

INSPECTION REPORT

THE GILES SCHOOL

Old Leake

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120719

Headteacher: Chris Walls

Reporting inspector: John Dixon
13155

Dates of inspection: 26th – 30th November 2001

Inspection number: 199342

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary modern
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs F J Grant
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd February 1998

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7948	Elizabeth Collins	Team inspector	Religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
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12941	Jenny Coleman	Team inspector	Physical education	
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20490	Paul Wilson	Team inspector	Performing arts	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Giles School is a secondary modern school with 840 pupils on roll serving a predominantly rural area with some social deprivation, although it draws a significant proportion of its pupils from nearby towns. There is a sixth-form unit providing vocational courses for 80 students. The school is very popular with parents. The number of pupils on roll has grown very significantly in recent years. In most year groups there are significantly more boys than girls. 230 of its pupils – over a quarter of the school population – are on the special needs register, which is above average for the country as a whole, and 17 pupils have statements of special educational need. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below average. Attainment on entry is below average but is rising steadily as the school grows in popularity.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Giles is a very effective school which is over-subscribed. It has strong leadership and committed staff who provide very good teaching and a wide range of learning opportunities. Pupils and students achieve high standards in relation to their prior attainment, well above average for this type of school. The curriculum is well designed to suit the needs and aspirations of all pupils. The school provides good value for money. Post-16 provision is cost-effective.

What the school does well

- Teaching is very good throughout the school and in the sixth form.
- Pupils' attitudes, relationships and behaviour are very good.
- Pupils make good progress; attainment in most subjects is higher than in similar schools.
- The school is well led and effectively managed by the headteacher, senior staff and governors.
- The curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of pupils and sixth form students.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.

What could be improved

- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has addressed all the issues raised at the time of the last inspection, but there is still progress to be made in some areas.

The school now makes use of information about pupils' progress and past attainment to set targets for the future. This has had a beneficial effect on the school's performance.

In order to promote the use of computers by all pupils, the school has developed its computer stock and there is now a favourable ratio of computers to pupils. Additionally, all pupils now have one lesson of ICT (information and communication technology) per week. However, the use of ICT in subject lessons is still unsatisfactory.

The range and breadth of the curriculum for older pupils has been increased considerably and provision is now good. There is an attractive range of vocational courses and courses to ensure that all pupils develop basic skills for living.

More work needs to be done on homework, although homework is now regularly set.

The school has re-modelled and developed the learning resources area since the last inspection in an attempt to develop pupils' independent learning. In some subjects, good opportunities are provided for

pupils to learn independently, but there is still a way to go and the school continues to address the issue.

Attendance remains a school priority. A range of measures has been put in place to improve attendance, and some progress has been made.

The school's assembly rota now meets the statutory requirement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13 based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	B
A-levels/AS-levels	A*	A*	A*	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Pupils of all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in the main school and in the sixth form. Pupils' attainment in the national tests at age 14 is rising steadily. In 2001 attainment in English, mathematics and science was well below the national average but above average for similar schools in mathematics and science. In the work seen during the inspection, attainment in most subjects at age 14 was approaching the national average.

The school's performance in GCSE examinations had been improving slowly, but showed a marked improvement in 2001, when the proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades A* to C, although below the national average, was well above the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A* to G was very high compared with similar schools. Attainment in some subject areas – art and design, science and French – in 2001 was above the national average, and in a number of other subjects attainment was close to the national average. In most subjects results were above or well above those for similar schools. Only in English literature, drama and religious studies was attainment below that of pupils in similar schools. The school has set itself similar targets for its performance in the current academic year. Pupils' work seen in most subjects during the inspection showed that pupils of all levels of prior attainment are continuing the good progress they made lower down the school. Attainment is overall approaching the national average and in many cases above it. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls – indeed, boys' attainment is closer to that of girls than is the case nationally.

A range of vocational courses is offered in the sixth form and attainment is well above the national average and very high compared with other schools with sixth forms in the county. All students following the GNVQ advanced course in business studies achieved a distinction and the A-level and GNVQ results in art and design were well above the national average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school and to their work are a strength. Their hard work and mature approach are major factors in the standards which they achieve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and about the school is good, with very few exceptions.
Personal development and	Relationships in the school are very good, and promote good learning.

relationships	There are good opportunities for pupils to develop as people and to plan their future, to take responsibility and to join in with others.
Attendance	Attendance is broadly in line with similar schools locally, although it is well below the national average. The current trend, however, is upwards, in response to the efforts which the school is making.

Pupils come to school well turned-out and well equipped, and develop positive and remarkably mature attitudes towards their learning. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good and make a real contribution to the atmosphere for success which the school sets out to achieve. Pupils are well behaved in lessons – with the exception of a small minority in Year 8 - and move about the school in a responsible manner.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching in English, mathematics and science is good. Good and very good teaching was observed in most subject areas, and in history and design and technology there was some outstanding teaching. Expectations are high, and teachers plan their work well, using a range of teaching styles, ensuring that the work is firmly based in practical situations. In most subjects, teachers' own enthusiasm for their subject is a feature which has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Almost three-quarters of the lessons seen during the inspection were good or very good, and very few unsatisfactory lessons were observed.

Pupils who have learning difficulties are well supported by well-matched work and classroom assistants and make good progress. Very good teaching ensures that pupils of all levels of attainment learn well and sustain their good progress throughout the school. The school is beginning to make good provision for developing pupils' basic skills of literacy in all subjects of the curriculum, but numeracy skills are not as well catered for outside mathematics lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school's curriculum is good and contributes well to the success which the pupils achieve: a wide range of learning experiences is provided for pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11. There is a lack of opportunity in many subjects for pupils to use computers to support and reinforce their learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are no barriers to their learning and they are well supported to make the most of their learning opportunities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual and cultural development, is satisfactory. Provision for moral and social development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good procedures are in place to track pupils' academic and personal development. Heads of year continuously gather information on progress and behaviour and take prompt action where appropriate. Child protection procedures are in place.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to their needs, especially in Years 10 and 11, where all pupils choose from a range of optional subjects leading to vocational qualifications. All pupils receive

formal teaching in the use of computers and other electronic technology, but there is a lack of opportunity to exploit these skills in subjects across the curriculum. The religious education curriculum is not allocated enough time in Years 10 and 11 to complete satisfactorily the locally agreed syllabus. Good opportunities are offered for pupils to extend their learning outside the normal school day.

Pupils receive good guidance about careers. The school works well in partnership with parents to ensure that all pupils make progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is very strong. He is ably supported by a committed senior team and this commitment to succeed permeates to all levels of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and fulfil their responsibilities well, particularly calling the school to account for the standards it achieves.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The declared aim of the school is to become completely self-evaluating, and it is beginning to make good use of data to assess its own performance. Monitoring of teaching is good.
The strategic use of resources	The school manages its resources well. All resource decisions are geared to providing better learning opportunities for pupils and to raising standards.

A major factor in the success of the school has been the determination of the headteacher, senior staff and governors to raise standards and aspirations. There is a dynamism and drive to move forward present at all levels of the school.

The school has adequate qualified staff, although the increase in pupil numbers has resulted in higher class sizes in the lower school. Accommodation is spacious and generally makes a good contribution to the quality of pupils' education. The school is satisfactorily resourced.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils enjoy coming to school • Pupils make good progress throughout • Teaching in the school is good • The school has high expectations of its pupils • The school responds well to parents' questions or problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents felt that pupils do not have enough homework • Some parents felt that behaviour could be better • Some parents felt that the school could work more closely with them

Inspectors found that parents' positive views were generally borne out by what they found. The adverse views (expressed by a small minority) were not considered generally to be the case. Appropriate amounts of homework are set in most subjects. Unsatisfactory behaviour was seen in a very small minority of lessons and not at all about the school. The school's efforts to involve parents in their children's learning and in the life of the school were considered to be good.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

Sixth-form provision at The Giles School is in collaboration with and funded by a Lincoln comprehensive school. Numbers are growing: there are currently 58 students in Year 12 and 21 in Years 13 and 14. Most of its students have come up through the main school, although there are examples of students who have transferred from local grammar schools or from the local further education provision. The range of vocational courses on offer is geared specifically to the needs and aspirations of the student body. There is a concentration on vocationally-oriented courses, although some students also take A-level examinations in art and design.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

Sixth-form provision is very effective and geared specifically to the needs of its students in terms of the range and quality of courses on offer. Teaching is very good and promotes high-quality learning. Standards of achievement are above average, and all students make good progress through the sixth form relative to their attainment at age 16. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good.

