

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **TIBSHELF SCHOOL**

Tibshelf, Alfreton

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112949

Headteacher: Mr P G Crowe

Lead inspector: Terence Parish

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> January 2005

Inspection number: 268501

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 11-16  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 771

School address: High Street  
Tibshelf  
Alfreton  
Derbyshire  
Postcode: DE55 5PP

Telephone number: 01773 872391  
Fax number: 01773 590386

Appropriate authority: Governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr J Beckingham

Date of previous inspection: 19/4/99

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The number of pupils at Tibshelf is smaller than average but it is oversubscribed and attracts pupils from some distance away. Almost all pupils stay at the school for five years though a few, particularly pupils with statements of special educational need, may join after Year 7. There are more boys than girls overall though proportions fluctuate each year. Attainment on entry also fluctuates and has been well below average but is currently just above average. Socio-economically pupils are broadly average overall but there is wide variation from below average to well above average. Almost all pupils are white. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average but the proportion of pupils with statements of need is above average and statements relate to behavioural concerns as well as physical needs. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is significantly less in Years 7 and 8 than in other years due to generally rising standards of attainment and to different ways of assessing pupils. The school is a Sports College and has some very good external provision. There are strong community links and the school is much used after school by adults and youngsters. There are diverse links with vocational providers. The school has a Basic Skills Quality Mark; Healthy Schools Certification; and Investors in People status.

## Glossary

The term 'Key Stage 3' is sometimes used and means 'Years 7 to 9'. It is often used in connection with national strategies to improve teaching and learning and hence raise pupils' achievement in these years. The term 'Key Stage 4' is sometimes used as an alternative to 'Years 10 and 11'.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15465	Parish T	Lead inspector	
19369	Wild C	Lay inspector	
12499	Durkin M	Team inspector	English
32993	Newton G	Team inspector	Mathematics
3735	Webb A	Team inspector	Science
21806	Swinnerton P	Team inspector	Design and technology
22906	Hodgson B	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
24887	Salmons Y	Team inspector	Modern languages
31191	Sylph D	Team inspector	History
33002	Woodhouse J	Team inspector	Geography
30899	Boden K	Team inspector	Art and design
31850	Nevens D	Team inspector	Music; citizenship
20192	McDermott T	Team inspector	Physical education
18447	Cohen R	Team inspector	Religious education
7958	Lewis G	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school**, which, despite well below average funding, gives very good value for money. Pupils achieve well, behave very well and are happy. Standards of work are above average overall. Teaching and learning are good. Leadership and management are good and the headteacher and governors are committed to further improving provision though far less money than average restricts such intentions.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics, geography and history across all years.
- Pupils achieve unsatisfactorily overall in Design and Technology in Years 7 to 9 for a variety of reasons, and in graphic and resistant materials technologies in Years 10 and 11; leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall.
- Pupils work hard and can learn well on their own or in collaboration with their classmates.
- There are very good relationships between pupils and staff and between each other.
- Support, advice and guidance for personal and academic development are very good.
- Though the school works hard to improve and maintain it, accommodation is unsatisfactory and hinders teaching, learning and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils have less access to computers than they should have.
- Work related learning is very good and well supported by diverse off-site training.
- English standards have improved by Year 9 but some weaknesses in pupils' literacy still hinder achievement in some subjects.
- The school plays an important role in the community and there are very good links with further education, training providers and businesses.

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. The curriculum; some accommodation; links with the community and other schools; and the use of assessment to help pupils do better have all improved. The school has also recently achieved Sports College status. However insufficient money and unsatisfactory accommodation have hindered sufficient improvement in provision for ICT, design and technology, indoor physical education and space for the whole school to regularly come together.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

**Pupils achieve well overall** and by Year 9 and Year 11. Standards are above average in Year 9, average in Year 11; older pupils began school with standards lower than those younger pupils have, particularly in English. End of Year 9 test results in 2004 exceeded targets and were above the local average; national data is not available. GCSE results have

improved as they have nationally in recent years but dipped last year and agreed targets were not met; inspection indicates improvement will continue again this year. A significant minority of older pupils successfully follow vocational courses which do not figure in calculations which create the table above. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics and standards are well above average. Pupils achieve well in science and attain above average standards. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall in English across all years; standards have risen and are now above average in Year 9, average in Year 11, though deficiencies in some literacy skills hinder progress in some subjects. Boys are achieving better than girls in English and science and particularly so in mathematics. Pupils achieve very well in geography and in history; standards in geography by Year 11 are above average whereas they are average overall in history, which is taken by most pupils with a corresponding wide spread of ability. Achievement in design and technology is unsatisfactory; standards are below average due to weak performances in graphics and in resistant materials technologies. Pupils achieve well in textiles technology, satisfactorily in food technology.

**Pupils' personal development is good.** Pupils' moral and social development is very good whereas their spiritual development is satisfactory. They understand the responsibilities of living in the school and local communities very well. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good; their attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good across all years;** assessment is good. Pupils work hard and learn well on their own or in collaboration with classmates. They are well supported by teachers' particularly good planning and their encouragement. Learning support assistants play a significant role in ensuring pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Inadequate access to ICT means it is not used by pupils to support learning often enough though teachers are increasingly using it when they have interactive whiteboards in their classrooms. Teaching and learning are very good in mathematics, history and geography across all years. An excellent lesson was seen in textiles technology.

Academic and pastoral care, guidance and support are very good, but the ensuring of health and safety is not as strong as some formal requirements are not met; links with parents are good and partnerships with other educational providers and with the community are very good. The curriculum is good despite weaknesses in design and technology and in the use of computers across subjects as it is much broader than typically seen in small schools and meets the needs of pupils well.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are both good.** Leaders motivate teachers and pupils to maintain or improve appropriate standards very well, and management ensures all pupils are included within the school's general provision and catered for individually as well as resources allow. Governors do a good job both in supporting the school's ambitions and in challenging the school to do better. Not all statutory requirements are met fully; governors are sorting out most lapses, but a few are taking longer because of a lack of financial resources and/or inadequate accommodation.

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

Parents are very happy with the school and the school is well oversubscribed. Pupils enjoy being at the school; they would like better buildings, but are pleased with the new sports facilities.



## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure the curriculum for design and technology is better led and managed; and that achievement improves.
- Continue to improve pupils' literacy skills through ongoing teaching and learning developments.
- Improve access to computers for both pupils and teachers.
- Pursue funding to enable accommodation to rapidly improve.  
and, to meet statutory requirements:
- Provide a daily act of collective worship.
- Improve the curriculum for design and technology in Years 7 to 9 and the ICT curriculum in Years 9, 10 and 11.
- Ensure health and safety risk assessments are done in all appropriate areas.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well overall in both Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. Boys are achieving relatively better than girls in several subjects. Standards of work seen are above average overall; they are above average in Years 7 to 9, average in Years 10 and 11.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in end of Year 9 tests have improved over the last few years and were above local averages in 2004.
- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics, geography and history across all years.
- Pupils achieve unsatisfactorily overall in design and technology in Years 7 to 9 and in aspects of design and technology in Years 10 and 11.
- Learning support teachers and assistants enable pupils with special educational needs to achieve at least well.
- Inadequate access to ICT equipment adversely affects pupils' achievement.

#### Commentary

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

*NOTE: Due to national problems with tests in 2004, OFSTED decided not to publish any 2004 results. School and local data shows the school's results in 2004 were better than the school's results in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	n/a (32.0)	n/a (33.4)
mathematics	n/a (36.3)	n/a (35.4)
science	n/a (33.2)	n/a (33.6)

*There were 150 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Standards in end of Year 9 test results have risen year on year at least in line with the national trend of improvement. National analysis of 2004 data is not available, but local analysis shows the school's results to be the best ever; standards in English, mathematics and science were above Derbyshire averages and above last year's national averages. Pupils achieved very well in their Year 9 tests compared to predictions based on their prior attainment when they started in Year 7. Such predictions were based on nationally recognised analysis. Boys and girls performed similarly in the 2004 tests but boys attained more high levels in mathematics and in science.
2. In work seen in Years 7 to 9, pupils achieve well overall. They achieve well in most subjects, very well in mathematics, geography and history, satisfactorily in English and unsatisfactorily overall in design and technology. Achievement in food technology is satisfactory, in textiles technology good. Achievement in work related to resistant materials and graphics is unsatisfactory as aspects of the curriculum, including resources, are unsatisfactory and leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Standards of work by Year 9 vary between subjects. This is in part due to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and learning in those subjects, and also

because of variation in the level of understanding and skills they bring to those subjects when they start in Year 7. Standards are well above average in mathematics and above average in English and in science. Pupils tend to start school with better standards in mathematics though attainment on entry is variable overall. Standards in most other subjects are average; they are above average in art and design, below average in design and technology.

3. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall. Pupils make good and sometimes very good progress in lessons as a result of well planned and organised support from both learning support teachers and learning support assistants who are well trained and very competent. Weak literacy skills impede progress in some subject areas when pupils are younger; the school recognises this and continues to focus on improving literacy. All pupils are entered for external tests and examinations and often achieve results which are above expectations based on their prior attainment. The wide range of opportunities provided by the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 enables these pupils to do well. The most able pupils generally achieve as well as their peers and their higher capabilities are best demonstrated in work in mathematics, geography, history and art and design. Such pupils are hindered from achieving better than satisfactorily within French by the wide range of ability within language classes.
4. There are a small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. They received extra tuition in the early stages of learning English and are now able to participate fully in lessons. They have some in-class support, are assisted by members of the learning support department as necessary and were making at least satisfactory progress in the limited number of lessons in which they were seen.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	46 (54)	52 (52)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (92)	89 (88)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	34.7 (34.5)	34.9 (34.7)

*There were 150 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

5. Standards in GCSE examinations in 2004 were average overall and broadly similar to those in 2003. The trend in results roughly parallels the national trend of slow improvement. There was an anomalous year, 2001, when the school's GCSE results were much better than usual. In 2004, the proportion of pupils attaining 5 or more A\*-C grades, in this school, fell significantly from the proportion in 2003. Both English and science had fewer higher grades though mathematics had more, and French and design and technology were particularly weak. In addition, a large group of pupils were entered for a new dual award vocational GCSE in ICT and results were below expectations. Boys attained fewer high grades in design and technology than girls whereas boys did better in mathematics and in science. Boys' mathematics results were well above the national average; boys' science results above the national average. However, overall, in 2004 girls did better in GCSE examinations than boys, which is typical nationally. The relative performance of boys and girls in this school varies and in 2003 and 2002 boys did better than girls. This fluctuation is likely due to the significant changes in the proportions of boys and girls which are a feature of this school's intake. The school has also focussed on raising boys' achievement, and

though the success of this should be applauded more attention now needs to be focussed on girls' work in some subject areas. Geography is also of note in the 2004 GCSE; results were well above average overall and there were a high proportion of A\*-B grades. History performed very well too; pupils attained a high proportion of A grades and none achieved less than an F grade. This is more significant because a far higher proportion of pupils in this school took history GCSE in 2004 than was the case nationally and the range of their prior attainment was consequently broader.

