupils respond well to teachers' questioning and make good oral contributions to lessons, particularly when they have been working in pairs and groups. Pupils show real interest in historical debate - for example, about interpretation of events at Dunkirk. They enjoy the wide range of visits, including one to the battlefield sites in Belgium and France, and more pupils are choosing to study history at GCSE.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

87. Pupils achieve well because they are well taught. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they ensure that pupils are very clear about the requirements of the external examinations. Local examples are used whenever possible. Revision sessions are provided and the good standard of assessment allows teachers to improve weaknesses and build on strengths by developing target setting so that pupils know how to improve. Marking is thorough and provides valuable guidance but pupils do not have many opportunities for peer or self-assessment. Pupils are taught as mixed ability groups and there is very good support for lower-attaining and special educational needs pupils. In Years 7 to 9, there is sometimes an absence of the extra challenge to promote really good learning for the highest-attaining pupils, although in GCSE classes, lesson content matches the needs of pupils well. Pupils usually work well in pairs and small groups and are capable of some independent learning and research but sometimes they lose concentration if the task is too straightforward. When they have the opportunity, they use computers well but teachers rarely use PowerPoint to enhance the quality of learning in the classroom because the department has limited access to computers. The focus on both literacy and numeracy is good as is the subject's contribution to citizenship. Data and graphs have been used well to extend pupils' understanding of the spread of cholera in Victorian cities and the wide range of written work includes the writing of newspaper articles.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

88. The good leadership and management of the history department have ensured good improvement since the last inspection. Schemes of work have been rewritten and assessment and marking are now good. Pupils' work is celebrated in displays that make a valuable contribution to learning but pupils who are not taught in history rooms do not have this advantage. A new GCSE course has been successfully introduced and resources, including those in the library, have been well chosen and are well used.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Short-course GCSE for all leads to above average standards.
- Pupils do not develop early enough their oral skills of questioning, contrasting and arguing different points of view in the context of groups within religions.
- Pupils are active and co-operative when given responsibility for their learning.
- Pupils are not secure in identifying evidence of living religions today in the wider community and media.
- Pupils' well-organised and well-presented written work reflects very good application, behaviour and willingness to learn.

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

Leadership	Good
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Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

## COMMENTARY

### EXAMINATION RESULTS

89. In 2003, the end of Year 9 assessment results were above the national average. The short-course GCSE examination results for all pupils in 2003 were above the national average and are part of a continuing trend. Nine girls gained the highest grade of A\*.

### STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT

90. By Year 9, standards are those expected by the locally-agreed Syllabus. Pupils can present and organise information to illustrate and explain the features of three religions and how their communities express their beliefs. They have not developed sufficiently their understanding of how texts and teachings are interpreted by individuals and groups within religions in this country and the world today. By Year 11, standards are above average as pupils examine the beliefs and practices of Christians and Jews. They can identify principal beliefs, understanding well how believers can be influenced by tradition, culture and change. They demonstrate good awareness of diverse groupings and alternative views about personal and social issues within contemporary society by people of all backgrounds.
91. By Year 9, pupils are achieving satisfactorily, supported by good literacy skills, positive attitudes and very good behaviour. They appreciate religious ideas about the world and moral behaviour, expressed in particular lifestyles and traditions. Pupils have learnt to recognise the characteristics of three main religions, and to use appropriate and accurate words to explain and comment on their practices. They do not appreciate their common heritage or current interfaith activities. Pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11. They produce detailed illustrated writing on marriage in Judaism and Christianity, and consider values and choices, using sources from religions and examples of changing lifestyles. They show maturity when they evaluate the pressures on the traditional family.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