Strengths

- Teaching is very good
- Students' attitudes to their work and determination to succeed are very good
- The sixth-form curriculum is well suited to students' needs and aspirations
- Results are very good

What could be improved

- The range of experiences provided in art and design and in performing arts courses would benefit from being broader

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Art and design	Provision for art and design is good overall , although there could be a greater breadth in the range of media used. Teaching is good and the subject is well managed.
Business studies	Provision is very good. Results are above average; they are better than would be expected from students' GCSE results. Course work is very good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and teaching is good with very good features.
Performing arts	Provision is good , and students are beginning to make good progress. The Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education course in performing arts was introduced into the school's sixth-form curriculum at the beginning of this academic year.
Science	The provision which the school makes for science is a developing strength and standards of attainment are satisfactory to good. Students make good progress in response to consistently good teaching and their attitudes to learning are very good. The new courses are well managed.
Sport and recreation	Provision for the BTEC National sports science course is good. Teaching is consistently good and students achieve good standards of

	performance across the board.
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Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching in the sixth form is very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection and most teaching was good or very good. Students have a mature approach to their learning and reflect in their enthusiasm and high levels of attainment the expertise and commitment of their teachers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	The support and guidance provided for students in the sixth form is at least satisfactory and often good. Great care is taken to ensure that students follow the courses which are best suited to them and that they are entered for examinations at the right levels relative to their attainment.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. Students' views reflect the need to ensure the provision of more constant help and guidance.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of subjects on offer suits the talents and aspirations of the students. Students are well taught and challenged by their teachers. Students are given good opportunities for independent study. Students' work is well marked and assessed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The printed information which students receive about sixth-form work. The advice which students receive. How well students are kept informed about their progress. How well students are advised about their future options.

The quality of work seen in the sixth form during the inspection leads to the judgement that leadership and management are good, but that the increasing burden on the sixth-form tutor needs to be addressed. Inspectors' interviews with staff and students during the inspection did not bear out the minority view in the students' questionnaires that the help and advice they receive is unsatisfactory, but there was evidence to suggest that they could receive more detailed evaluations of their progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school is situated in an area where 40 per cent of pupils are selected for grammar school places and pupils' attainment on entry is consequently below average. Boys' attainment on entry, as determined by the cognitive ability tests (CATs) administered by the school to the youngest pupils, is much closer to that of girls than is usual, indicating a higher selection of girls than boys.
2. In the national tests taken by pupils at age 14 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in 2001, the performance of pupils at The Giles School was well below the national average overall. Just over half attained the national expectation of level 5. Attainment was below average for similar schools in English, but above average for similar schools in mathematics and science. Girls' performance in English at age 14 is markedly higher than that of boys, but in mathematics and science the reverse is the case. Over the past three years, there has been a gradual rise in the performance of pupils at age 14 in all three core subjects, roughly parallel to the rise in standards nationally.
3. After a period where the proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades A* to C in the GCSE examinations had been fairly static and well below the national average, there was a substantial improvement in the results in 2001. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more higher grades, although below the average for all schools nationally, was well above the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades A* to G, and the proportion of pupils achieving at least one GCSE pass were very high compared with similar schools. The average total points score achieved by pupils in their GCSE examinations was above the average for similar schools.
4. In English, mathematics and science, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades was well above average for this type of school. In these core subjects, the differences in performance between boys and girls were less marked than at age 14: whereas girls did markedly better than boys in English and in single science, there was little significant difference in their performance in mathematics and double science.
5. Pupils achieved above-average GCSE results in most subjects compared with similar schools and in some subjects their performance was above the average for all schools nationally. In art and design and single-award science, where a large number of pupils were entered, and in French and double-award science, where the entry was smaller, results were above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. In a number of other subjects – design and technology, information systems and history - the proportion of higher grades at GCSE was close to the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Only in English literature, drama and religious studies did pupils perform markedly less well than in similar schools.
6. In the work seen during the inspection, most pupils and students of all ages and ranges of prior attainment were seen to be making good progress. From a position below or well below the national average on entry, many pupils achieve standards in line with the national average by age 14 and by age 16 the majority are achieving the national expectation. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is at least satisfactory and often good because their teachers have high expectations of them. There is no marked difference between the progress which boys make compared with that of girls relative to their previous work and the attainment of boys is closer to that of girls than is normally the case.
7. By age 14, most pupils in English are developing their writing styles and accuracy, and higher-attaining pupils can write well in a wide range of contexts, although their critical skills are often not sufficiently developed at this stage. In mathematics, pupils gather and analyse data at increasing levels of complexity. In science pupils are developing their ideas about the role which science plays in the modern world. Initiative and confidence are seen in pupils' art and design

work, and achievement is high in design and technology, where pupils with special educational needs make good personal and academic development, especially in food studies. Pupils use the Internet with confidence and appreciate its importance as a medium for research. In history and geography many pupils make good progress through their first years in the school, and by age 14 are achieving levels which are in line with the national expectation. In history they are developing a good understanding of social issues. In languages, 14-year-olds achieve satisfactory standards and produce accurate written work, but speaking skills are under-developed. Satisfactory standards are achieved in music and good progress is made by most pupils in physical education. In religious education, pupils are not working at the level required by the locally agreed syllabus and lower-attaining pupils in particular do not make satisfactory progress.

8. At age 16, pupils have improved the accuracy and presentation of their written work in English and achieve at or around the national expectation. Higher attainers write well, with a fluent, mature style. In English literature, however, this is not the case because pupils do not sufficiently develop their critical response to the works studied. In mathematics, pupils continue to practise and develop their number skills whilst undertaking more complex work in algebra and geometry. In science pupils are developing independent learning and analytical skills. In art and design pupils are resolving complex problems in their work and become more skilful at using a range of materials. Pupils make good progress throughout in design and technology, although their rate of progress is occasionally variable. Good progress continues to be made to age 16 in geography and history, where pupils develop their mapping skills and their understanding of the causes of events in history. Standards achieved at age 16 in languages are satisfactory overall, but there are still weaknesses in speaking. In music, pupils have made good progress and perform confidently, although their composition work is not at the same level. In religious education, whereas some pupils achieve the levels of attainment required by the course, others have difficulty in evaluating religious views on moral issues.

Sixth form

9. The performance of post-16 students at The Giles School over the past three years has been outstanding, above the national average and very high compared with all other schools in the area. In 2001, all students achieved at least pass level in their courses, and the proportion of distinctions in GNVQ art and design and business studies was very high. Half of the students entered for the GCE A-level examination in art and design achieved higher grades. Compared with their attainment two years earlier in the GCSE examinations, students had made very good progress in the sixth form.
10. In the sixth form, students apply themselves well to their work and respond well to the good teaching which they receive. They work hard to develop the skills which they need and show initiative and independence. Students make good progress and develop good written and spoken communication skills and all seem to produce work which is well above what might be expected from their prior attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils and students respond extremely well to the opportunities offered by the school. The majority enjoy being in school, many having made a positive choice to attend The Giles and they like what they chose: this attitude was very much supported by parents. As a result, with the exception of a minority of pupils in Year 8, all are keen to make a real contribution to the life of the school and play their part with enthusiasm. They know what is happening and are pleased to be involved. The standard of school uniform is very high at all levels.
12. The building is treated with respect and areas are used sensibly. Many pupils use the library facilities before and after school and socialize naturally in the hall and dining area. Despite some narrow doorways which can be a cause of congestion, movement about the building is orderly and restrained. School rules and expectations are understood and usually followed. Most classrooms are orderly work places with pupils sharing materials, exchanging ideas and applying themselves appropriately to the work in hand. Some younger pupils spoke of having been bullied, or knowing of bullying, but recognised that it is quickly dealt with and there is a range of people to support them. There is a clear understanding among the majority of the impact personal actions

can have on others. A Year 7 boy being reminded that his teacher would not be expected to make an inappropriate response to the pupils, immediately offered an apology for a remark he had just made with an obvious recognition of the cause and effect of his actions. Pupil exclusions are below the national average.