6. Pupils continue to achieve well overall in their work in Years 10 and 11 but not as securely as in Years 7 to 9 and inadequate access to ICT equipment is more noticeable. Though very good teaching continues to lead to very good achievement in mathematics, geography and history, pupils' achievement in music, core physical education, and in citizenship is now satisfactory rather than good. Achievement in music dips because staffing has changed and work with older pupils is not yet as effective as it is with younger ones, neither is there sufficient access to computer equipment. Achievement in physical education is affected by significant use of non-specialist staff and inadequate accommodation. Achievement in citizenship dips because older pupils have less time due to other modules of work taking precedence and their teachers are less trained in citizenship teaching. Achievement in design and technology, within resistant materials and graphic products, is unsatisfactory due to 'catching up' needed to fill in areas of work missed in Years 7 to 9, inadequate resources, particularly for graphics, and unsatisfactory management. Emphasis on raising boys' achievement has been successful and girls' achievement in English is now lagging behind. In mathematics both boys and girls do very well but boys better than girls. In science boys are more enquiring and reach higher standards in experimental work. Standards in ICT lessons, average, are now better than 2004 GCSE results suggested. It is unclear what the ICT standards are of pupils not following the course as their ICT experiences are not sufficiently monitored.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils are punctual to school and lessons. Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are happy to be at the school and feel fortunate to be there.
- There is very good behaviour in and around the school.
- There are very good relationships between pupils and staff and between each other.
- Low levels of exclusions reflect good school strategies to keep pupils interested in learning.
- Opportunities for enriching the day make it an interesting school and contribute to pupils' personal development.
- Attendance dipped a little last year but it is currently better than the national picture.

### **Commentary**

7. The school has upheld the very good attitudes to school and the very good behaviour by the pupils identified at the last inspection. Pupils say they enjoy school and appreciate that staff work hard to help them to achieve. A Year 7 pupil said "I feel lucky to be a citizen of the school". The wide range of enrichment activities and clubs

available both at lunchtime and after school sustains pupils' interest in school life and enhances their confidence and self-esteem. The word most used by the pupils to describe the school is friendly and this is reflected in the way the school builds very good relationships between staff and pupils. The heads of year office is a hive of activity at break-time and lunchtime; pupils make use of the open door policy to discuss their concerns or to pass on good news. In the inspection questionnaire 90 per cent of parents agree that their children like school.

8. The poor layout of buildings makes the school very difficult to regulate at lunchtimes and break-times, but good supervision by lunchtime staff and the willingness of pupils to behave create an orderly pleasant community. In the pupils' questionnaire, nearly all pupils agreed that behaviour is good in the school. Discussions with pupils revealed that they feel bullying occurs, but only rarely, and the school deals with any incidences very quickly and effectively. Exclusions are lower than average and reflect the success of the school in managing the needs of pupils with behavioural difficulties.
9. When given responsibility pupils show good levels of maturity. The School Council is well known to all pupils and is very effective in bringing about changes to the school through the focussed, productive, meetings that they hold. Pupils appreciate that others give up their time to be trained as Peer Counsellors and prefects. Year 11 pupils form constructive relationships with Year 7 pupils to help and guide them in their first days at school.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	760	26	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

10. Although there has been a steady gradual decline in attendance in the last three years and it was lower than the national median in 2003/04, attendance in the autumn term 2004 rose to 93.1%. Last year a few pupils who hardly attended the school brought attendance figures down; these pupils have now left. Strategies and measures involving staff, parents and pupils in a concerted effort to improve attendance are beginning to take effect. The school has reduced unauthorised absence in the last year and it is now just above the national median.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/04 (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.4	School data	1.5
National data	6.9	National data	1.1

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

11. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Although the arrangements for collective worship do not meet statutory requirements, several assemblies and tutor periods contained moments for reflection and moral thinking but no worship. There are very good opportunities for moments of reflection in religious education and other subjects. Music and physical education provide good opportunities for that aspect of spiritual development which is associated with pride of performance and the satisfaction that comes from achieving personal success and self-confidence.
12. Provision for the moral development of pupils is very good. The school has clear and high expectations of the pupils in terms of obeying the code of conduct and of exercising personal responsibility and the vast majority of the pupils respond well. They learn to respect the views of others. Older pupils look after younger pupils and, via the Alfreton Park Special School, those pupils with special educational needs. Parents and pupils declare themselves to be happy with the effectiveness of the school's strategy to help pupils become more mature and responsible. Opportunities to discuss moral issues occur throughout the curriculum. Pupils demonstrate a good deal of moral concern for others.
13. Provision for the social development of pupils is very good. This includes co-operative learning in lessons, in sports and in many extra curricular activities and clubs. Team sports foster sportsmanship and playing by the rules. There are good opportunities to learn about society in several subjects such as citizenship, history and geography and in associated visits such as the residential visit that all Years 7, 8 and 10 pupils undertake. Pupils also learn about society by being involved, for example, in work experience or community projects, such as the Dry Stone Wall Project, at Hardwick Park. In religious education, geography, and personal, social and health education there are profitable discussions on moral issues relating to society, the environment and personal relationships.
14. Provision for cultural development is good, particularly in English and in art and design, where it includes good multicultural awareness. Both art and design and music feature aspects of African culture. Display is a good feature of this contribution. The "Smart Artz" project enables pupils to engage in extra curricular arts projects. In religious education and in history there are opportunities for pupils to widen their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other main religions, and to learn about cultures and societies with different values.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good; academic and pastoral care, guidance and support are very good; links with parents are good and partnerships with other educational providers and with the community are very good. The curriculum is good.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good across all years. Assessment is good overall, good in Years 7 to 9, satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are very good in mathematics, history and geography across all years.
- Pupils work hard and can learn well on their own or in collaboration with their classmates.
- Teachers have particular strengths in the planning of lessons and in encouraging pupils to do their best.
- Learning support assistants play a significant role ensuring pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- During the inspection over a quarter of lessons seen were very good and reflected the developments in teaching and learning the school has been engaged in.
- Inadequate access to ICT means it is not used by pupils to support learning often enough though teachers are increasingly using it when they have interactive whiteboards in their classrooms.

## Commentary

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (1%)	30 (28%)	42 (39%)	32 (30%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	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.*

15. Teaching and learning were predominantly good during the inspection. There were similar proportions of good and very good lessons in Key Stage 3 and in Key Stage 4. No subject had unsatisfactory teaching overall though the small amount of less than satisfactory teaching was in design and technology. The excellent lesson was in textiles technology.
16. Teachers ensure learning is good despite often inadequate accommodation and sometimes unsatisfactory resources. Classes are most often of average size or bigger and too often contained within smaller than average rooms; many were built with different needs in mind almost a century ago. Consequently it is not always possible to operate a mix of class, individual and group work; rooms are too crowded to move anybody. In addition, modern resources such as computers cannot fit into many rooms and there are no spare rooms which can be used as a general ICT resource. However, the very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils, fostered and developed by teachers building up very good relationships, means pupils work hard and endeavour to get around problems rather than contribute to them. Pupils get on with work without constant supervision so teachers' efforts can be best directed to where they are needed. Pupils also collaborate well in class and outside it, working together on projects or to solve problems, sometimes helping younger pupils to learn in their lessons.
17. Teaching has many strengths and no overall weaknesses within the bounds of resources available. Pupils do not learn enough about some aspects of design and technology, and the use of homework to help pupils learn is unsatisfactory in modern languages. Teachers most often know their subjects well, and plan lessons and encourage pupils very well to help them achieve. In addition many teachers and most subject areas provide additional opportunities, outside of lessons, for pupils to catch up

or extend their learning. Many trips and visits, still very much continuing in this school, also extend pupils' learning and develop their personal skills.

18. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is good overall and marking is thorough and useful to pupils, who know how to get on and improve their work. Assessment is better in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4 and is generally satisfactory rather than good in English, modern languages, ICT, and design and technology. The better picture in Key Stage 3 has been influenced by work that has gone on in the school to raise standards by Year 9 which has involved most teachers developing how they teach and improving their understanding of how pupils learn. This developmental work has centred on the National Key Stage 3 Strategy to improve teaching, learning and assessment, and also embraced the latest ideas about children's thinking. Primary partner schools were also involved to ensure better continuity between practice in them and practice in this school. Inspectors noted that lessons seen were most often at least well planned and followed national guidelines. The humanities faculty led some aspects of teaching and learning development and the very good teaching and learning within history and geography demonstrates their expertise. Teaching and learning are also very good in mathematics, where very clear lesson objectives are reinforced and revisited throughout lessons so pupils learn and retain new knowledge and skills and achieve very well over time. There are still some weaknesses in pupils' literacy which hinder their progress in some subjects. The school has successfully focussed teachers' attention towards improving literacy and this needs to continue.
19. The use of ICT to support learning is mixed. Problems with computer placement and access are described above. However, the school did receive additional funding to purchase a significant number of interactive whiteboards (boards which a computer screen can be projected onto and which respond to contact) and staff continue to train in their use. They do bring computer assisted learning to whole classes. Teachers have also been provided with laptops and so are becoming more proficient in software and can project work they have done in preparation time using the interactive boards. The school has also begun an online curriculum on its website so pupils will be able to use ICT to assist their learning from home or library computers.
20. Teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are good overall. They are most often taught alongside their peers. A few Year 7 pupils are withdrawn from lessons for literacy support and other pupils may be withdrawn to participate in the 'positive support programme'. Such withdrawals from lessons have a minimal effect on pupils' curriculum entitlement but have very positive effects in improving their skills, attitudes and behaviour. In history, low attaining pupils participate in the Certificate of Achievement course which is taught very well. In art and design, the structure, planning and preparation of lessons ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Across the school, a valuable contribution is made by learning support assistants in designing and developing course materials. Such assistants play an important role in supporting several pupils whilst being designated to specific individuals. Pupils are able to participate fully in lessons, and respond well to effective planning, adapted resources and support. In lessons where support is effectively used, learning is often very good. Pupils with special educational needs are often enthusiastic learners who participate well in lessons. The school uses a variety of tests to assess pupils' needs, in addition to results of end of Year 6 national tests in primary schools. The data available provides a good guide to pupils' attainment and which learning style best suits their needs. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully monitored. Each individual education plan identifies three specific targets which are reviewed each term. However, some subject teachers do not make sufficient use of such plans or provide suitable differentiated materials based on them.



21. The school has not received additional funding to provide additionally for gifted and talented pupils but does identify them and puts in place what it can. Additional learning took place in an arts summer school and work displayed around the school is of a very good standard.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good overall, satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, good in Years 10 and 11. Opportunities available to pupils outside of normal lessons are very good. Resources, and particularly accommodation, are unsatisfactory; staffing is satisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The range of courses in Years 10 and 11 is broad and innovative and meets the needs and aspirations of pupils well.
- Off site vocational provision is diverse and successful.
- Some statutory requirements are not fully met.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory and hinders teaching and learning.