92. The quality of teaching is mainly good, and is often very good in Years 10 and 11. As in the previous inspection, pupils collect useful and appropriate information about religions and their practices in clear notes which are useful for revising. In Years 7 to 9, teacher-led lessons do not meet the need for pupils to identify, analyse and formulate religious questions and to compare and contrast views arising from differing interpretations of the same beliefs. When Year 8 pupils design a Christian place of worship, they apply their knowledge and understanding with critical skills and the learning improves. Although teaching in all years focuses on Judaism and Christianity, with some work on Islam, pupils do not collect enough first-hand evidence. There is insufficient attention being given to broadening pupils' knowledge of the three other main living religions today. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is based well on examination requirements, with regular assessment. There are good opportunities to relate learning to topical issues, and to develop skills of analysing, justifying and contrasting.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

93. Leadership is good. One full-time and two part-time teachers provide a range of methods and resources, promoting positive attitudes and high standards of behaviour. The spiritual, moral and social development of all pupils is good in this subject, but their understanding of different cultures, faiths and backgrounds is not as developed. Management is satisfactory, with all pupils being taught religious education that leads to an accredited course. In Years 7 to 9, at the start of lessons, pupils are not given learning and assessment objectives providing for different levels of challenge and support. The frequent reordering of programmes of study reflects uncertainty about how to match pupils' need to build on their prior attainment or how to set clear enough subject targets for pupils to be clear about how to improve. The previous inspection judged Year 7 to 9 pupils' achievement to be good and standards above average. Improvement since then has generally been satisfactory, with teaching yet to adapt fully to recent changes in the requirements of the agreed syllabus.

## TECHNOLOGY

### DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils attain above average results at GCSE A\* and A grades.
- Provision for Computer Aided Design/Computer Aided Manufacture (CAD/CAM) is good, but is yet to be developed fully in pupils' work.
- Good teaching was seen during the inspection.
- Assessment procedures are good but pupils are often unsure of National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning lacks a sufficiently rigorous approach for achieving consistency of practice in raising standards, particularly of middle attainers.
- Relationships are always good, contributing to a positive response by pupils to the subject.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory

Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory	Progress.75	TD -4.5	0.75	14Ne f	342	123.75	0.75	0.75
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## **COMMENTARY**

### **EXAMINATION RESULTS**

94. At the end of Year 9 in 2003, pupils attained average results in the school assessment. The 2003 GCSE results were average overall in comparison with results in other subjects. Boys results were above average for A\*-C grades, with girls' results average. Over recent years, results have been broadly inline with the national average. Higher attainers achieved results above average at A\* and A grades.

### **STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT**

95. Current standards in Year 9 are average overall. Attainment on entry is average and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress from Years 7 to 9. Good work was seen in a Year 7 exercise where pupils were able to evaluate critically in the travel game project and in Year 9 where pupils could experiment when problem solving in textiles. Where the work is weaker, it is mainly because it is incomplete, has spelling errors, drawings are not annotated or there is untidy work written in ballpoint pen. Some homework is not completed and some marking can be over-generous. Girls usually do better than boys, particularly at the higher levels.
96. Current standards in Year 11 are average overall and similar standards are seen in Year 10. Predicted grades for Year 11 show above average standards in graphics and textiles and broadly average standards in food technology and resistant materials. Achievement is satisfactory overall and there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. There is good work in all areas and very good work by higher attainers as in the pop-up book project in graphics in Year 11 and in the analysis of consumer needs in dress design in textiles in Year 10. Also in Year 10, there is very neat written work in food technology in the dietary fibre exercise and there are good isometric drawings and use of colour in the clock design in resistant materials. There is weak work in all areas, mainly due to poor presentational skills, both graphical and written, and because tasks are not completed. Standards of practical work are good but on occasion, the material used in the manufacture is not appropriate.
97. Literacy skills are good overall although written work can be poor at times. There is good support of technical language and pupils respond positively to questions. Numeracy skills are satisfactory. Where information and communication technology is used in pupils' work, it is mainly of a good standard.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

98. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with a proportion of satisfactory and very good teaching seen. In the better lessons, learning is increased because of the teaching strategies used, good subject expertise and good use of resources. Many lessons interest and engage pupils in their learning and have good pupil management. Satisfactory lessons have many positive features but can lack challenge for different ability levels in the class and sometimes the management of the tasks is not always appropriate. A Year 8 lesson where pupils increased their CAD skills in using two-dimensional design tools and software and a Year 9 lesson where pupils made good gains in developing research skills using the Internet and literature, are two examples of

good lessons seen. In most lessons, teachers use good questioning skills to involve pupils in the lesson and to reinforce learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