13. Relationships at all levels are very good. Pupils in the main treat each other well and are confident and maturely open in their dealings with adults. Some prefects feel an occasional resentment from their peers when on duty, but there is no evidence of barracking or open aggression when they are doing their duties. Lining-up for buses at the end of the day is orderly and controlled even in weather which is not conducive to standing outside.
14. Approaches to learning are positive, especially when faced with topics which present a new or different response to life. New ideas and practices are accepted as something to be explored and considered in an open manner. When opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility are offered - as prefects, for example, in Year 11 - these are accepted willingly. Sixth form millennium volunteers have reconditioned computers for Bosnian Aid Foundation and Year 9 pupils were seen busily engaged in preparing a mini-enterprise project.
15. It was noticeable that a considerable number of lessons observed did not have a full cohort of pupils present. The school is working hard to maintain the progress it has already made on pupil attendance and is working closely with the Education Welfare Service. Attendance is broadly in line with similar schools locally and has improved since the last inspection, although it is well below the average for similar schools nationally. The current trend, however, is upwards, reflecting the concerted efforts by staff at all levels to bring about an improvement. Parents claim that a strong factor in attendance is the distance which many pupils have to travel to school; if they miss their 'bus and parents have gone to work, there is often no other way of making the journey.

Sixth form

16. Sixth-form students have an extremely mature attitude towards their work. The school has high expectations of them in terms of the way they go about their learning and contribute to the daily life of the school and they respond extremely well. Relationships between students and their teachers are very positive and contribute in no small way to the success which students achieve at the end of their course. Students' attitudes as expressed in the pre-inspection questionnaire were mature and positive in the main and clear about what they would like to improve.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Pupils and students at The Giles School are well taught. Almost three-quarters of the lessons seen during the inspection were good or very good. In the main, teachers have good subject knowledge, prepare their lessons well and use a range of strategies to get the message across. The quality of teaching and the positive relationships between teachers and taught have a direct impact on the good progress which most pupils make. Teachers' management of pupils is very good and increases the effectiveness of the imaginative teaching methods which they employ.
18. Teaching was mainly good or very good at all levels. It was best in Years 10 and 11, where over three-quarters of the lessons seen were at least good and one in four very good or outstanding. In the lower school, almost two-thirds of the lessons were at least good and a significant proportion were very good. There is a clear relationship between the achievement of the pupils at each level and the good teaching which they receive.
19. In English, expectations of pupils are high and teachers use a good range of styles and activities to stimulate learning. Mathematics learning is soundly based in practical activities and in science teachers encourage pupils with their own enthusiasm and the depth of their subject knowledge, causing pupils to think hard about their work with skilful questioning. Teachers' good subject knowledge and personal enthusiasm are characteristics of learning in ICT, and art and design lessons encourage pupils to develop independent learning skills. Teaching is very good in history: lessons are very well planned and teachers use a wide range of strategies to provide a sense of purpose to pupils' learning. In languages, teachers make effective use of native speakers to provide speaking opportunities. Where appropriate, teachers are ably backed by learning support

assistants who ensure that pupils with special educational needs are able to make optimum progress.

20. In the sixth form, very good teaching encourages students to develop sound independent learning and research skills and all teachers are secure in their own subject knowledge and expertise. In business studies, for example, teachers have solid personal experience of the world of business and commerce which they use to advantage in managing the learning process. There is good match of activities and themes to student needs in the physical education and performing arts courses, but in art and design teachers' expectations of what their students can achieve are occasionally not high enough. Whilst science teaching post-16 encourages students to think independently and to manage their own learning, the highest attainers need to be challenged more with more searching questions.
21. During the inspection very few unsatisfactory lessons were observed. They were mainly due to teachers' lack of confidence when they were inexperienced or teaching outside their specialist area, or where class management allowed pupils to disrupt the lesson. Too many teachers are asked to teach the statutory religious education course and whilst they possess the teaching and class management skills required, they often lack the subject knowledge and insight to develop appropriate subject-specific concepts.
22. There are nonetheless some areas for development in teaching. The use of helpful rather than purely corrective and supportive marking to develop and improve pupils' progress is under-developed in some subjects, and although many subject departments are beginning to analyse results and data, the use of that information to plan teaching and learning programmes is not always present. In English, the development of pupils' analytical and critical skills in the study of literature is unsatisfactory, and modern languages teachers do not make sufficient use of the target language in the classroom. The assessment and recording of pupils' and students' achievements in art and design is unsatisfactory. Most subject departments make insufficient use of computers to support pupils' learning.

Sixth form

23. The teaching at sixth-form level is very good: no unsatisfactory lessons were seen and three-quarters were good or very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and appropriate skills and experience to teach their subject at this level and their commitment and enthusiasm is reflected in student attitudes towards their learning. Particularly notable is the range of first-hand commercial experience which teachers of business studies bring to their teaching.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

24. The school has evolved a curriculum which serves its pupils and students well, and has done much to make the changes required by the last inspection report. All pupils are now taught information technology (ICT) on a formal weekly basis and by the time they reach age 14 their skills are at the expected level. However, the use of ICT as a planned part of pupils' learning in other subjects is still limited and therefore unsatisfactory. In the lower school, pupils follow the range of courses and subjects required by the National Curriculum and the curriculum is enhanced by the addition of Spanish alongside French. There is no possibility, however, for the higher attainers in languages to take on a second language at any time. The school has begun to implement the national literacy strategy under the guidance of the English department. There has been some staff training and there is evidence of literacy becoming part of departmental lesson planning, although the process is as yet far from complete.
25. In Years 10 and 11, the school has responded well to the findings of the last inspection and has devised a curriculum which retains its breadth and balance, and which has increased relevance for the aspirations and potential of pupils in the school. All pupils select from a range of vocational subjects leading to GNVQ qualifications at intermediate level in addition to the courses leading to more traditional GCSE qualifications. In business studies both options are open to the pupils. Lower attaining pupils are guided where appropriate towards courses and qualifications which enhance their basic literacy and numeracy skills. A large proportion of pupils opt with the

consent of their parents to discontinue their study of a foreign language from Year 10 onwards; this course of action may not be the most appropriate for some of these pupils, and the school's guidance to both pupils and parents should be more precise on this matter.

26. In most subjects, pupils are setted in line with their prior attainment to ensure that the speed and range of the work can be best suited to their needs. In each setted subject the highest achieving set is referred to as the 'grammar' set to raise the aspirations of both pupils and their parents as to what can be achieved. Parents are invited to present their children at the school during their last year at primary school for an aptitude test to determine whether they are suited to working at the accelerated rate which this set purports to demand. Given the very positive attitudes of most pupils of all levels of prior attainment towards their work, this seems an unnecessary process and could detract from more useful curriculum liaison and continuity work with contributory primary schools, which is at present unsatisfactory.
27. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, who are well supported in class. For pupils who have difficulties in following the curriculum on offer because of their behaviour patterns, the school has a social inclusion unit which is effective in providing the opportunity for temporary withdrawal from the mainstream to avoid exclusion or other radical action. Here, they have space and time to modify their behaviour and at the same time get on with their work in a supportive atmosphere without falling behind their peers. The organisation and quality of support for the lowest attaining pupils is good; it helps them to access the curriculum and achieve at least satisfactory standards relative to their potential.
28. For all pupils and students, the school curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities, including trips, visits and competitive sport. All are well attended and all pupils are welcome to take part. Good use is made in many subjects of visits into the community to support the learning which is going on in class. A good example is in Year 10, where pupils in business studies have spent some time studying a nearby theme park and work on its management and administration back in school. In most subjects the curriculum is well planned and ensures continuity between year groups and phases, and is supported by useful and helpful schemes of work. There is insufficient account taken, however, of the experiences, knowledge and skills which pupils bring with them from their primary schools.
29. The curriculum is timetabled in a 40-period week, with lessons alternately of 35 and 40 minutes. Although much of the teaching is in full 75-minute blocks, learning in a number of subjects is adversely affected by the short 35- and 40-minute lessons which are allocated at certain times of the week. This is particularly unhelpful in subjects like ICT and art, where the short time available makes the development of pupils' wider understanding of the subject more difficult. Although there is a full programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) for all pupils in the school, which includes sex education and attention to drug misuse, the allocation of two short periods per week is unsatisfactory because of the difficulties in treating any topic in depth in the time available. However, many of these difficulties will be overcome next year, when the school will institute different timetable arrangements.
30. The school provides a good range of careers advice both within the taught curriculum and outside it. There are two Connexions Advisers linked to the school, who provide high quality support for all pupils. The school also provides one week of work experience in Year 10 and a range of vocational courses, many of which include work placements. The work-related curriculum is very effective. The school has not yet developed a comprehensive policy for drug education or for dealing with drug-related incidents. However, the scheme of work for PSHE is being reviewed to take account of the new citizenship requirements. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in PSHE.
31. Provision for pupils' personal development is at least satisfactory and for moral and social development it is good. The lack of a whole-school understanding of how spiritual, moral and cultural development can be planned across all curriculum areas makes some provision incidental and not fully rooted in regular planned teaching and learning strategies.
32. The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is fulfilled and all pupils attend one or other of the two assemblies held daily. A policy for worship sets the context for this activity