### **Commentary**

22. In Years 7 to 9, curriculum provision is satisfactory overall. Mathematics, history and geography are particularly well organised, enabling high achievement and fostering wide appeal for history and geography in the optional curriculum in Years 10 and 11. The number of pupils in the school, combined with restrictions imposed by the accommodation, leads to an imbalance of time allocation in some curriculum areas, particularly when subjects are taught in rotation. In Year 9, art, music, and ICT are mixed with recently introduced drama in a four subject rotation and needs dictate that different sized groups of pupils are used within the rotation. In consequence, ICT is taught twice as much to two thirds of pupils as it is to the other one third; this latter group undoubtedly covers National Curriculum requirements in less depth than other pupils. Coupled with inadequate pupils' use of ICT elsewhere in the curriculum, mainly because of insufficient access to computers as there is nowhere to put them, statutory requirements for ICT are not met. In design and technology, elements of National Curriculum requirements are not taught at all; this is a subject management issue which the school is addressing.
23. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum is good. The school has worked in an innovative and imaginative way to increase the range of courses in Years 10 and 11 and to make them accessible to all pupils. There is a range of 19 subjects on site and, in collaboration with a range of providers, 9 further vocational subjects off site. Some pupils have opportunities to follow additional practical work related courses at two local colleges of further education. Pupils not suited to the full range of GCSE courses can take a reduced GCSE timetable; they receive additional support with their studies and follow other accredited courses in the time created. All pupils take a GCSE short course of religious education in Year 10 having begun it in Year 9. Though this is successful, the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education are not fully met within the personal, social, and health education (PSHE) course in Year 11; the school is aware of this and is taking steps to provide an extra module of work.
24. Opportunities for learning and personal development outside of lessons are very good, with almost all subjects offering either additional opportunities in school, or visits and residential experiences of both short and long duration, including trips abroad. The range of sports and games available is particularly strong. There is good support for

gifted and talented students and the results of one summer school for them are well displayed around the school.

25. Statutory requirements for the provision of a daily act of collective worship are not met and this is explained in the leadership and management section. PSHE is effective and most often taught by appropriately trained teachers. Links with the health centre next door to the school are very good and appreciated by older pupils. Careers education and guidance increasingly becomes part of personal development lessons as pupils get older and is very good provision. Sections in this report on citizenship and on work related learning refer to aspects of personal development education and careers.
26. No pupils with special educational needs are disapplied from the curriculum provided for other pupils and they benefit from enhancements. In Year 10, some pupils have an 'enhancement' period which gives the opportunity for support to be given in a range of subjects as well as reinforcing basic literacy and numeracy skills. Organising classes by ability enables some subjects to have smaller groups of lower attaining pupils, some taught by learning support teachers, others by teachers supported by learning support assistants.
27. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory overall. Buildings are mostly very old but some recent additions have been built. Significant improvements have been made through the Football Foundation lottery grant to improve outdoor provision for physical education but indoor accommodation is totally inadequate and often has to be given over to other activities when a large space is needed for examinations, catering, and shows. Disabled access has been improved. The building is generally well maintained and staff work hard to make the environment as attractive as possible by wall displays and general care. There are however many areas which give cause for concern as highlighted in the previous report. Significant shortfalls exist in the provision for design and technology, science, physical education and general classrooms which are so cramped that learning activities are restricted. The poorest accommodation is the timber classroom block where some of the rooms have outlived their life expectancy by almost forty years. The school says that overcrowding can have a detrimental effect on pupil behaviour although this was not observed during the inspection.
28. Although resources have improved since the previous inspection they remain unsatisfactory overall. The main reason for this is the inadequate provision for ICT across subjects. The introduction of 9 interactive whiteboards and laptops for all teaching staff is having a positive impact on teaching and learning. Design and technology, modern foreign languages and religious education have a limited number of textbooks available, some of which need updating. The quantity and quality of small equipment available in practical lessons for design and technology are also inadequate.
29. Staffing is satisfactory overall. The high number of non-specialist teachers delivering physical education in Years 10 and 11 is a shortcoming given the school's Sports College status and means pupils' progress in some areas of work is hindered. In design and technology the post of one teacher is covered by part-time staff, which creates timetable and continuity problems. The number of support staff, teaching assistants and technicians is satisfactory overall. However, support staff are not always available in lessons where they could have a positive effect and the science technician, given the problematic accommodation, is overstretched. Technical staff undertake a valuable role in assisting and supporting the teaching of the curriculum and secretarial and site management staff make a good contribution to the smooth day to day running and overall condition of the school.

## Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are satisfactory overall. Provision of guidance for pupils through the monitoring of their work and the setting of appropriate targets is very good. The school takes good care to ensure that pupils' views are valued.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Support, advice and guidance for personal and academic development are very good.
- There are very good arrangements for the induction of new pupils and to support pupils leaving the school to enter further education.
- Guidance given to pupils on further study or career opportunities is very good.
- The Positive Support programme helps pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties tackle their problems.
- Risk assessments are not done in some areas of the school.

### Commentary

30. Hard work by staff, the very good attitudes of pupils and the relatively small size of the school create a close-knit community which is friendly and trusting. Very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are evident. Peer mentoring and support, the prefect system and the school council involve pupils actively in the school, contribute to citizenship development, and demonstrate that the school values pupils' views and perceptions. A trained counsellor contributes to the successful care and well-being of pupils who are confident in the support tutors and teachers provide.
31. Pastoral staff are an effective team who very well monitor the personal development and academic achievement of pupils. A two-day suspension of the timetable allows tutors to speak to pupils, and often their parents, so that pupils know and understand how to improve their work and how to attain their academic targets, or exceed them.
32. Pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties have access to the 'positive support programme'. This includes the use of an unusual accommodation resource which is leased by the school. The learning support assistant responsible for this is enthusiastic and fully committed to the provision, which enables pupils with low self esteem and/or poor social skills to develop strategies to control anger and build self confidence. The use of pupil self assessment, combined with staff assessment, allows pupils on the programme the opportunity to remain in school where they may possibly have found themselves being formally excluded. Staff liaise closely with the learning mentor, subject teachers, feeder schools, and parents and carers to ensure appropriate support is provided and all know what progress is being made.
33. Child Protection procedures are clear and follow local area guidelines; all staff have received training and are aware of their own responsibilities. The school teaches pupils to care for themselves through the personal, social, and health education (PSHE) curriculum, which informs them about personal risk and safeguards within society. Close links with the neighbouring health centre contribute to pupils' awareness of local and personal health issues; there is a 'Teen Clinic', a pupil member on the patients' committee, and information on the centre's website produced by pupils.
34. First aid procedures in school are good; a good number of staff have first aid certificates, and accidents are recorded promptly and correctly. Risk assessments for

outside visits are in place, but the school needs to review its procedures and practices for identifying and recording risks in design and technology lessons and in and around the school site. Inspection revealed no risk assessments had been done in design and technology or, if they had, had been ignored with areas of risk and lack of signage obvious in rooms. Neither had an inexperienced teacher been made aware of risks associated with work in hand or carried out such a risk assessment. The site itself is on different levels, has steps and is difficult to negotiate. Relatively minor things like obvious white paint on step edges and good lighting in and around doorways have not been done well enough, leading to the conclusion that site risk assessment is not rigorous. Risk is increased by the relatively heavy use the site gets after dark.

35. The local authority has recognised the school's procedures for the induction of new pupils as a model of good practice. Taster practical lessons are very popular with pupils before they start the school and past pupils visit the primary schools to tell of their experiences and allay any fears there might be. Pupils in Year 7 feel that the first day at school, where only Years 7 and 10 attend, is very helpful as the older pupils show them round and they form very good relationships with each other; they can approach the older pupils during their first year if they need any assistance.
36. Guidance to pupils to prepare them for their futures is very good. Careers education begins in the first two years with basic information on work possibilities and how pupils should gather information about themselves for future use. A strong careers programme from Year 9, through the PSHE curriculum, enables pupils to have a very good knowledge of opportunities available for further education, training or employment. A successful programme of visitors to school and activities such as work shadowing, work experience and industrial visits broaden pupils' outlooks. Links with the Connexions Service have improved recently and are strengthening pupils' information about possible prospects.

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

The school has good links with its parents. Very good links are in place with local primary schools and colleges. The school has very good links with the community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most parents are happy with the school's provision for their children.
- The school plays an important role in the community and there are very good links with further education, training providers and businesses.
- Parents are provided with very good information about the curriculum and about the personal development of their children.
- Information in pupils' annual progress reports is not focussed enough on what pupils can do and what they need to do.

### **Commentary**

37. Most parents are supportive of the school and are happy with the provision their children receive. The school attracts an intake from a wide area due to its good reputation amongst parents for its care and the general success pupils have. There is good parental support for events and information evenings and the school has an active and successful 'Friends of the School Association' that provides social events and raises much needed funds for the school. Although the school does not receive

many complaints from parents and has informal procedures for dealing with any dissatisfaction, it does not have a written complaints policy to outline how the procedures work in practice.

38. Overall, information to parents is of a good quality. Parents receive very useful information booklets on the curriculum; parents are able to see how the curriculum is taught and how to help their children at home. Newsletters are regular and informative, and the school website contains a wide range of useful information. An e-portal system, recently purchased by the school, will enable parents to access records and reports about their children. The school prospectus is detailed and a useful document. The full governors' annual report to parents is very detailed with a clear picture of the governors' roles. The school has commissioned a survey of parents on their views of the school so that they may be better considered within improvement plans.
39. About a quarter of parents who responded to the OFSTED questionnaire do not feel they are well informed about their children's progress. However, they do get two opportunities to talk about their children's achievement (the requirement is one) and at annual meetings, which are very well attended, they are able to see detailed information on their children's progress. The pupils' annual progress reports give good general information and indicate areas for improvement in pupils' personal development. However, such reports are less successful at focussing directly on pupils' specific achievement in subjects, weaknesses in learning that they have, and targets for improvement, which would assist parents to help their children at home. Inspectors agree that reports could be improved.
40. Since the last inspection, when it was described as "the centre of the community" the school has further improved its links. Close links are in place with the Health Centre, which shares its expertise with the school in promoting healthier lifestyles. The school is a pivotal member of an effective cluster of surrounding schools whose meetings are pro-active in improving standards in schools; links with its feeder primary schools ensure there is some measure of continuity in pupils' learning. The school has wide links with local businesses. Thirty-two took part and sponsored the school, in conjunction with the local police, in a school based 'Crime stoppers' Competition. Sports College status has benefited the district in its provision of better facilities for community sports. Close links with local colleges, further education establishments and Derby University assist the smooth transfer of pupils to the next stage of their education. Well-established links with Derbyshire Chamber and Business link enable National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) to be offered; the Army and Royal Navy enjoy close liaison with the school and support pupils who wish to enter careers with them.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are both good. Governors do a good job both in supporting the school's ambitions and in challenging the school to do better. There are several omissions in statutory responsibilities which make governance currently unsatisfactory, but they are either being addressed or tackling them is hindered by a lack of financial resources and/or inadequate accommodation. They are: providing a daily act of broadly Christian worship; aspects of the work in design and technology and in ICT; risk assessments in design and technology and around the general school site.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leaders motivate teachers and pupils to maintain or improve appropriate standards very well.
- The school is very committed to ensuring that all pupils receive appropriate provision.
- The training of new teachers is very well provided for.
- Very good financial management and the pursuit of best value enable the school to do well or better in many areas, despite low funding.
- There are some breaches of statutory requirements which need further attention.