99. Leadership of the department is good. The head of department has addressed issues from the last inspection and introduced new initiatives for improvement. Management is satisfactory. Assessment procedures are good but pupils are unsure of their National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9. Marking is not always as helpful as it could be for improvement and can be over-generous at times. Work is not always planned for the different ability levels in the group and monitoring procedures for teaching and learning and pupil progress need to be more rigorous. The new resources for CAD/CAM are a good feature of the department. The curriculum provision, particularly in Years 10 and 11, is good, with five specialisms offered as full courses from September 2004. In-service training needs are on-going especially in addressing health and safety requirements in specialist areas. Technician support is insufficient at present, and some upgrading of equipment is needed in the food technology room. Some class sizes are rather large in Years 7 and 8 and can restrict the practical work undertaken. Accommodation is good overall, with good displays of work in all areas. Further improvements are planned such as the networking facility for food technology and textiles.
100. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. A number of issues have been addressed and new improvements made such as the introduction of CAD/CAM equipment and an information and communication technology room, the development of booklets for Years 7 to 9 and the introduction of electronics in Years 10 and 11 at GCSE level. Some issues from the last inspection remain, such as marking of work and monitoring of teaching and learning for consistency of practice and have not been acted upon.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

### ART AND DESIGN

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

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- GCSE results have improved significantly over the last three years and in 2003 were above average, with an above average percentage of A\* and A grades.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Most pupils achieve well and pupils with special educational needs achieve particularly well.
- Management and leadership are good.
- The department provides insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of art through speaking about art.
- Curriculum enrichment opportunities are very good.
- Display around the school is excellent.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Good

### COMMENTARY

### EXAMINATION RESULTS

101. The National Curriculum teacher assessment results for pupils in Year 9 were above average in 2003. GCSE results have improved since 2001 when they were below average. In 2002 they were average and in 2003, they were above average with an above average percentage of A\* and A grades. This represents good achievement. No significant overall trend is evident in relation to gender.

### STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT

102. Standards are above average in Year 7; pupils are familiar with the basic elements of art such as colour and tone and with the work of artists such as Picasso and Lowry. From Years 7 to 9, pupils make substantial gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding, and achievement is good. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average, most pupils relate their work well to the work of artists and have secure observational and investigational skills. Pupils are familiar with several non-Western visual art forms and use their sketchbooks well for researching and developing their ideas. By the end of Year 11, standards are above average. Pupils undertake extensive investigations into art movements and non-Western visual art. Most have accomplished painting, drawing and three-dimensional skills which they use well in their imaginative work. Standards are highest where images are developed from direct observation rather than from secondary sources such as illustrations or photographs. Most GCSE pupils achieve well. Throughout all years, pupils with special educational needs are enabled to make good progress by the close individual attention the teaching provides. Pupils of above average

ability in art achieve well because they are challenged to be ambitious in their interpretation of the projects. Girls undertake more extensive research and development than boys and thus achieve higher standards.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

103. Most teaching is good and contributes significantly to the overall good quality of learning and standards achieved. Lesson content is appropriate and lessons are well organised. For example, Year 9 pupils were studying Cubism. They had watched a video and had researched and written about artists such as Picasso and Braque; they were superimposing silhouettes of objects such as kitchen utensils in preparation for their Cubist painting. Demonstration and explanation, for example of how to accentuate features when Year 10 pupils were making a gargoyle, clearly show the pupils what to do and how to do it. Once practical work is underway, teaching provides pupils with good support, guidance and feedback. Teachers' marking is excellent; comments are encouraging and evaluative and they help pupils in their own assessments of their performance. This gives pupils the confidence to undertake ambitious work. The high expectations of behaviour are consistently met. Most pupils concentrate throughout lessons and many enthusiastically devote many hours to their homework. Though pupils are required to write about art, insufficient opportunities are provided for them to speak about art, particularly in plenary sessions.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