and it is obviously regarded as the main vehicle for spiritual development. Some pertinent and thought-provoking acts of worship were observed, although these are balanced against more mundane and ordinary occasions when no special atmosphere is created and pupils are not invited to consider the relevance of the presentation to their own lives or are challenged to look more deeply into the theme. The school needs to develop further its understanding of how spiritual development can be incorporated into learning and its implications for teaching styles means there is no planned provision outside the act of worship. Individual teachers in certain curriculum areas seize the moment, however, and exploit opportunities as they arise: this was seen particularly in some work in history, English and in Year 11 examination lessons for RE.

33. The school's policy and procedures for pupil behaviour set a clear context for moral development and the consideration of right and wrong on a day-to-day level. The act of worship is also used to reinforce and to develop further consideration of values and right decision-making. In some curriculum areas teaching material is used well to encourage deeper thinking about the cause and effect of actions. Questions of justice and equality are discussed and the underlying issues concerning the rights and responsibilities of individuals and society explored. Opportunities presented in English and the humanities subjects are often used to effect, but observations in areas like science showed that opportunities were not always taken to look at how scientific and technological developments bring moral and ethical dilemmas.
34. Pupils' have good opportunities to develop socially and learn the skills of living within a community. Many expressed their appreciation of the choice of extra-curricular activities and the chances given to be involved in clubs and trips. Good teaching practice encourages paired and group work and the need to learn how to share ideas and equipment, and to gain the experience of working alongside others. There is a range of opportunities to take responsibility and to learn how to exercise choice for the wider good through the main school and sixth form councils, charities and involvement in projects like mini-enterprise in Year 9 and the Millennium Volunteers in the sixth form. Year 11 pupils take on a range of duties as prefects and perform them diligently. Inspectors noted on a number of occasions the mature approach of pupils and students to their work, particularly in business studies and science.
35. Through the taught curriculum pupils are able to experience many aspects of British and European culture at a popular and a higher level. The high standard of art produced by pupils creates a 'home grown' cultural encounter, but it is restricted to the curriculum area and lacks planned reference to cultures outside the white European. The quality artwork which pupils and students produce is not used as much as it might be to enhance other areas of the school. A multi-cultural statement is incorporated in the equal opportunities policy. The text is clear in both identifying aspects of ethos and culture and outlining what the school should do to promote cultural development.

Sixth form

36. The sixth form curriculum promotes high levels of achievement from the majority of students, some of whom have transferred to the school from local grammar schools and from further education courses. It provides a range of vocational and advanced level courses which build well on the students' previous experience and at the same time takes care to develop their key literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The business studies course supports its relevance to students' aspirations by developing good contacts with local enterprises, organising frequent visits to see the world of work and commerce in action, and through the organisation of a successful work experience partnership with enterprises in Le Touquet, France. In preparation for this, the modern foreign languages department offers a French language course for the students. The art and design courses offered at sixth-form level are rather more narrow in their focus than they might be, however, and the performing arts course would benefit from more emphasis on dance and music.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. Provision for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory overall with some good practice in a number of areas. Issues of health and safety raised by the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and there is now a policy and a named person in place with

responsibility for its implementation. No major health and safety issues were raised during the inspection. Child protection procedures, however, still need to be strengthened. The policy document gives useful information for staff, but the designated senior member of staff is not named and clearer guidance is needed on steps to take where it is suspected that a child needs protection.

38. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are good, involving effective collaboration with the Education Welfare Service. Prompt action is taken to follow up absences and an appropriate reward system for full attendance is in place. As a result, attendance is improving steadily, although it remains below average. Policies and procedures for maintaining good pupil behaviour and dealing with bullying are also very effective. Pupils in all year groups speak reassuringly of knowing that inappropriate behaviour would be dealt with quickly and effectively, although a minority of parents expressed concern about pupil behaviour in some lessons.
39. Considerable time and attention has been given recently to establishing whole-school strategies for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, co-ordinated by heads of year in collaboration with form tutors and subject departments. These offer the foundation of a system for successfully monitoring pupil progress through personalised target setting and the mentoring of individuals needing extra support and encouragement. The effectiveness of measures taken by the school to raise expectations and aspirations is seen in the improvement in attainment at all levels and in the very positive attitudes of most pupils and students towards their work. Although the school makes good provision for the induction of new pupils, assessment information and data from primary schools are not fully used to inform curricular planning and to give staff a clear view of the differing needs within a class when setting work.
40. The pastoral system and the underlying support offered by heads of year and form tutors are pivotal to the monitoring and overseeing of pupils' wellbeing. Regular meetings at all levels maintain a good flow of information with the emphasis being on intervention sooner rather than later. A considerable amount of time each day is allocated to tutorial business. This time is used positively in many instances, but less successfully in others when pupils are not directed and left to their own devices. A newly-constructed PSHE programme is in place and taught twice a week, but the short time spell is often insufficient for any meaningful or developmental work to take place and for issues to be dealt with in a comprehensive manner.

Sixth form

Assessment

41. Students consider that their work is well marked and assessed, and these views were corroborated by the inspectors. Provision for basic skills development is thorough, although there is a need for course planning through a more precise assessment of students' needs. Some of the students interviewed felt that the basic skills work which they were asked to do was not stretching them.

Advice, support and guidance

42. There is appropriate provision for advice, support and guidance for sixth-form students. A weekly lunchtime session is held for sixth-form students about career prospects and access to higher education, and support and guidance through subject specialist teachers is good. A minority of students felt in their questionnaires that the support and guidance which they receive is not satisfactory, but this view was not supported by the findings of the inspection team.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. One of the declared aims of the school is to raise the educational aspirations of the local community and to this end its communication with parents is consistent and informative. It canvasses their opinions of school initiatives and takes careful note of their views. Parents are welcome at any time to come into school if they require information or have concerns. There is a good partnership with the parental body.

44. These relationships between the parents and the school are reflected in the responses which parents made to the questionnaire sent out prior to the inspection and to which the proportion of responses was high compared with many similar schools. Parental satisfaction with the school was high. They expressed positive views about all areas of the school's operation: well over three-quarters felt that the school works closely with parents and that the school keeps parents well informed about their child's progress. Nearly all felt that the school deals well with questions or problems which parents may bring to the school. All but a very small number of parents were satisfied with what the school achieves and the progress which their children make. Forty-four parents were present at the meeting held by the registered inspector before the inspection began and there was warm support for the work of the school and the way in which it cares for its pupils. Parents who had recently moved into the area from another part of the country said how much their children had flourished since joining The Giles School.
45. The school keeps parents well informed about their children's progress through half-termly reports on effort and attainment and a more detailed annual report, although a small minority of parents felt that this was not the case. Contacts throughout the year are good and geared to raising standards in partnership with parents. Letters are sent to parents if a pupil's progress is thought to be faltering, and commendations are sent when progress is outstanding. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about the school's plans and the events which are taking place. The school website is developing to reach a wider audience and to keep the public in touch with the school. There is an active Parent Teacher Association which is both an effective channel for communication and a generous fundraiser.
46. Many parents are involved in partnership with the school in ensuring that their children complete homework and carry out the tasks which the school requires. The home-school partnership agreement encourages parents to have high expectations of their children. There is communication between school and parents through the pupils' planners, which are required to be regularly checked by parents and form tutors. Some parents at the meeting felt that planners were not always as diligently checked on either side as they might be, but inspectors found that with a few exceptions the system operates well and is successful in ensuring that pupils remain on task and make the progress of which they are capable.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The school is well managed and benefits from the strong and dynamic leadership of the head teacher, ably supported by his senior colleagues and the governing body. Head and governors share a determination for the school to do the very best for its pupils and to raise the educational aspirations of the community as a whole. There is a clear, shared vision of where the school is now and where it wishes to be. The school's aims and aspirations are seen in all aspects of school life, but most particularly in the ways in which the school is continuously striving to set and attain ambitious targets, review and improve its performance relative to other schools and to provide wider and better facilities and learning opportunities for its pupils and students.
48. The governing body is well informed about the school and clearly aware of its strengths and areas for improvement. There are good relationships between the governors and the staff of the school and this increases the governors' awareness of the school and their ability to act as critical friends and to call the school to account. All subject departments report annually to the governing body on their performance and what they intend to do to improve standards.
49. A declared aim of the headteacher is to make the school completely self-reviewing, and some progress has been made along that road, although there is still a way to go at departmental level. The school makes careful analyses of the attainment of its pupils in tests and public examinations and seeks through this research to find learning programmes and syllabuses which best suit its range of pupils. The curriculum for older pupils and sixth-form students in particular has evolved as a result of the school's evaluation of its performance and its desire to provide the best learning opportunities for all. This has been a major factor in raising standards in GCSE examinations and in the sixth form. In some subject departments, however, too little formal use of performance data is made in the planning of teaching programmes.