## Commentary

41. Leadership and management are good; the school and governors are very committed to inclusion as seen in the high reputation the school enjoys for supporting and encouraging pupils with special educational needs, integrating potentially difficult pupils and providing a varied and applicable curriculum.
42. The school is a very well established village school which has rightly earned a good reputation and is popular. In consequence many staff have been involved with the school for many years. However, the school does anything but stand still and leaders at many levels, very well encouraged by the headteacher and governors, have taken on new developments and innovations in teaching and learning and in the curriculum. This has been done to such an extent that the school is seen locally to be an exemplar for other schools in such things as its improving performance by the end of Year 9 due to developments in teaching and learning, work to help pupils move from primary school and onwards to colleges, and curriculum work related to citizenship, vocational education, and the humanities. The programme to improve teaching and learning, led by a member of the leadership group, has been and is very thorough and well received by staff. As well as practice in the classroom it also includes improving how data is used to set academic targets for individual pupils and for the school; the process has been ongoing for over three years and contributed to the best ever end of Year 9 test results in 2004, both likely above the national average (national data is not yet available) and amongst the best in the local authority. The headteacher and governors are very well aware of the need to both consolidate and build on this success in the performance of older pupils in Years 10 and 11.
43. Though staff have often remained at the school for a long time or intend to once they have joined the school, retirement and expansion in pupil numbers have caused a regular influx of new teachers. The school is very active in the recruitment, training and support of new teachers in ways which 'spill over' into the professional development and support of all staff. The national graduate teacher training programme was embraced and consequently several 'mature' new teachers are now working in the school. Nottingham University places student teachers in the school and students are regularly used to carry out useful research in the school, for example into teaching and learning styles and into the effectiveness of interactive whiteboards. Such research feeds into the school's increasing use of lesson observations to evaluate its effectiveness and to identify good practice which is then shared. Students and teachers both benefit with little cost to the school's time and resources; an example of ensuring best value from opportunities which present themselves.
44. The leadership and management of the special educational needs department are good. The co-ordinator teaches lower ability classes, within mathematics, providing a good role model for others in the preparation and planning for individual pupils. Learning support teachers and learning support assistants are an effective team. Although there are some subject areas

where there is little support provided, for example, modern languages, what support is available makes a substantial contribution to the learning experiences of pupils other than the limited number having a statement of special educational needs. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are given every opportunity to achieve above their predicted test or examination results, based on prior attainment. Leadership and management, overall, of all curriculum areas is most often good or better but leadership and management of design and technology are unsatisfactory overall and some aspects of leadership are poor. The governors have this weakness in hand.

45. The funding this school has received for each pupil is amongst the lowest seen by this inspection team. It is well below the national average; around £700 per pupil less. It is also low when compared to several other local schools of similar size, between about £219 and £472 less per pupil. If the school received nationally average funding it would be about half a million pounds better off, if it received the funding provided to some other low funded Derbyshire secondary schools, about £170,000 better off. It is therefore not surprising that the school acquired a deficit last year, more surprising that it has not carried a much larger one for years. The deficit was a result of 'claw back' when fewer pupils joined the school in 2002 than was predicted by the school (money for pupils is paid 'up front' and then budgets are readdressed later) and, to a smaller extent, money that was reduced when the school changed its meals provider (partly to ensure a healthier selection of food). Financial management is actually very good and best value always pursued rigorously.
46. The popularity of the school most often means more pupils apply than can be taken in and the governors accept about 27 more than the number the local authority sets, which means about 135 more in the school across the five years. This does contribute to crowding in the inadequate accommodation but very good pastoral provision, the very good behaviour of pupils, and often larger classes than average allow it to work. In fact, if the governors reduced the intake significantly the corresponding reduction in income would make the school's long term financial viability questionable. The school has done what it can to improve accommodation and has paid for several new rooms, for example in art and design, out of its own very limited budget. The school also pays out more for each pupil taking up its very good vocational provision than it actually receives per pupil from the local authority. Recent sports college status has brought more money with it but also new responsibilities and inside sports accommodation remains unsatisfactory. The school successfully sought lottery funding for changing facilities to help the local community access a new outside sports area. Considering the good provision overall, very good in some aspects, against a well below average income, the school gives very good value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,209,473	Balance from previous year	35,374
Total expenditure	2,347,720	Balance carried forward to the next	- 102,873
Expenditure per pupil	3,021		

Note that the expenditure per pupil exceeds the income per pupil, £2,844, hence the deficit. Both figures are well below the national average.

47. Governors do a good job overall, and are particularly good at ensuring limited resources are well used and that the attention of the local authority is constantly drawn to the limited funding and inadequate accommodation. They also set appropriate targets for the headteacher and school through approval of a clear improvement plan which focuses well on improving standards, through setting appropriate performance management targets, and through supporting new initiatives which are likely to be attainable within the resources of the school, or merit success, such as the bid for

Sports College status. They are very knowledgeable about the strengths of the school and significant areas which cause some disquiet, for example aspects of design and technology. They have seen the school, as directed, improve significantly in end of Year 9 test results and generally improve at GCSE. They are very committed to the school and to the community it serves and are frustrated by their perceptions of the inadequate financial support provided.

48. Nevertheless, there are several areas, listed at the start of this section, in which the school does not meet statutory requirements. There are good reasons for some of these omissions. A lack of accommodation means pupils cannot be assembled daily to allow those staff who are willing to lead an act of worship to do so. The governors have made the honest decision not to enforce providing a daily act of worship in smaller groups, because not all staff are willing to lead one and they cannot be compelled to do so. The problems with ICT requirements are due to staffing, accommodation and resourcing issues very difficult to overcome, given the low funding. The shortfalls in the design and technology curriculum are significantly due to an ongoing management issue which the governors have in hand, and also a resource shortfall. In addition, risk assessments are not carried out in design and technology or effectively enough in general areas of the school. Governors have assured the inspection team that swift action will be taken to address risk assessments, but overall governance is judged unsatisfactory because of lack of compliance with statutory requirements.

## **WORK RELATED LEARNING**

Provision in work related learning is very good; statutory requirements are met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school uses its strong links with further education and business to provide a wide range of vocational opportunities.
- Year 9 pupils participate in a work-shadowing scheme.
- Two weeks' work experience in Year 10 is extended for some pupils.
- Careers education and advice are very good.
- Work related learning is co-ordinated very well by an experienced assistant headteacher.
- Work related learning awareness has not yet sufficiently permeated the whole curriculum.

### **Commentary**

49. The school has long experience of providing work related activities for its pupils and current provision is building on that successful tradition. This area of the curriculum is well led and co-ordinated by an experienced assistant headteacher who manages the diversity of provision efficiently.
50. The school uses its wide range of contacts with other institutions and organisations to provide pupils with very good opportunities to learn through work and about work. Pupils attending courses in engineering, business, motor vehicle work and child care at nearby Chesterfield College benefit from professional tuition and specialist facilities. All those pupils interviewed were appreciative of this and felt that the courses were of benefit to them as individuals as well as to their future employment prospects. The



school takes pains to ensure that pupils are selected for courses appropriate to their needs and aptitudes. Regular attendance and appropriate behaviour are both emphasised and very good liaison between school and college ensures prompt action if these are breached. This has led to a marked change in the maturity of many pupils, something often noted by the local community. Cooperation with Derbyshire Chamber's 39 Steps programme provides very good preparation for employment for pupils by developing personal qualities and basic skills. Pupils are also involved in a modern apprenticeship scheme at another college of further education. All courses lead to appropriate accreditation and the school is seeking ways to extend provision.

51. Combined expertise from local colleges and within the school has been used to establish applied GCSE courses in ICT and in health and social care. Whilst initial examination results have been disappointing, valuable experience has been gained for further development of this area.
52. All pupils participate in two weeks' work experience in Year 10. This is extended for those pupils for whom it is considered to be of benefit. Pupils play a part in finding a suitable placement and are expected to evaluate the benefits of the experience on their return to school. A work shadowing day for Year 9 pupils provides a valuable foretaste of the longer Year 10 experience and contributes to their personal profile. Careers advice is very good overall, and a well-planned programme is woven into personal and social education throughout all year groups. This is supported by visits, a programme of visiting speakers and taster days, all of which prepare pupils well for the next stage of education or employment.
53. The school has not yet fully audited the curriculum to assess where subject areas can contribute to pupils' learning for work. Some departments have begun this process but there is no set timescale for this to be completed. Overall development plans for work related learning, however, are detailed and extensive.

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

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

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

##### **English**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards in Year 9 tests in 2004 appear significantly better than those in 2003.
- Girls are not doing as well in GCSE examinations as boys.
- Good leadership leads to a good curriculum.
- Some pupils are not aware of their standard of work or how to improve it.
- The analysis of data is not sharp enough to help pupils achieve better.

##### **Commentary**

54. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall. Indications are that national test results at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were better than the below average results in 2003. The trend over the last three years is inconsistent; staffing difficulties adversely affected progress. Test results in 2004 are likely to agree with the above average standard of work seen in Years 7 to 9; standards have been raised through a concentration on literacy teaching. Test results in 2004 are likely to be as good as they were in similar schools.
55. GCSE English language results in 2004 were average overall compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A\*-C grade was average whilst the proportion of pupils attaining an A\*-G grade was above average. When compared to similar schools, GCSE results overall were a little weaker than might have been expected; the proportion of pupils attaining A\*-C grades was a little low whilst the proportion gaining A\*-G grades was better than might have been expected. Boys' results were better compared with girls' results because the department has planned lessons and resources to particularly help raise the standards of boys' work.
56. Most pupils also take a GCSE in English literature. In 2004, overall results were broadly average but the proportion of pupils attaining an A\*-C grade was well below average and girls' results at these higher grades were significantly below average.
57. Results in 2004 are broadly similar overall to those in 2003 though the proportions of pupils attaining A\*-C and A\*-G grades in English language were above average then. English literature results were very similar in 2003 to those in 2004. The trend in results over the last three years is inconsistent because of differences in pupils' prior attainment year by year and temporary staffing difficulties.
58. By Year 9 pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils can write analytically and descriptively. They read fluently and their comprehension is above average. Occasionally they

cannot listen attentively or respectfully because their concentration is low. Standards are average in Year 11; pupils achieve satisfactorily. By Year 11, pupils can write in a range of forms using sophisticated vocabulary. However, a minority do not present their work consistently well. It is occasionally brief, lacks insight, and does not indicate pride in their work. Pupils read a range of challenging texts and identify well with characters. Pupils love to contribute but too often lack the discipline to listen attentively to others. Teachers' planned use of the library and the inclusion of drama within English help standards of work to improve. The use of ICT lifts standards of presentation but access to computers is limited and all pupils do not benefit.