104. The department benefits from good leadership and strong management. Appropriate areas for improvement have been identified and effective action has been taken in relation to most of these, but progress in developing the use of ICT has been slow. Though suitable computers and software are now available, little evidence exists in pupils' work of the use of ICT in their artwork. Teachers have kept their skills and knowledge up to date by attending appropriate in-service training; performance management has been beneficial in the process of improvement. The curriculum provides a broad and balanced programme of two- and three-dimensional work and places a strong emphasis on non-Western art. Curriculum enrichment opportunities such as visits to art galleries and museums and visits from artists in residence make a valuable contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding and often inspire them to create imaginative work. The department has insufficient artefacts for pupils to draw and paint to support pupils in their study of non-Western art. Display, particularly in the school hall and entrance hall, is of a very high standard.

105. Improvements since the previous inspection have been good. The department has maintained all of the good features reported in 1998 and improved pupils' use of technical terms, their use of non-Western art and the assessment arrangements but pupils still do not use ICT enough.

## **MUSIC**

Provision in music is **good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- Very good pupil/teacher relationships help foster positive attitudes to the subject.

- Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well.
- The commitment of the head of department.
- Singing and ICT require more attention in Years 7 to 9.
- Inadequate accommodation is restricting work and attainment.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards seen	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

## EXAMINATION RESULTS

106. Teacher assessments for Year 9 pupils indicate standards above expectations. Work seen during the inspection confirms this but by a less significant margin. The 2003 GCSE examination results are above the national average, though involving a very small group. The current groups are larger and the work seen indicates a standard which continues to be above average. These standards represent good achievement from an average starting level on entry to the school.

## STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT

107. Standards seen in all years were above the national expectations. Pupils' achievement is good. All groups have access to the music curriculum. Girls tend to perform a little better than boys, though both respond to the subject equally well. Lessons have a strongly practical focus and pupils acquire skills on the keyboard and in playing tuned percussion instruments. They create simple musical structures which provide them with opportunities to be inventive. In this context, they are introduced to musical notation. This element does, however, require a greater degree of consolidation and progression. Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 are broadly in line with National Curriculum requirements, though ICT is as yet under-developed. Singing and music from the western classical tradition and the British Isles require more attention.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

108. The standard of teaching is good overall. Pupils are treated in a pleasant and supportive manner. They enjoy lessons and their behaviour is very good. Positive relationships between pupils and teachers are a striking feature of lessons and contribute significantly to the pupils' motivation and achievement. Planning and organisation are generally good.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

109. Leadership and management are positive and committed and there has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Resources have been increased, notably for ICT. Accommodation is, however, inadequate. There is insufficient space for teaching and the storage of instruments. Practice rooms, which are also used for instrumental teaching, lack natural light and ventilation. There is insufficient space for group work and for the development of music technology.
110. Aspects of documentation require updating and refinement. Pupils benefit from a range of out-of-class enrichment activities. There are choral and instrumental groups which perform from time to time as well as instrumental lessons provided by visiting peripatetic teachers.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Results in the 2003 GCSE examination were well above the national average.
- Good teaching is raising standards.
- Good leadership and management contribute to improvements in provision.
- Assessment is not consistently used to support pupils' learning in lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

## COMMENTARY

### EXAMINATION RESULTS

111. By the end of Year 9, standards are above national averages. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were well above the national average. In core physical education, standards were above national averages. This difference is because the time allocation for core physical education is below the recommended two hours per week. In all years, the standards of girls' work are in line with those of boys.