50. The governors assume their strategic management role well and have made effective and judicious use over the years of finances available to the school, resulting in a learning environment which contributes well to the quality of learning. They have actively sought resources to finance a number of ambitious projects. For example, when attempts through traditional routes to acquire funds for a sports hall failed, a deal was struck with the local council to provide dual-use facilities which are of great benefit to the school.
51. Members of the senior management team have a programme of lesson observations through which the quality of teaching is monitored. Middle management is at least satisfactory and many departments are well led. There is a developing culture of monitoring and evaluating standards and the quality of teaching at departmental level, although this still falls short of what the school's planning intends. Most departments have helpful guidelines and shared principles by which the work is planned and there is a shared commitment to raising standards of attainment.
52. The school's management of its finances has resulted in appropriate levels of learning resources. Specific grants are allocated appropriately. Since the last inspection, the provision of computers to aid learning has increased considerably and provision is now good. The learning resources area, developed in response to the findings of the last inspection that opportunities for independent learning were unsatisfactory, is developing well, but more book, tape and electronic resources are still necessary. The school has expanded physically since the last inspection and provides a well-maintained and spacious environment in which to learn. A drawback of the school's expansion has been the dispersal of some specialist rooms, particularly in art and design, which result in less opportunity for teachers to share their expertise and develop together professionally.
53. Staffing is satisfactory, although increases in the number of pupils on roll since the last inspection have resulted in larger class sizes in the lower school. Arrangements for staff development to meet the aims of the school are good. The school has not had any more than the usual difficulties in appointing specialist staff of late, but there are areas of the curriculum where teachers are required to teach outside their strongest subject, often sharing a class with a specialist member of staff. This is unsatisfactory and often unnecessary. The headteacher has shown great initiative in bringing in specialists who are not trained teachers for specific purposes – a bank manager to assist on one day per week with business studies and a technician to teach basic ICT skills with older students, for example.

Sixth form

Leadership and management

54. Leadership of the sixth form is sound and committed. The two staff involved ensure that curriculum provision is appropriate to the needs of the students and that students sustain their efforts to achieve their educational goals. As the student numbers grow, the burden of co-ordinating sixth-form provision and running a major subject department is becoming increasingly great and the school will need to review job descriptions to ensure that all aspects of management can be satisfactorily fulfilled.

Resources

55. All courses in the sixth form are satisfactorily resourced to cover the demands of the curriculum as it stands at present. The art and design curriculum would benefit from a wider and more eclectic approach to the range of courses and strands which the subject can offer, and there would be important resource implications if steps were taken in that direction.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. The headteacher and governors of the school should seek to improve educational provision in the school by:

Ensuring as a matter of urgency that provision is made in all subjects of the curriculum for the use of ICT to support learning. This should be accomplished by:

- The inclusion in all departmental schemes of work precise programmes of work which involve the use of ICT;
- Providing training and support for all teaching staff in the use and application of ICT in the classroom;
- Making timetabled provision for all subjects to have access to computers on a weekly basis.

(Paragraphs 22, 24, 65,83, 95, 100, 104, 113, 136, 137, 142, 151, 187)

Sixth form

57. The school should seek to enhance sixth-form provision by:

Extending the range of media available to students of art and design beyond those represented by craft and fine art activities (paragraph 188)

Other issues

There are other minor issues which the governors should seek to address in their plans to take the school forward:

- The provision of opportunities for higher attaining pupils to study two foreign languages, and the encouragement of more pupils to continue their languages study in Years 10 and 11;
(paragraph 24, 143)
- The improvement of direct curriculum links with primary schools so that work in Year 7 can be more precisely focused;
(paragraphs 28)
- The inclusion of literacy strategies into the working schemes of all subject departments;
(paragraph 27, 72, 73)
- The improvement of the quality of marking in some subjects.
(paragraphs 68, 72, 84, 94)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	155
	Sixth form	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		87

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	4	24	77	45	5	0	0
Percentage	2.6	15.5	49.7	29.0	3.2	0	0
Sixth form							
Number	0	7	14	7	0	0	0
Percentage	0	25.0	50.0	25.0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting the percentages for the sixth form as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	752	79
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	71	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	17	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	208	7

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	44
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.5
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	71	62	133

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	28	43	45
	Girls	32	35	24
	Total	60	78	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	45 (48)	59 (61)	52 (52)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	3 (10)	24 (30)	14 (15)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	43	44	51
	Girls	42	38	29
	Total	85	82	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	64 (61)	62 (74)	60 (45)
	National	65 (64)	68 (64)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	20 (24)	20 (35)	19 (6)
	National	31 (31)	31 (39)	33 (29)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	74	74

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	27	71	73
	Girls	26	72	74
	Total	53	143	147
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	36.0 (21.4)	96.6 (85.7)	99.3 (93)
	National	49.8 (47.4)	88.8 (90.6)	94.5 (96)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	30.3 (26.2)
	National	39.1 (38.4)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	118	83
	National		n/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	7	12

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	[]	[]	[]	10.0	6.8	7.0
National	[]	[]	[]	1.7	2.7	2.8

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	19	100
	National		n/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	820
Any other minority ethnic group	4

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	20	4
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	45.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.1

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	9.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	345.5

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	80
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.0
Key Stage 4	20.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-1
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	£
Total income	2185413
Total expenditure	2198728
Expenditure per pupil	2759
Balance brought forward from previous year	50626
Balance carried forward to next year	37311

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	18.3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	21.6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	716
Number of questionnaires returned	320

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	56	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	34	58	7	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	59	12	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	56	18	4	1
The teaching is good.	28	63	5	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	48	10	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	45	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	38	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	30	53	10	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	34	53	5	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	57	4	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	51	4	1	6

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Most parents are very satisfied with the school. A minority felt that pupils are not given enough homework, and there are some small concerns about behaviour.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- An improving trend in pupils' progress and performance, particularly of boys, in both national tests at age 14 and in GCSE examinations
- All pupils, regardless of ability, have the same wide range of learning opportunities
- Teaching in two-thirds of lessons is good or very good
- The capacity of the department to evaluate its performance and to seek continuous improvement through its planning for the future

Areas for improvement

- The sharing of the criteria used to assess work in Years 7 to 9 in order to show pupils what they need to do to achieve a higher level
- Strategies for developing pupils' critical and analytical skills and thereby improving their performance in examinations
- The co-ordination of information and communication technology (ICT) to ensure that pupils have equal and regular access to computers and are able to develop the skills and experiences identified in the department's planned learning opportunities