59. Pupils with special educational needs, and the most able pupils, make satisfactory progress because their needs are planned for and supported by teachers and support assistants. Girls make less progress than boys by the end of Year 11 because there has been an emphasis on raising the standards of boys and girls' achievement has now lagged behind.
60. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall across all years. In Year 7, a good lesson which looked at literature from different cultures included food tasting and descriptive talking and writing. Pupils enjoyed themselves and were thoroughly involved in their learning. This reflects the importance the school attaches to improving literacy skills in an innovative and exciting way. In contrast, a satisfactory lesson in Year 9 did not give the pupils enough time to pause and reflect on what they had done and the objectives of the lesson were not fully met. In Year 11, a very good lesson on World War 1 poetry used music, photographs and pictures to illuminate the historical background of the words and prompted pupils to reflect on and evaluate their meaning. In contrast, a satisfactory lesson missed opportunities to clearly identify work with examination expectations and raise pupils' aspirations.
61. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leadership is good, management is satisfactory. Good leadership ensures a good curriculum which incorporates drama and emphasises spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, and citizenship. Consequently, pupils are aware of their responsibilities to themselves and the wider community. The national literacy strategy has been well adopted to help pupils do better, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Assessment practice is satisfactory overall but not all pupils are aware of their standards or how to improve them. Neither is analysis of pupils' performance data rigorous enough to clearly identify individual pupils' achievement and consequently determine what exactly must be done to raise it.

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

62. Standards in literacy are average overall and appear to be improving in Years 7 to 9. Weaknesses in, for example, writing coherently at length, do affect the achievement of diverse groups of pupils, sometimes low attainers, sometimes boys, particularly in science, history, religious education, and art and design. The school recognises the importance of improving pupils' literacy skills. A range of texts, in all subjects, encourages the use of technical and specialist vocabulary, especially in geography, history and English. The library runs a successful induction programme with the English department but has limited resources to support all subjects. The English department has dictionaries available in each classroom; key words are displayed prominently in most classrooms to familiarise pupils with these words. Carefully censored Internet access allows pupils to research topics in detail but access is limited. Pupils discuss their work enthusiastically and sensibly and show respect to their peers and staff by usually listening attentively. Reading fluency is encouraged and seen to particular effect in English and in history. Pupils enjoy reading; particularly reading

aloud. A minority of pupils' literacy standards are comparatively weak when they enter the school and the school provides extra literacy work to tackle this; 'progress units' are well planned and monitored which results in improved standards for these pupils. Teachers across many subjects undertake the teaching of basic literacy skills conscientiously as a means of improving pupils' standards of work.

## French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Able pupils make insufficient progress.
- Inappropriate grouping arrangements, especially in Years 10 and 11, limit pupils' achievement.
- Pupils are motivated by imaginative use of the interactive whiteboard.
- In Years 10 and 11, insufficient textbooks limit pupils' language development.
- Leadership of the department is good.

### Commentary

63. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. Recent staffing difficulties are now resolved.
64. GCSE results in 2003 were below average overall compared to those in all schools and in similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A\*-C grade was well below average, but the proportion of pupils attaining an A\*-G grade was average. When compared to similar schools, GCSE results were poorer than might be expected. Results in 2004 are better than those of 2003. However, the trend in results over the last three years is below average because pupils' continuity of learning has been severely disrupted by unavoidable staff absence.
65. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average in French. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. In Year 7 they make rapid progress, but this slows in Year 8. By Year 9 most have a good understanding of language structure. However, many pupils cannot speak and write confidently without support and often cannot recall what they have learned in past lessons. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are below average; pupils achieve satisfactorily. Against the national trend, many boys achieve as well as girls because they are enthusiastic learners. By Year 11, pupils can express themselves well when supported, for example, when describing work experience and their hometown. Homework opportunities are limited, especially in Years 10 and 11, because of lack of personal textbooks. In all years, pupils are restricted in their language development by insufficient independent learning tasks and lack of opportunities in lessons to quietly consolidate learning. Pupils develop speaking effectively in groups and pairs but are sometimes limited by teachers' lack of use of the foreign language in lessons. Pupils' independent learning through ICT is restricted by lack of ready access to computers. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because teachers support them well in lessons. The most able pupils make unsatisfactory progress in the large, wide ability groups in all years.
66. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers do not always demonstrate the strategies to support pupils in groups containing a wide mix of abilities. For example, in a satisfactory Year 8 lesson, the lack of specialist support for pupils with special educational needs in a wide ability group directed the teacher's attention away from the able pupils. Skilled use of the interactive whiteboard by one teacher is

motivating all pupils, especially boys. Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers' frequent testing and thorough marking of pupils' work are not always supported by individual target setting for improvement.

67. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The dedicated head of department gives good direction to the committed team; and good use of assessment data is helping to raise standards. Social and cultural development of pupils is part of routine learning; and citizenship is included in schemes of work. Areas for development are: the achievement of able pupils, and improvement in the curriculum.

## **German**

Provision in German is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils are motivated by imaginative use of the interactive whiteboard.
- In Years 10 and 11, insufficient textbooks limit pupils' language development.
- The department is led well.

## Commentary

68. GCSE results in German in 2003 were average overall compared to those in all schools and in similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A\*-C grade was slightly below average in German and the proportion of pupils attaining an A\*-G grade was average. Results in 2004 are lower than those of 2003, with some disruption to pupils' continuity of learning by unavoidable staff absence.
69. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are average and pupils achieve well. Pupils make rapid progress and by Year 9 pupils can speak, understand, and write confidently with a good understanding of language structure. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are average and they again achieve well. Boys and girls achieve equally well and both can express themselves well – they develop speaking effectively. However, pupils do not have their own textbooks, which means they cannot be set homework using them, nor can they use them for independent learning tasks. Pupils' independent learning through ICT is also restricted by lack of ready access to computers. However, one teacher's skilled use of the interactive whiteboard is very effectively motivating pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because teachers support them well in lessons.
70. Teaching and learning are good. In one very good Year 9 lesson, the teacher's effective planning enabled all pupils, especially boys, to speak confidently in German. In a very good Year 11 lesson, the teacher's clear explanations and skilled questioning supported all pupils well in preparing for the GCSE examination. Assessment is satisfactory, but, as in French, teachers' frequent testing and thorough marking of pupils' work are not always supported by individual target setting for improvement.
71. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. Leadership is good. Recent staffing difficulties are now resolved and the head of department gives good direction to the team. Good use of analysis of assessment data is helping to raise standards, and citizenship and social and cultural learning are well integrated into the curriculum.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and, as a result, pupils achieve high standards.
- Pupils are confident in lessons and have a very good attitude to learning.
- The leadership and management of the department are very good.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are very good.
- Most classrooms used for teaching mathematics are too small for larger teaching groups.

## Commentary

72. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2004 appear to be better than those in 2003, which were above average and better than those in similar schools. The trend of improvement over the last three years is gradual, in line with the national trend. The standard of work seen is well above average, reflecting very good teaching and learning. GCSE results in 2004 were well above average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C and A\*-G were both well above the national average. Both boys' and girls' results were well above average but boys' results were significantly better than girls'.

73. The attainment level of pupils on entry to the school is generally close to the national average. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well and standards in all years from 7 to 11 are now well above average. By Year 9 pupils can, for example, handle data, form and test hypotheses, and distinguish between different averages. They can calculate the area of compound shapes, solve linear equations and know the properties of different geometric shapes. By Year 11 pupils demonstrate a good understanding of probability, statistics, algebra and trigonometry, both in classwork and in coursework.
74. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers are very skilled in encouraging and motivating pupils. They use good, focussed questioning to provoke and develop pupils' mathematical thinking, to check understanding and to keep pupils involved throughout lessons. Teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour help build pupils' confidence to ask for help, offer answers, and to say when and what they do not understand. Relationships in the classrooms and pupils' attitudes to learning are very good: they treat each other with respect and listen attentively to each other and to the teacher.
75. Teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of all pupils and make lesson objectives clear. They use starter activities to engage pupils quickly and to set a good pace which then continues throughout the lesson. Teachers use plenary sessions to recap on the lesson and to check pupils' understanding and progress. These can be fun: for example, in a Year 7 lesson, pupils took turns to pick a card from an envelope. Some cards asked pupils to answer a question themselves, others (more popularly!) told the pupil to pick a friend to answer the question.
76. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they emphasise the importance of literacy skills. In particular teachers stress the importance of using correct vocabulary which, when possible, they link to alternative contexts, for example comparing the statistical meaning of range with a range of mountains. Pupils are set, and are aware of, challenging targets. Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully by regular tests and by setting and marking homework which builds on and extends pupils' learning in lessons. Teachers intervene quickly if pupils appear to be underachieving.
77. Although the department is satisfactorily resourced, accommodation is not satisfactory. The mathematics classrooms are too small for many of the classes that are taught in them and there is no space for any computers in these rooms. Teachers and pupils make good use of the one interactive whiteboard in the department and there is a good supply of appropriate textbooks and workbooks for pupils to use.
78. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The departmental handbook and schemes of work are kept up-to-date to provide good relevant guidance to teachers. Opportunities to address literacy, citizenship and ICT are clearly identified. Assessment procedures are very good and the head of department monitors the progress of different teaching groups. He provides a good role model for other teachers - with high expectations of himself, his team and pupils.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

79. The school has a clear policy for mathematics across the curriculum which is included in departmental handbooks. This is detailed enough to ensure consistency across departments and to support pupils' mathematical learning across the school.
80. The standards seen during the inspection demonstrate that pupils have good mathematical skills to support their learning in other subjects. For example: in English and science pupils make good use of graphs. In geography, pupils in Year 8 carry out research into recycling and make good use of their data handling skills to analyse data and present graphs of their findings. In Year 11, pupils compare two maps to consider erosion over a period of 78 years.

By accurate measurement and appropriate use of calculators, they complete the necessary calculations.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are enthusiastic and committed to raising standards despite the restrictions of insufficient and overcrowded laboratories.
- Pupils have very good attitudes.
- There are very good staff-pupil relationships resulting in good humoured lessons and enjoyable learning.
- There is very good use of assessment and use of data to raise standards further.
- Teachers have good knowledge of pupils' needs so that unobtrusive support can be offered where needed.
- There is first class technician support underpinning good teaching and learning, but there is insufficient time provided for support.

### Commentary

81. Improvement since the last inspection is good. All the issues raised at the previous inspection have been addressed. Examination results have been maintained or improved and the continued use of assessment, together with new revision and examination preparation initiatives, is helping to raise standards. However laboratory conditions and overcrowding are still major problems.
82. The 2004 national test results at the end of Year 9 are better than those for 2003, which were roughly in line with national averages. From being behind girls' performance in 2003, boys have now resumed the lead, especially at the higher level. The school trend over the last three years has been of gradual improvement, matching all schools nationally, but 2004 saw a big upward jump. Results are also much better than the Derbyshire county averages. These results, which are likely to prove better than those of similar schools, reflect growing confidence in teaching the new strategy for science, and reflect the standards seen in most lessons.
83. GCSE results in 2004 fell back slightly from 2003 levels, but were still better than those for all schools nationally. The proportion of A\*-C grades was still ahead of the national average, while the A\*-G proportion roughly matched it. When compared with similar schools, results are favourable and typically better than might be expected. The standards seen in lessons are reflected in these results, and measures are already in hand to further boost pupil performance in the 2005 examinations.
84. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are above average and pupils achieve well. By Year 9 they have learned to identify the factors which might affect a particular situation and can design and set up a simple investigation to test their theories, based on their previous knowledge; for instance what factors make a helicopter fall more quickly when 'windmilling' earthwards after a power failure. A minority of pupils have poor literacy skills which hold back their comprehension and hinder their completion of a written record.