## **STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT**

112. When pupils enter the school, standards are in line with national expectations. Standards are above average by the end of Year 9, representing good achievement. In work seen in Years 7 to 9 good teaching has led to this good achievement. Pupils in tennis lessons have a good knowledge of the technique of playing groundstrokes. They can perform these shots when rallying in pairs over short distances. They can work co-operatively when discussing aspects of the technique which would improve their performance. By the end of Year 11, standards in GCSE physical education represent very good achievement. This is due to good, and some very good, teaching, which enables pupils to develop observation and evaluation skills through independent learning. In athletics, they can observe a partner throwing the javelin and give feedback on areas for improving the performance. In core physical education, pupils' achievement is restricted by a below average time allocation and unsatisfactory indoor facilities, which restrict the breadth and depth of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs generally achieve at the same rate as other pupils.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

113. Teaching and learning are, overall, good with some very good teaching. In Years 7 to 9, pupils particularly benefit from knowledgeable teachers. Teachers target the work to the standards students are at, with pupils often working on different tasks and with different equipment. When teaching is not as good, teachers do not use assessment to enable pupils to know what they can do and how to improve in line with National Curriculum levels. In GCSE physical education, teachers use a variety of teaching and learning styles which motivate pupils and develop their independent learning skills. In Years 10 and 11 core physical education, pupils do not know how to set targets to ensure that they work towards the next level.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

114. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has a good vision for raising standards. There are very good systems and procedures which ensure that teachers are fully prepared. Assessment procedures are good, with appropriate recording systems. The management of facilities and resources is very good. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not yet fully in place. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Year 10 and 11 pupils still do not have the recommended time allocation for physical education. Many pupils enhance their performance in sport through a good extra-curricular programme.

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

### **CITIZENSHIP**

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- A combined approach through subjects and focus event days benefits pupils.
- Management of planning by teachers and reports for pupils are improving.

- Consistent delivery of all elements, focused on achievement and standards, is at an early stage.
- There are limited citizenship activities in school and the community.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Not applicable

## COMMENTARY

### STANDARDS AND ACHIEVEMENT

115. By Year 9, standards are below average. Pupils demonstrate increased awareness of personal issues and human rights. They have below average knowledge of the role of public services and opportunities for influencing change. By Year 11, standards remain below average. Pupils demonstrate increased knowledge and understanding of their legal responsibilities and voting rights. They have a below average knowledge of the functions of local and national government, and have not developed skills of debate and negotiation about local and national issues.
116. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in all years. By Year 9, pupils acquire satisfactory skills of enquiry and communication. They consider other people's experiences and increase their awareness of global issues through, for example, consideration of the effects of tourism on developing countries. In English, Year 7 pupils encounter the civil rights movement against racism through a study of the impact of the protest speeches of Martin Luther King. By Year 11, pupils are developing satisfactory skills of responsible action when considering lifestyle issues of work and leisure, and the global impact of economic decisions. In drama, Year 10 pupils explore human rights and the responsibilities of family life by role-playing the temptation to neglect a baby to go clubbing. In ICT, pupils discuss the moral and legal aspects of breaking copyright.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

117. Citizenship is delivered through seven focus event days in which part or the whole of the day's timetable is organised around citizenship and personal and social education. Subjects also identify citizenship elements within their area. Focus events give pupils time to focus on citizenship but topics are not sufficiently discrete from personal and social education topics for pupils or staff to identify them. Time and space are not used effectively to block time, organise projects or make the most of visitors, and worksheets, therefore, are used too much. In subjects, citizenship elements are not obvious enough for pupils to be assessed or for them to recognise their own progress.

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

118. Satisfactory leadership has concentrated on subject co-ordination, and planning and resourcing focus event days. The management of planning by teachers and the reports for pupils are satisfactory. Assessment is not matched clearly enough to attainment and achievement. Pupils' current folders of work from focus days lack organisation and targets, not providing a helpful profile or record. Pupils lack opportunities to take part in citizenship activities allowing participation, either in school through organising class events or in the local community, for example using rural concerns and the European dimension. The school is working towards full implementation of the subject, linking the two approaches with a more consistent approach across subjects for all pupils and better informed reports from teachers.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

*Inspection judgement*

**Grade**

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	2

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Students' achievement	3

<b>Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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