58. Standards on entry are below average but are rising. This year, pupils aged 14 were well below the national average for all schools in their tests and well below that achieved in schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds: however, results over the past three years show an improving trend for both boys and girls. Neither does as well overall as in mathematics but girls perform better here than they do in science. Teacher assessments of pupils' levels in their English work are consistently much higher than the tests indicate, which suggests that the department should review its assessment procedures to bring them more into line with National Curriculum expectations.
59. GCSE results are below the national average in English and well below in English literature, although this year there was a marked improvement and, in English, pupils' performance was above that in similar schools. Most pupils were entered for both subjects. All achieved grades A* to G in English and over half of the girls and almost two out of five boys attained grades A* to C. Boys' results were, however, much closer to the national average for their gender than those gained by girls. In English literature girls again outperformed boys, as they do nationally, although results for both were still very low with only one in four pupils gaining an A* to C grade.
60. In the work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 are low compared with those nationally, but pupils are making satisfactory progress in relation to their levels of attainment on entry. As a result of the department's emphasis on the teaching of basic skills and its implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, pupils of all levels of attainment take care in the accuracy of their written work and have opportunities to write in a variety of forms. Lower attainers can write simple but interesting stories, descriptions, letters, diary entries, autobiographies and poems, whilst the most capable show a growing confidence in using complex sentences and can attempt successfully a much wider range of writing, including good quality and longer creative pieces, advertisements and newspaper articles. However, although they readily recognise and understand technical terms, such as metaphor and alliteration, many pupils are unable to comment effectively on how they are used. Many also have difficulty using quotations to support their opinions when writing about media or literature texts. Although they know that they must quote evidence, they usually paraphrase rather than analyse. In most cases, it is the lack of well-developed critical skills which is preventing more pupils from achieving the higher grades in the end of Key Stage tests.
61. All pupils follow the GCSE courses in both English and English literature in Years 10 and 11. They make good progress in English and there is a general improvement in the accuracy and

presentation of their extended writing in particular. Standards of work seen are approaching the national average for many pupils in English, but not in English literature. Coursework folders and books show a wide variety of writing, discursive and argumentative, creative and original, as well as responses to Shakespeare and other literature and media texts. The quality of writing varies considerably between the fluent, sensitive, lively and mature, written by those with a good vocabulary and the ability to explore and develop an argument and illustrate it with appropriate evidence, or to use imagery to make it lively and interesting, and the simple, far less technically accurate, with undeveloped descriptions and ideas, of the lower-attaining pupils. However, pupils of all capabilities have some difficulty responding critically to literature, often placing an undue emphasis on plot and character and writing about them as if they were real events and people, instead of investigating a writer's themes, language and style.

62. There are considerable variations in pupils' reading comprehension skills. By the end of Year 9, most pupils can follow and understand instructions unaided, such as those in test and examination papers, or in notices around the school, and can read reference books and magazines to extract information. They can also make some inferences and predictions based on their reading of the good range of short stories and other fiction, media and non-fiction texts studied in class. All pupils are given opportunities to read for pleasure and in the lower school library lessons are designed to encourage this. Personal reading is recorded in a journal which is monitored by teachers to ensure pupils are making progress and are reading a range of books. Both boys and girls of all abilities readily volunteer to read aloud in class and they are listened to, and encouraged if necessary, by other pupils. The department enjoys close links with the library and the librarian is ensuring that there are more books which will appeal to boys and that there are also big books and stories on tape for pupils who have problems or who are reluctant readers. Additionally, there are sixth form students who are very willing to hear junior pupils read. The most capable in Year 11 can read fluently, widely and with good understanding, although many boys do not maintain their earlier interest and lack the self-discipline and motivation to read novels in particular.
63. Standards of speaking and listening for both boys and girls are good and higher than those observed in reading and writing. Most pupils of all ages and abilities speak confidently among themselves and to adults and, when given the opportunity, are able to use talk to solve problems, negotiate, share and extend ideas and to consolidate their learning. One strength of their group work is that relationships are usually good and they are able to listen to each other and make positive and constructive criticism. This support gives confidence and encourages full participation. The quality of pupils' speaking and listening skills contributes well to the improvements in examination results.
64. In all years, pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the clear guidance and support which they receive from their teachers, who collaborate very effectively with learning assistants in lessons and are aware of the identified individual needs of their pupils. In Years 10 and 11 they follow the same courses in both English and English literature as other pupils and most are able to produce work of a sufficient standard to be entered for the GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11. In Year 7 those pupils who have not yet achieved level three in English are just starting the national progress units which the department has decided to adapt to the specific needs of its pupils.
65. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) in English lessons, although a range of activities is identified in the department's planned programme of learning opportunities for pupils. There is no ICT provision in English classrooms. During the inspection, only one English class was observed working on computers, a Year 9 group which was using the world wide web for individual research and reading, but there is evidence, both in classroom displays and, particularly, in most folders of Year 10 and 11 pupils, of their using word processing and desk top publishing software successfully to plan, draft and write coursework assignments.
66. Most pupils are effective learners because they have positive attitudes to school, are co-operative in classes and enjoy the subject, although some in Year 8 have immature social skills, do not listen carefully and are poorly behaved. Pupils' learning gains are well monitored by their teachers who use national test and other diagnostic data effectively to set class and individual

progress targets. Marking is supportive but does not always show pupils what they must do to improve or why their work is good. Pupils are not made sufficiently aware of National Curriculum levels and of what they need to do in order to reach the next level. Senior pupils and students have recently been to Norwich to see a production of *West Side Story*; and a programme of activities, such as theatre visits and writers and performers in school is being developed to enhance the extra curricular experiences for pupils but, at the moment, such opportunities are rare. However, some teachers provide valuable extra learning opportunities by running lunchtime and after-school classes to help pupils catch up on coursework and missed lessons and to improve literacy skills, particularly reading.

67. New departmental schemes of planned learning opportunities for pupils ensure that teachers plan together to enable all pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding within a wide range of interesting and challenging topics. Because of this planning, appropriate resourcing and continuous professional dialogue, teaching is good overall. It is good, and sometimes very good, in two out of three lessons in both Years 7 to 9 and 10 to 11. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen during the inspection. Good lessons are characterised by teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour and progress. A variety of teaching styles and activities, together with good relationships between pupils and their teachers, makes it possible for all to become fully engaged in a purposeful and enjoyable work atmosphere in which learning is both rewarding and satisfying. In the very good lessons, pupils are given some choices in how they approach their work and teachers make particularly effective use of pupils' existing knowledge to stimulate and help them to engage with their writing: for example, in a Year 9 class comprising only boys, the teacher made references to cars, action films and recent television programmes, all of which helped the pupils to see and discuss the relevance and value of their own experiences and to incorporate them effectively into their creative writing. In the lessons with shortcomings, pupils' learning objectives are not made clear to them, the pace is dictated by the slowest, the quality of pupils' progress is not monitored and opportunities to investigate the use and effect of writers' language, or consider wider social, moral and cultural issues arising from the topics being studied, are missed. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the inadequate management of poor behaviour by a very difficult group meant that many in the class made insufficient progress. One weakness, which is borne out both by the sampling of pupils' work during the inspection and the GCSE literature results, is in the teaching of analytical and critical skills by some teachers. Written tasks, such as "Who do you think was to blame for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet?" do not allow pupils to develop the analytical techniques which will give them access to the higher grades in their examinations.
68. Leadership and management of the subject are sound. The head of department has done much to raise and maintain staff morale and to set examples of dedication, determination and commitment to raising standards. Responsibilities are appropriately delegated, all policies are in place and understood, and communication is effective. Teaching and marking are monitored, though the latter is not done as rigidly as it needs to be, and there is good development planning which identifies priorities for the improvement of learning and teaching. The team of hard-working and conscientious teachers is also providing much of the impetus for the development of literacy across the school's curriculum.
69. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes to the subject in Year 11 are now positive, standards achieved by boys are improving and behaviour in all years, except for a minority of pupils in Year 8, is good. Settings according to aptitude in English and the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) have gone a good way towards meeting the learning needs of all pupils in lessons, although extension activities, particularly for higher attainers, are rarely planned. The absence of drama from the curriculum has been addressed and classes in Years 7 to 9 now have a timetabled lesson, and it is an optional GCSE subject in Years 10 and 11. One significant weakness, which still has to be resolved, is the poor performance of both boys and girls in GCSE English literature. Some strategies to raise standards in the subject have been introduced and results are gradually improving, but they are still very low and below those achieved by most pupils in English.

Key Skills across the curriculum – literacy

The provision for literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory.