85. In Years 10 and 11, standards are also above average, with the majority of pupils achieving well. They can apply their theoretical knowledge to practical situations, for instance, explaining why a concentrated acid will attack a metal more aggressively than a dilute one, explaining this in terms of the interaction between acid molecules and metal atoms, and they can further adapt this to forecast correctly what might be the effect of heating the acid. From Year 9 onwards, boys tend to take a more inquisitive stance to their lessons than girls and are more willing to volunteer ideas and suggestions – as well as to seek clarification when it is needed. Girls produce more detailed written work which is usually more neatly presented. Pupils with special educational needs match the progress of their classmates, especially orally and in practical work. In general they can only be identified by examining their written work. However the level of non-teaching support that is available is low.
86. Teaching is good, and the resulting learning is equally good, with the more effective teaching taking place in Years 7 to 9, possibly because the same teacher teaches the group throughout the year, rather than classes rotating between different specialists as in Years 10 and 11. In Year 9, a high-attaining group enjoyed a very good lesson on how acids and alkalis react together, even though this was taught in an ordinary classroom and not in a laboratory, with a variety of activities and some telling small-scale demonstrations keeping pupils alert, concentrating and learning well. The brisk pace, range of challenges and the use of modern technology (a data-projector and interactive whiteboard) enabled pupils to grasp the theoretical concepts involved and to be able to correctly forecast and explain the interaction of a variety of other metals and acids that they had not seen. Two important factors enable good learning to result from good teaching. The high quality of staff-pupil relationships is one. Because of this, pupils are unafraid to seek help or information and frequently help each other over minor problems. Good relationships also mean that pupils are striving all the time to meet the high expectations of their teacher, and hence class management can be of a very 'light touch' variety. The second factor is the enthusiasm and willingness to learn displayed by the pupils. Both are strengths of the department and facilitate good learning.
87. Assessment is frequent and the resulting data are very well used to monitor the progress of each pupil, to identify potential under-achievement and to highlight parts of the syllabus that need revision. Pupils are consequently aware of how well they are doing, and how they might improve. They know how their targets have been set, and what is needed to exceed them. Good teaching and learning depend on good technician support, and a first-class service is provided by stretched staff no matter where in the school the lessons take place.
88. Leadership and management are both good, and the recent change of leadership has been seamless. Several new initiatives have arisen from assessment of pupils' work and recent test results, and the needs of high-attaining pupils are being freshly addressed. Newly-appointed staff are well supported and their contributions to good practice are valued and shared. Good organization and the flexibility of staff mean that the barriers of overcrowded laboratories and the need for some 13 of 100 lessons being in ordinary classrooms each week are minimised as far as possible. However both these barriers inhibit what the teacher can attempt safely, or with minimal equipment away from the resource base. Improving levels of ICT equipment mean that teaching methods can be steadily updated and pupils' levels of ICT competence can be harnessed and built upon. The faculty is good humoured, hard working and forward looking, and a supportive place in which to teach or learn.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well overall.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and work hard in lessons.
- The curriculum in Year 9 is unsatisfactory; inadequate accommodation means insufficient computers can be deployed and some pupils have fewer lessons than others.
- There is insufficient use of National Curriculum attainment levels in teaching to inform pupils of their progress in the subject.
- Through extensive training, teachers are now well prepared to use ICT when it is available to them.
- There is no monitoring of ICT provision for pupils who do not take a GCSE course in Years 10 and 11; as a result, the school cannot be sure it is meeting statutory requirements.
- The curriculum on the school web site, although in an early stage of development, allows pupils to work on the ICT curriculum at both school and at home.

### Commentary

89. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. A new vocational GCSE course has been introduced. Half the pupils in Years 10 and 11 have selected this course. In Years 7 and 8 pupils now have one ICT lesson each week.
90. GCSE results in 2003 were average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A\*-C grade was average, although only a small group of pupils took the examination. Results in 2004 are poorer than in the previous year. However over fifty pupils were entered for the dual award examination, which was a new applied GCSE course. These results were well below expected levels and this has caused some debate with the examination board and with the principal tutors, based at a local college. Current standards of work are now average and the course is taught by school staff.
91. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are average; pupils achieve well overall. However, though the National Curriculum strategy is being followed, the present timetable arrangement for ICT in Year 9 is unsatisfactory. Three fifths of the pupils get below the usual time for the subject compared with most schools. The remaining two fifths of the pupils get insufficient time to be able to complete work to the same depth as their peers; topics are skimmed and independent work is not as strong. The reason for these deficiencies lies in school curriculum issues which are difficult to resolve because of insufficient access to computers, largely due to inadequate accommodation. Pupils enter the school with a range of experiences in the use of computers; the majority have satisfactory skills for their age in word processing, some pupils have experience of creating slide shows. By Year 9 they can use different types of computer software. Pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of more technical software to create spreadsheets and web pages. They also increase their competence in word processing and produce posters using desktop publishing software. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are average and pupils achieve well on the GCSE course, as they make use of higher level skills available within software. Presentation of their work is

more sophisticated, and they use more advanced features of spreadsheets and databases as they complete projects for GCSE. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, similar to all other pupils. The most able pupils make good progress because teachers set harder work for them in lessons.

92. Teaching and learning are good and assessment is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a good understanding of their subject and give good explanations, which help pupils learn new skills. In a very good Year 7 lesson pupils were well challenged and used new techniques to create flow charts. Although planning is generally good, and three part lessons (developed as part of the national Key Stage 3 strategy) are well structured, sometimes planning does not always take into account pupils' capabilities and previous experiences. For example, in a poor Year 7 lesson the tasks set did not make use of pupils' knowledge about logos, or their limited experience of desktop publishing. However, in a good GCSE lesson pupils were given clear guidance on what they needed to do to gain high marks in their project work. Too little use is made of National Curriculum levels in teaching and pupils are not always aware of how well they are doing or how they could improve their work to reach higher levels.
93. Leadership and management are satisfactory. New courses have been introduced, and there is good day to day management of the department. However, monitoring of teaching is restricted to performance management requirements only.

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

94. There has been some improvement in the use of computers in subjects other than ICT since the last inspection. There has been extensive staff training in the use of ICT, firstly under the New Opportunities Fund training when all staff completed the course. Since then, there has been good ongoing in-house training in the use of interactive whiteboards and computer slide show presentations. Teachers are now much more confident in the use of ICT technology in their teaching. The nine interactive whiteboards are well used by English, mathematics, science, geography, history, ICT, and modern language departments.
95. Half of the pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not take a GCSE ICT course, and their experience of ICT is through other subjects. However there is no tracking of this provision and it is unclear if pupils receive their full entitlement of ICT. Pupils' use of computers in subjects, apart from ICT, is most likely unsatisfactory; there was little evidence on which to make judgements within the few days of the inspection. In Years 10 and 11 pupils make use of word processing to present their coursework in some subjects, and there is good use of spreadsheets to work out complex mathematical problems. Pupils' access to computers is limited. Some departments have a few computers and many have no space to put more. The two ICT rooms are in high demand by the ICT department and no other rooms can be made available for general ICT use. Pupils learn new skills with different types of software, but the unsatisfactory access to computers means they are unable to apply these skills often enough in other subjects. The school has introduced an online curriculum available through the school web site and most departments have made a contribution to this. This is a good development and as it is further improved it should increase pupils' opportunities to use ICT in all subjects at both school and home and relieve some of the strain on the school's resources. It does, of course, require pupils to have computers at home.

#### **HUMANITIES**

## Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do much better than expected in GCSE examinations because of very good teaching and well planned programmes of revision.
- Pupils achieve very well from Year 7 to Year 11 as a result of very good teaching.
- Pupils are clear as to how well they are doing because they are assessed regularly.
- The quality of lessons is maintained and improved through frequent monitoring of teaching and the sharing of good practice.
- Data could be better used to analyse the examination performance of pupils.

### Commentary

96. Improvement since the last inspection is very good because pupils are making faster progress as a result of better teaching. A thorough system of assessment has been developed and pupils use computers more frequently.
97. GCSE results in 2004 were well above average. In 2004, pupils did much better than expected and boys did much better than boys nationally. Too few girls took geography to make national comparisons.
98. From work seen and lessons observed, standards are average in Years 7 to 9. This represents an improvement as attainment in geography on entry to the school is below expectation. Pupils achieve very well. A significant improvement in skills is apparent early on in Year 7, although written work does not improve significantly until Years 8 and 9. Pupils are confident with mapwork skills and are aware of, for example, issues related to the recycling of household waste and reasons why people travel to different holiday destinations. Standards are above average in Years 10 and 11 and pupils continue to achieve very well. Pupils can use a wide range of skills and can write with clarity and accuracy to explain geographical patterns and processes. In Year 10 pupils have a good understanding of the issues related to global warming, and in Year 11 they are well aware of the impact of coastal erosion on the lives of different groups of people along parts of the Yorkshire coast.
99. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and lessons are very well planned. Objectives are set but sometimes they need to be presented in more detail so that pupils are clearer as to what they have to learn. Lessons are varied and generate much interest and enthusiasm for the subject. Previous learning is usually reinforced at the beginning of the lesson so that the next step has a firm foundation. Activities are very well matched to the needs of pupils but sometimes not enough time is planned for pupils to express their views and ideas before they move on to the next stage. Pupils are often rewarded for their achievements. Progress is aided by the very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils. Teachers use electronic and video presentation very effectively but do not use computers with their classes as much as they would like to as access to them is inadequate. There are plans to improve opportunities pupils have to use computers. Teachers assess pupils' progress frequently and pupils are very clear as to how well they are doing.

100. Leadership is very good. The head of department has created a very effective team that is always looking to improve the quality of learning for their pupils through the introduction of new teaching ideas. Management is good. Lessons are monitored regularly and good practice is shared. A thorough system of assessment enables teachers to track the progress of pupils accurately. Standards have been maintained in spite of an increase in the number of pupils who choose to study the subject. Data could be used more effectively to analyse the performance of pupils in GCSE examinations and a scheme of work is required in Years 10 and 11 which incorporates pupil activities and the learning that is expected from them.

## History

Provision in history is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching leads to very good learning and achievement by pupils.
- Very good leadership and management have proven successful in improving teaching and learning.
- Very good curriculum provision meets the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Relationships are very good and attitudes to the subject are very positive.
- There is insufficient access to ICT to allow the department to deliver all its planned activities.

## Commentary

101. Improvement since the last inspection is good. At that time, the department received a very favourable report. Since then, the quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 has improved; examination results have improved and the subject has increased enormously in popularity in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive: relationships and behaviour in lessons are both very good.