70. Standards of the middle and lower ability pupils are below national expectations when they enter the school and generally reflect their attainment in English, but they are now improving more rapidly owing to the introduction of the NLS and the lead provided by the English department. Those attained by most higher ability pupils are average.
71. Because most pupils have a positive attitude towards others and relationships are good, they support and encourage each other well, particularly in speaking and listening activities. By the end of Year 11, they have made good progress and reached above-average standards of attainment. They are able to use talk effectively to negotiate and make decisions, ask questions and confidently develop their learning through class and group discussions and the giving of short talks and presentations. In art, PE and drama, for example, pupils of all ages and capabilities are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' work and performances through group and peer assessments, and in history and RE, pupil discussion is an integral part of most lessons.
72. Standards in reading and writing are average by the end of Year 11. They are not as high as in speaking and listening, but pupils of all ages and capabilities make satisfactory progress in these two components of literacy. They usually take care in the presentation of their writing, trying to make it as technically accurate as possible, using sentences and paragraphs and incorporating an appropriate range of subject vocabulary, although the spelling, grammar and punctuation, in particular, of the lowest attainers is sometimes poor and not always appropriately corrected in some subjects. In GCSE classes, pupils have the greatest difficulty with their analytical writing, in geography, for example, but their creative writing is generally good, when they are given the opportunity. However, in some subjects, pupils are rarely encouraged to use bullet points or shown how to make their own notes, sometimes being asked to copy from the board or from books, as in some PHSE lessons, and few are taught how to develop their extended writing, except in English. There are opportunities for all pupils to read aloud in many lessons and they readily volunteer, undeterred by the difficulty of vocabulary. Pupils can also read to gain information, although many have difficulty making deductions or drawing inferences from their reading.
73. There has recently been whole staff training and a limited list of school improvement targets for Years 7, 8 and 9 has been drawn up but, as yet, an agreed policy or strategies for marking, monitoring and evaluation are not in place, nor is literacy fully embedded in the teaching of every department, or opportunities for its development identified in all schemes of work. Additionally, the school has yet to explore fully how the library and the very capable and knowledgeable librarian, the ICT resources and the PHSE programme can contribute further to the improvement of literacy across the curriculum. Few departments other than mathematics have a clear policy document, with guidelines on the use and development of specialist subject language. However, most departments display key subject words in their areas and encourage their use in both speaking and writing, and there is some good, well-established and successful practice in lessons, particularly in history and science, with many teachers beginning to follow the structure of the NLS in their planning and teaching in Year 7.

Drama

Provision for drama is **satisfactory**.

74. Although drama is a very popular subject, some pupils see it as recreational rather than as a discipline, particularly as they are not formally assessed. Consequently, many take insufficient care to develop the performance skills required for successful acting. They are often far too concerned with their own final presentation and not with the processes leading up to it. Although they work on body language and voice, interpret stories and incidents for the stage, learn about genres, such as melodrama, and experiment with strategies for creating mood and dramatic tension, many do not show a good awareness of audience and have difficulty staying in character, sustaining an improvisation or remaining serious. There is, however, a small number of pupils in most classes who move and speak with great confidence and who have good, sometimes original, ideas. Work schemes are often effectively linked to what pupils are doing in English, such as the set scenes for the Shakespeare SATs papers in Year 9 or the Myths and Monsters module in Year 7, and they reinforce and enrich the pupils' learning. Additionally, there are many good

opportunities for pupils to develop their social and team-working skills, through group discussions and collaboration, as well as to be creative and to examine a variety of cultural and moral issues through drama. With the exception of a small number in Year 8, pupils usually support and trust each other satisfactorily, applaud performances and try to give positive suggestions for improvement, but analysis is often superficial and brief, sometimes because insufficient time is allocated to it or pupils lose interest once a performance is over.

75. GCSE drama results in 2001 were very low compared with those gained nationally in all schools and well below those of secondary modern schools. The overall standard of pupils' attainment is below average, but there are signs of improvement as pupils develop their listening and evaluative skills and become more self-critical and dedicated to the subject. Teaching is satisfactory: pupils' work is carefully and helpfully marked and a range of interesting and relevant topics and scripts is provided for investigation and interpretation. However, strategies to ensure that pupils develop their team work in a focused and disciplined way are not always effective and their practical experience of a wide variety of stage and performance skills and theatrical conventions is limited.
76. The subject is satisfactorily managed by a recently-appointed and enthusiastic head of department who is working hard to raise its profile, but there is no recent tradition of whole-school, or small group, productions and there are fewer theatre trips or visiting theatre groups and workshops than there are in many schools in which drama is a particular strength. There is, however, a very effective link between the small sixth form performing arts group and Year 7 pupils, through which the senior students have an audience for their presentations and the juniors learn from their skills and interpretations.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- Good standards of teaching and learning
- Good attitudes, values and personal development shown by the pupils as they learn
- Good opportunities for developing numeracy skills in mathematics lessons

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers in mathematics
- Need to develop primary school links to improve continuity
- Recently implemented departmental policies and procedures need to be fully established and evaluated

77. The level of attainment on entry to the school is below national averages in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or above, and well below in the proportion at Level 5 or above. By the age of 14 pupils have made good progress relative to their attainment on entry: the attainment of many pupils is approaching the national expectation. The standard of work observed in lessons and in exercise books confirms good progress; pupils are now given regular experience of using and applying mathematics through termly investigations. Pupils of different attainment levels can gather, analyse and present data, and draw and present conclusions with degrees of complexity appropriate to their capability. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into their mathematics groups and through coordinated support of teachers and classroom assistants, make good progress.
78. Pupils develop and rehearse basic number skills in almost every lesson, through engaging and challenging activities which motivate pupils of all capabilities to demonstrate and reinforce success. Pupils understand and carry out estimation, understand and calculate with fractions and negative numbers, and learn basic concepts of probability of events. They learn the concepts and basic processes of algebra, with emphasis on systematic presentation to support process and understanding. Pupils are familiar with common geometric forms and acquire the language and understanding to solve problems involving angle properties and triangles. Teachers emphasise key mathematical words, and engage pupils in the development and discussion of topics during

lessons. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and reviewed in plenary sessions, so that pupils appreciate their own progress.

79. By age 16, pupils have continued to make progress and higher attainers are working at levels above the national average for their age. A high proportion of pupils are achieving at least average levels of attainment. In lessons and written work there is no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievements. There is still an emphasis on developing and reinforcing number skills and learning and applying more complex algebra and equation solving continues to stress systematic presentation and explanation of procedure. Pupils progress to solving problems with triangles through Pythagoras' theorem, algebra and trigonometry. In the 2001 GCSE examinations, pupils' attainment was well below the national average but above the average for similar schools.
80. The lower attainers in Year 11 are assessed through a Graduated Assessment Scheme which provides motivation through accrediting short modules of attainment. Pupils engage themselves enthusiastically in their work, and achieve success in percentage work, estimating and predicting a number sequence. There is no evidence of disaffection or underachievement by this group, in which pupils with special needs are enabled through good support to match the achievement of their peers. Previous significant differences between grade distributions of boys and girls, including a significant group of under achieving boys, are no longer evident.
81. Pupils are often enthusiastic and eager to learn in mathematics lessons; they are co-operative and willing to assist the teacher in developing topics in lessons. Good behaviour habits have been established and very few behaviour problems occur. Pupils interact well when undertaking group activities.
82. Teaching is good in mathematics. Most of the lessons seen during the inspection were good or very good. The mathematics department has thorough and well-structured schemes of work detailing satisfactory core and foundation programmes for pupils in Years 7 to 9, and satisfactory foundation and intermediate programmes higher up the school. There are appropriate planned opportunities at all levels for all four attainment targets, including attainment target 1 (using and applying mathematics). Teachers ensure that mathematical experiences relate well to real-life situations and there are good opportunities within the department to sustain and develop numeracy skills, using a good variety of stimulating and engaging activities. However, apart from geography and science, there is little evidence of planned numeracy development in other subjects.
83. There are insufficient opportunities to use computers in mathematics; the department has no fully developed information and communication technology strategy. This was an issue at the last inspection. However, funds have recently been allocated to support development of information and communication technology in the mathematics department.
84. Pupils' work in mathematics is regularly marked, and marking is monitored by the head of department. However, there are currently inconsistencies in the styles of marking adopted. Regular structured tests are set and results are analysed to inform the review of pupils' progress, as a result of which pupils are given targets to reach. There is regular and effective monitoring and support of pupils' progress during lessons, including those with special needs. Support assistants are effectively deployed in lessons. Teachers show commitment to building confidence in pupils of all capabilities and encourage them to strive for maximum achievement.
85. Leadership of the department is sound; there is a shared sense of purpose and clear departmental ethos. A comprehensive handbook ensures clear aims and enables consistent approaches. The schemes of work for mathematics support effective lesson planning and include appropriate guidance on differentiating the work to suit pupils of differing ability. Mathematics is taught in a dedicated suite of rooms, with good displays of pupils' work illustrating achievement across all attainment targets, and displaying key words of mathematical language. However, some lower school classes are taught away from the mathematics area and do not benefit from the specialist accommodation.