102. In 2004, GCSE results were a little above average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A\*-C grade was just above average, as was the proportion attaining an A\*-G grade. Most pupils performed better in history than in their other subjects. Boys' results were better than those of girls because a small minority of lower ability girls with relatively poor school attendance under-achieved. In 2003, the number of pupils taking GCSE was smaller; results were higher. The overall trend in recent years has been one of improvement.

103. Standards in Year 9 are average. Standards Years 7 and 8 are, however, above average. Pupils' achievement is very good. On entry, pupils in the current Year 9 were generally of average ability but their historical knowledge, understanding and skills were very limited. By Year 9 they have reached national standards. Most pupils understand and can explain the main changes which took place in the industrial and agricultural revolutions and most can explain the links between causes and effects. Most can use historical sources effectively and are beginning to evaluate them. Many pupils of average and below average ability are hindered by weaknesses in literacy which the department works hard to overcome; the standard of structured writing is therefore better than might be expected.

104. Overall standards in Years 10 and 11 are average but range from well above average to below average; pupils' achievement is very good. The number of pupils taking history in Years 10 and 11 is dramatically larger than in previous years and includes a

high proportion of pupils of below average ability; most pupils now take history as an option, which is unusual nationally because lower attaining pupils tend to drop the subject. However, by Year 11, pupils, overall, reach national standards in their knowledge, understanding and written work. Their use and interpretation of historical sources are above average, though their skills of evaluating sources for reliability and utility are average. There is no consistent difference in achievement between boys and girls. The most able pupils produce some very high level work; equally, achievement for those pupils of lower ability on the entry level course is very good.

105. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. Lessons are very well planned with clear objectives, which pupils understand. Teachers present the subject in a lively and imaginative way so as to interest and motivate pupils. A very good Year 10 lesson on the importance of Galen's work in medicine used role play and vivid visual images. Teachers have high expectations; they challenge pupils to think for themselves: in a Year 8 lesson on Charles I, pupils classified sources on a Venn diagram showing power, money and religion as causes of the Civil War. In Years 10 and 11, the skills essential for success in examinations are taught very systematically. A wide variety of teaching styles is used to meet pupils' different needs and their preferred learning styles and to promote their wider personal development. For example, in a very good Year 7 lesson on health and hygiene in medieval towns, pupils worked both independently and in groups, using their observation and recording skills and identifying for themselves a whole range of questions to ask about the picture sources they were using. In a very good Year 10 lesson on the American West, tasks and materials were very well matched to the needs of pupils of below average ability, though occasionally there is scope for more variation of tasks and materials for pupils of different abilities. Pupils work hard and concentrate well. Their work is assessed regularly and thoroughly and good feedback given. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of their performance and how to improve. Sometimes they are not quite so clear about their longer term targets.
106. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The head of faculty has proved innovative and knowledgeable in developing the history curriculum and in improving teaching and learning. There is clear evidence that this is helping to raise standards. She leads a very effective team of teachers. There are secure systems for monitoring performance and for taking effective action where needed.
107. The history curriculum is a real strength. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum has been re-modelled to make the National Curriculum more stimulating and more accessible for pupils. The range and choices in learning styles given to pupils are very effective in motivating them. In Years 10 and 11 the department has developed a very good foundation level course to meet the needs of those pupils for whom a full GCSE course is not appropriate. The department also makes an important contribution to citizenship. Book resources are satisfactory but insufficient access to ICT prevents the department from fully implementing its planned programme to use computers to enhance teaching and learning.

## **Religious education**

Provision for religious education is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils make good progress from a low starting point in Year 7.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Girls make better progress than boys, whose attainment across time is affected by their weaker literacy skills and their lack of examination techniques.

- Religious education effectively contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

### **Commentary**

108. Improvement since the last inspection is good overall, and particularly in the burgeoning of numbers of pupils studying the subject in Year 10 and in the use of assessment methods to track and improve pupils' progress.
109. Pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9. However, there is a marked gender discrepancy with girls attaining slightly better than girls nationally, but boys attaining lower than boys nationally. Boys' achievement is affected by their weaker levels of literacy. Nevertheless, standards are average and higher than those that might be expected from such pupils based on their knowledge and understanding of religious education when they start in Year 7. A very small group of pupils in Year 11 study for a full GCSE course. Their examination results and the standard of their work in class are above national levels.
110. Whilst still complying with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, all pupils begin a two year study of the GCSE short course in Year 9. Results in 2004 for pupils in Year 10, where pupils complete their study, were in line with national averages. Standards in class work are above average and pupils achieve well. However, here too, there is a wide difference between the results and standards attained by girls and boys. Reasons for this are boys' relatively weaker literacy skills in religious education and their less effective retention of work needed for examinations. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, despite the lack of in class support. They do this because teachers know them well and give them additional support. In Year 11, the few examination pupils make good progress because of their diligence and the selfless additional teaching in 'twilight' classes by their teachers. In non-examined work seen, pupils make good progress because of stimulating and exciting teaching. The time allocated to the subject is short and additional time, as a block, is being added for the current Year 11 to meet statutory requirements.
111. Teaching and learning are good overall across all years. The department is well staffed with specialist teachers and they have a good knowledge of the subject. Their commitment to religious education is strongly conveyed to pupils. Lessons are planned well. With the exception of a small but significant minority, usually amongst low attainers, the response of most pupils is good. Religious education contributes effectively to the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by effectively providing pupils with knowledge and insight into concepts of right and wrong and asking them to apply those concepts to the range of fundamental issues which confront them in real life.
112. Accommodation is only satisfactory overall. One of the two rooms allocated to the subject has supporting structures which restrict vision and movement. This impedes both teaching and learning. There are few artefacts but some good videos that augment the paper-based resources of the department. These effectively aid learning. Textbooks for pupils in Years 7 to 9 seriously need updating. The use of computers has recently got better but access is still limited.
113. Leadership and management are good overall. The head of department has produced good planning documents which support all aspects of the department's provision. She is committed to raising both pupils' image of the subject and their standards of work. She has initiated a review of schemes of work for the subject and is implementing more uniform and comprehensive assessment procedures which are now good.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Aspects of the National Curriculum are not taught in Years 7 to 9 and this limits options for GCSE and hinders work in courses which are offered.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall and some aspects of leadership are poor; pupils' achievement is consequently adversely affected.
- Very good teaching in textiles results in pupils achieving well.
- Pupils acquire a good range of practical skills in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils have a good attitude and behave well because they are well managed by teachers.

#### Commentary

114. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Some issues highlighted in the previous report remain unresolved and overall standards slipped in 2004.
115. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 were carried out for the first time though they have been required for many years. Problems occurred when these were correlated and the results are unreliable. The school has agreed that a realistic assessment would show that, overall, pupils attained below average, which is consistent with the work seen on inspection.
116. Examination results in 2004 were broadly average overall but the proportion of pupils attaining A\*-C grades was below average, lower than in 2003, and not high enough. Pupils achieved well in textiles and as expected in food. They did not achieve as well as they should in resistant materials, in part due to staffing changes. Results in graphic products were particularly low because coursework did not meet examination board specifications. Pupils overall achieved significantly less well in this subject than in other subjects with boys achieving poorly. In 2004 a higher proportion of pupils than is seen nationally chose this subject.
117. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average and pupils of all abilities do not achieve as well as they should. They do not acquire a good knowledge of the design process because this is not taught consistently between the material areas. Pupils acquire a good range of practical skills but designing skills are weak and some presentation skills poor. A significant amount of the National Curriculum is not taught and this adversely affects overall achievement. This is only partly due to a lack of resources. Pupils can work with a range of tools and materials but they have limited opportunities to work on computers in resistant materials and graphics. Pupils display literacy and numeric skills which are sufficient for the needs of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons by teachers and support assistants and achieve similarly to other pupils.



118. A carousel system, whereby pupils move between material areas such as food and resistant materials with months in between, was criticised at the previous inspection. This system continues and significantly contributes to a lack of continuity in pupils' learning. The use of part time staff, creates difficulties when timetabling and not all pupils receive the same curriculum.
119. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are below average overall. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall but shows variation between the material areas and between teachers. Standards and achievement are highest in textiles where the best teaching was observed. Standards in food are as expected with pupils achieving appropriately. Standards are adversely affected by poor resources for ICT work including computer assisted designing and manufacturing in graphics and resistant materials, where standards are lower and achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards and achievement are also adversely affected by unsatisfactory accommodation except in textiles, where accommodation is satisfactory. Rooms are mostly old, cramped, short of storage space and in need of refurbishment. There is no dedicated clean room for graphics. Courses in systems and control and electronics cannot be offered because the foundations for these are not taught in Years 7 to 9. Pupils in Year 10 resistant materials were seen having to catch up work normally completed in earlier years.
120. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. A small amount of both unsatisfactory and excellent teaching was observed. Teachers engage and manage pupils well and generally make lessons interesting so that pupils have good attitudes and behave well. Relationships are good and pupils are willing to participate in extra-curricular provision. A strength of teaching is the very good demonstrations which enable pupils to learn practical skills. Teachers set meaningful homework that aids progress. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and developing; pupils have targets for improvement. The shortcomings which lead to pupils not achieving as well as they should are the elements of the curriculum which are not taught, and a lack of consistency in the teaching of the design process in Years 7 to 9. These issues are linked to poor leadership, a lack of resources or accommodation problems.
121. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall with some poor aspects to leadership. A breakdown in relationships has led to low morale. The department does not work as a team with a shared vision for the subject and lacks a sense of direction and a consistent approach to how the subject should be taught. Teachers work in isolation, doing the best they can in their individual material areas without the necessary support to move forward. A departmental development plan which addresses important issues exists, but not as a result of a consultation process. Some significant health and safety issues have been identified to the department, including failure to carry out risk assessments.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

*Art and design and music were inspected in detail. Drama was sampled.*

122. In **drama**, teaching ranged between satisfactory and good and standards were broadly average. Drama is a feature of English provision in this school and makes a significant contribution to the curriculum. Pupils are able to transfer the skills they have learned into other subject areas. Teaching and learning emphasise decision-making skills, and provide opportunities for pupils to think for themselves. Pupils enjoy the subject and the chance to take responsibility within collaborative work. A wide range of extra-curricular activities using drama contribute to the positive ethos in the school. Pupils

and parents praised the large annual performances which very many attend and which involve many pupils and staff.

### **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE results are above average and reflect an improving trend.
- Teaching is good overall with some very good practice.
- Pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' personal qualities are developed well.
- Very good assessment procedures are beginning to give a more accurate picture of pupils' attainment.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to enrich their experience of art and design outside the school environment.

## Commentary

123. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Very good leadership has enabled the subject to maintain and build on previous above average standards, increased the popularity of art and design as an examination subject, and heightened its visual impact around the school.
124. Teacher assessments for Year 9 pupils in 2004 were below average. Inspection evidence indicates higher standards than this. Teachers have revised assessment procedures considerably and these are now providing accurate information about pupils' progress and attainment. The department uses this information to make appropriate changes to the curriculum and teaching methods. Self-assessment and peer assessment techniques have been effective in involving pupils in the development of their own learning.
125. GCSE results in 2004 were above average and reflect an upward trend. Almost three-quarters of pupils gained A\*-C grades and comparative figures show that pupils' achievement is higher in art and design than in many other school subjects. Below average results for 2003 still represented satisfactory achievement for that group of pupils. Whilst girls perform better than boys, the gap is not as wide as that seen nationally.
126. Pupils' sketchbooks provide evidence of good progress throughout Years 7 to 9 and standards are above average. Because the course is well structured and provides a sound introduction to the basic language of artistic skills and processes, pupils are able to build on their average attainment on entry. Consequently achievement is good. Higher attaining pupils use line, tone, colour and the techniques of mark making and speed sketching with imagination and care. Pupils with a particular talent for art and design have good opportunities to extend their work and evidence of this can be seen in the high quality of display around the school. Because pupils with special needs are supported well they make good progress and achieve well. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the work of well-known artists and higher attaining pupils are able to write good personal responses to works of art. Lower literacy levels hinder this type of work for many pupils.
127. Standards for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are above average. Higher attaining pupils have sketchbooks that reflect a high level of commitment to individual research and development work. ICT is used effectively, but not extensively, to scan images and search for Internet references for project work. Pupils have a good understanding of how themes can be developed from observational drawings through to two- and three-dimensional outcomes by using a range of appropriate techniques such as printmaking, sgraffito, collage and various methods of achieving three-dimensional effects. Lower attaining pupils benefit from the practical nature of the work and respond well to all aspects of the course despite difficulties with annotating their work and explaining the rationale behind it. Achievement for all pupils continues to be good.
128. Teaching is good with some very good practice. Teachers' planning includes opportunities for developing personal skills as well as artistic ones. For example, in one well-taught Year 8 lesson, the skills of research, enquiry, co-operation, and decision making were explicitly linked to an understanding of the individual's citizenship responsibilities. Structured lessons, varied teaching techniques and good relationships combine to create a worthwhile learning experience. Pupils with special educational

needs are given good support and there is good liaison between teachers and support assistants. Considerable development of teaching techniques and assessment procedures has improved pupils' ability to work independently but this remains a difficulty for some lower attaining pupils who rely heavily on direction from the teacher. Teaching benefits from good quality technician support but time allowed for this is inadequate.

129. Very good leadership has provided a clear path for development of the subject and, through very good management, has successfully incorporated new developments into teaching methods and curriculum content. Good use is made of available resources. Support for pupils' work outside the classroom is good but, at present, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to experience the wider cultural significance of art and design through gallery visits.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good leadership and good teaching have made significant improvements in provision and standards since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' achievement is good by Year 9 and GCSE results are improving.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop music skills through computer programs.

## **Commentary**

130. The previous inspection report recorded a number of significant weaknesses including low standards. Since then, better leadership and organisation, the development of good teaching and more opportunities for pupils have improved provision. Improvement is good overall and there is capacity for further improvement because of the very recent appointment of a new curriculum leader.

131. Pupils' standards on entry are below average. By Year 9 standards are approaching average, particularly in practical skills of performing and composing and the understanding of key and technical words. Pupils are less confident in their command of musical theory and contexts. Standards in Years 10 and 11 vary widely from below average to well above average, often reflecting pupils' capability and experience in musical performance, but also their level of enthusiasm and motivation. Overall standards are average and achievement is satisfactory.

132. Recent GCSE results, often from small numbers of entries, have also varied, but there has been a gradual improvement over time. The results in 2004 were the best ever and included a greater proportion of higher grades achieved mainly by girls; there were too few results for further analysis. Music is proving a more popular choice and current numbers in Years 10 and 11 are much higher than before. In all years, pupils with special educational need progress as well as others and talented pupils are encouraged to take greater responsibility in activities.

133. Teaching and learning are good overall, although slightly more effective in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. The new curriculum leader teaches all classes and is in the process of exploring different approaches in activities and learning styles. Most of the work is challenging and pupils are responding positively and enthusiastically and are

developing good collaborative and problem solving skills. The emphasis on self and peer evaluation and appraisal, using National Curriculum levels and criteria, means that pupils understand and benefit from the new and effective assessment system. Year 10 and 11 is slightly more problematic because the large numbers of pupils, their modest amount of lesson time, and the wide range of their individual needs make excessive demands on relatively inexperienced teaching. In all years, pupils' activities and to a certain extent their achievement are restricted by cramped and inflexible accommodation and the lack of resources, particularly computer based music programs.

134. Good leadership is demonstrated by the improvements already made. Management is satisfactory. At this early stage the outcomes of a number of changes, for example, the reorganisation of activities such as bands and choirs, are not yet clear. There is also insufficient short and mid term strategic planning to help the subject develop and particularly to minimise the restrictions placed on it by only one specialist teacher, and limited accommodation and resources.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good specialist teaching ensures good learning overall.
- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning and their very good behaviour ensure good progress in lessons.
- All pupils achieve well in Years 7 to 9.
- Indoor accommodation is unsatisfactory. It is too small, and a barrier to learning for older, larger, pupils.
- Timetabling pupils from Year 9 with GCSE pupils in Year 10 is unsatisfactory, and inhibits learning.

### **Commentary**

135. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Strengths in the quality of teaching have been maintained, but the previously identified issue of the deployment of non-specialist staff remains unresolved. Unsatisfactory internal accommodation still effects overall achievement. Inadequate school funding is the principal reason for these unresolved problems.
136. Standards at GCSE in 2004 were below average at grades A\*-C, but average by all other measures. Girls did better than boys. The overall examination standard reached by pupils in this subject was the same as they reached in the other subjects they took.
137. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with standards below the national expectation. By the end of Year 9, reliable teacher assessments indicate that standards are average, and all pupils achieve well. Standards in the physical education entitlement all pupils receive in Years 10 and 11 remain average and pupils' achievement, whilst satisfactory, is restricted by unsatisfactory accommodation and the limited number of specialist staff. Very limited and unsuitable indoor space restricts the curriculum offer made to pupils, and is particularly inhibiting in Years 10 and 11. In addition, though staffing meets the demands of the curriculum, it only just does so, given the significant number of non-specialist staff teaching, albeit enthusiastically, in Years 10 and 11.

Pupils are achieving well in work at GCSE level. A very good range of extra curricular activities, including fixtures with other schools, provides many opportunities for pupils of all abilities and interests to take part in activities to extend their engagement in healthy sporting activities, at levels suited to their individual needs. Many pupils take advantage of these activities and, overall, pupils achieve well in physical education and sport.

138. Teaching and learning are good overall. Three very good lessons were seen. Specialist teachers have good knowledge of the subject, and effectively use a wide range of teaching methodologies which enable pupils to learn well. In the best lessons there is a good balance of activities and teachers have high expectations. They give clear and precise explanations and demonstrations, and pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn. The best teaching encourages pupils to work both independently and co-operatively and pupils work very well together. In a very good Year 9 soccer lesson, clear, precise and expert coaching by the teacher led to boys playing a fast paced game, passing and receiving the ball with accuracy. A large Year 10 GCSE group gained a very good understanding of the effects of strenuous physical activity on the heart and lungs, because their teachers relentlessly drew attention to changing physiological attributes during very committed participation in exercise. A very large, inexperienced and disparate group of Year 9 girls made significant physical commitment in a very good step aerobics lesson, because they were inspired by the teacher's enthusiasm and expertise.
139. Pupils with special educational needs are unobtrusively included in lesson activities and work is fully matched to their different needs. Higher attaining pupils are given sufficiently challenging activities. In lessons seen, pupils were able to modify their ideas and their performances in response to changing circumstances. They know how and why to warm up before strenuous activity. They are confident to express their views when asked.
140. Pupils respond with commitment to demanding teaching. They arrive at lessons promptly, are well turned out, and have very positive attitudes to the subject. They pay close attention to teachers' guidance, and work with energy and enthusiasm. Relationships and behaviour are very good, and this contributes strongly to good overall progress in lessons.
141. Leadership and management are good. The school gained specialist Sports College status in July 2004 and is now in a position to appoint a director. The specialist teachers form a well-balanced and experienced team, but there is some uncertainty caused by temporary promotions. Their enthusiasm and their skills are complementary and they support each other well, ensuring equal opportunity for almost all pupils. However, teachers were unable to resolve a necessary but unsatisfactory timetable which placed Year 9 pupils and GCSE Year 10 pupils together with the same teachers at the same time (this arrangement was needed this year to facilitate vocational provision elsewhere). Teachers clearly place high value on personal standards of behaviour, fair play, and commitment. This underpins pupils' spiritual, social and moral development. Schemes of work are up to date and detailed, and assessments of pupils' progress are made module by module. The information derived from assessments is now being used effectively to inform curriculum development and the planning of teaching. The developing curriculum, utilising off-site facilities, is a significant factor in maintaining the interest and motivation of older pupils.

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

*The focus of the inspection was on citizenship.*

## Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because of very good leadership and management citizenship has quickly gained a strong focus and status within the curriculum.
- Very good provision for pupils in Years 7 to 9 promotes their good achievement and contributes to their very good personal development.
- Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to practise active citizenship in school, community, local and national initiatives.

### Commentary

142. The previous report recorded that the well-developed personal health and social education programme contributed to pupils' citizenship development. Since then the scheme has been extensively and skilfully revised to incorporate national requirements for citizenship and includes careers education for pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11. The school's decision to establish citizenship within a dedicated curriculum department with powerful cross-curricular influence and input means that citizenship is now strongly established and contributes effectively to pupils' very good personal development. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 experience very good citizenship provision through explicit modules in both dedicated lessons and through other curriculum subjects. In Years 10 and 11, citizenship is delivered satisfactorily through modules in dedicated lessons only, but time is more limited because of the demands made on the weekly lesson by careers education. Overall improvement since the previous inspection is good.
143. At the time of the inspection the scheme was in its fourth term. Standards of attainment of pupils in Years 7 to 9 in lessons and written work are already approaching average. Their achievement is good, particularly as they enter the school with no prior learning in citizenship and are at an early stage in what will eventually be a three year course. Standards are about average in Years 10 and 11 but pupils have not had the cumulative benefit of the first three years of the course. Achievement is satisfactory but pupils' attitudes, motivation and productivity are not as good as those in Years 7 to 9.
144. Teaching and learning are good overall but better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. This is because the dedicated team teaching younger pupils has had the benefit of specialist citizenship training and specialist teachers provide modules from other subjects. Pupils' learning in Years 10 and 11 sometimes lags behind their teaching, because they lack accumulated citizenship skills. Learning is enhanced through the use of a wide range of visiting speakers, workshops, and visits and experiences such as elections to school and local youth councils. In addition pupils have interesting opportunities to practise active citizenship through the many initiatives which link the school to its local and wider community. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have an effective and meaningful assessment system, which the school has devised using National Curriculum levels and criteria and through which both pupils and teachers can track individual progress.
145. Leadership and management are both very good. High aspirations to make citizenship a positive experience for every pupil through its status and focus within the school are being realised successfully and quickly through very good schemes of work, staff training, good teaching, strategic planning, monitoring, evaluation and internal and external review. The effectiveness of the school's leadership in citizenship is recognised in the guidance which it provides to other developing school citizenship initiatives in the area.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
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>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' 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 pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).*