SCIENCE

The provision which the school makes for science is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards of attainment in Key Stages 3 and 4 are steadily rising
- The progress of most pupils and their attitudes to learning are good and for some very good. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support to achieve good progress
- The quality of teaching is mostly good and in some lessons it is very good
- The department is well led.

Areas for improvement

- Expectations of the higher attaining pupils. Sharing the best practice in teaching across the whole team
- Making fuller use of assessment information to evaluate what pupils are capable of and how well they are doing
- Ensuring that the ICT requirements in science are met

86. Progress has been made on a number of fronts since the last inspection. Some higher attaining pupils now achieve standards which are well above average. There is an improvement in the presentation of work, which is assisting a general rise in standards. There is more consistency in the progress of pupils and in the quality of teaching, though there are still variations. Most pupils with special educational needs now make good progress. There is a greater sense of the enjoyment of lessons, although there is room for further improvement in some lessons. The new leadership in the department is very good and in just over half a term has brought in palpable improvements.
87. In the national tests taken by 14 year-olds in 2001 the proportion of pupils achieving the expectation of level 5 or above was below the national average but was well above that for schools of a similar type. The proportion of pupils achieving level 6 or above was well below the national average but above that for schools of a similar type. The attainment of boys was significantly higher than that of girls. Standards achieved by 14 year-olds in science have risen steadily over a three-year period.
88. The attainment of 16 year-olds is also showing improvement. Again, attainment overall is below the national average, but it is well above that of similar schools. In 2001 almost two-thirds of the pupils entered for the dual-award science examination achieved grades A* to C, above the average for all schools nationally and significantly higher than the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving higher grades in the single-award science examination was above the national average and above the average for similar schools. GCSE results in science are showing a marked rising trend.
89. The good progress which most make in the lower school is continued in Years 10 and 11. The pupils who are in the middle range of attainment make the best progress. Lower attainers and pupils with statements of special educational need make satisfactory to good progress, particularly where they receive support from classroom assistants. The progress of some pupils with the highest attainment in some teaching groups is not as great as it could be.
90. Most higher attaining pupils are beginning to mature into more independent learners as they progress through the school. For example, they can analyse an unfamiliar chemical reaction and explain clearly what type it is using the principles they have been taught. They can plan an experimental investigation and then use their laboratory skills to make accurate observations to test their ideas. Most of these pupils can then make well-reasoned conclusions and some of them write fluently, making good use of the correct scientific language. Where opportunities are given to write with feeling on scientific issues which are in the public eye, some pupils' work shows maturity. The middle range of pupils achieve these qualities in more modest measure and with less independence of learning. The lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs can, with assistance, organise experiments, make measurements appropriately and present their data in tables and graphs. They can recall and apply scientific knowledge to a limited extent to explain the effects which they observe.
91. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed in science and well over half were good or very good. In many lessons there is a good level of concentration and pupils are very willing to respond to

teachers' questions. Some boys and girls in the top sets in each year display a good level of scientific curiosity and are keen to draw their evidence together to explain phenomena. One Year 11 girl, for example, was concerned about whether the kidney in a healthy animal can build up chemical pollutants and therefore whether there are consequences for the meat and livestock industry. Most pupils co-operate well when doing experiments or when working on group tasks.

92. In many good lessons the teaching challenges pupils' curiosity about scientific matters and has good expectations of the pupils. There is insistence on the correct use of scientific language and principles and the need for accuracy. In one Year 7 class, for example, a boy was asked to go back to his experiment and repeat a temperature measurement because his table of results was not consistent. Lessons are well planned and some of the most effective of them relate the learning to applications in real life. Classroom management is good in nearly all cases. In a tiny minority of lessons pupils needed to be frequently brought back from idle chatter to resume their task, but this was competently done. In these lessons, questioning is less demanding, the pace and challenge of the lesson is not as great as in the majority of well taught lessons and there is little application to real life.
93. Good basic teaching skills were observed in most lessons, featuring skilful questioning and a clear presentation of the work to be done. In some lessons, the teachers' knowledge, enthusiasm and practical participation encourage the lively involvement of pupils. In a Year 9 lesson, for example, pupils were thinking hard about their recent work on plant nutrition as they got ready to debate whether intensive farming can be justified. Most lessons help pupils to make progress, irrespective of their skills or capability. Pupils receive encouragement and praise for their achievement and where they have difficulties they are treated with respect and sensitivity. Some good opportunities are offered in some lessons, for example in the health and social care course in Year 10, for pupils to explore their own values and to consider their personal response to issues concerning right and wrong.
94. There were some weaknesses observed in the consistency and quality of marking pupils' written classwork and homework. At its best it shows ways in which pupils might improve or it gives encouragement about how their work is progressing. At the other end of the scale the marking comprises unhelpful ticks and crosses and sometimes fails to pick up on obvious and sometimes serious errors. In general the assessment of pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum is good. The assessment of coursework for examinations is also good. Much more attention is now being given to storing such data on computer and it is beginning to be used to assess the potential of each pupil.
95. The science curriculum is well planned; it is supported by detailed schemes of work to help all staff to plan good lessons. Under the new leadership there has been little opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching, but firm plans are in place for this to be done systematically from the beginning of 2002. The access to computers for science learning is unsatisfactory. Many aspects of the new departmental management are very good. A strong team ethos with the common purpose of achieving high standards has been established. Further development of the use of pupils' test and progress data to evaluate how well they are doing will be a factor in achieving this goal. The department is staffed with a satisfactory balance of expertise and experience and there is good quality technician support from dedicated staff who are highly valued. There should be more attention to the in-service training of teachers and technicians to meet the needs of the department. A priority is training for the use of computers and the use of electronic data logging equipment in experiments. Resources and accommodation for science are adequate overall.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good
- Pupils make good progress to age 14
- Standards are high at age 16
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress

- Pupils are encouraged to work independently

Areas for improvement

- Assessment criteria are not clear enough
- Formal recording procedures are unsatisfactory
- There are insufficient opportunities for feedback to pupils
- The art and design curriculum is too narrow
- Insufficient use of ICT to support learning

96. Pupils' skills in art when they come to the school are not highly developed, but they make very good progress. By the end of Year 9 attainment is broadly in line with national expectations, and for some pupils it is above average. There has been a steady improvement in standards since the last inspection. In 2001 two-thirds of the pupils achieved grades A* to C, slightly above the national average for all schools, sustaining the high levels over the past two years.
97. Most pupils adopt a very positive approach to their art and design work and rapidly develop their drawing, painting and three-dimensional design skills. They show interest in the tasks that are set and learn quickly to control line, tone, shape and colour which are incorporated into their drawings and paintings. Most pupils work well to develop their ideas and to acquire those basic skills that enable them to communicate their ideas effectively. Pupils collaborate well: group work is effective. A significant minority of pupils, however, find the set tasks rather difficult and show poor understanding of what they are expected to do. Consequently there are occasions when there is too much idle chatter during lessons. Some class sizes are too large for the available studio space and have a negative impact on attitudes and behaviour and the progress which pupils are able to make.
98. At age 14, most pupils are interested in their art and design work. They settle quickly and work at a reasonable pace throughout lessons. A minority continue to experience some difficulty in using media and materials effectively, but many pupils achieve standards above the national expectation. The most capable pupils show initiative and develop the confidence to explore ideas through drawing, painting and making constructions using three-dimensional materials. The lowest attainers work to their potential to produce satisfactory final pieces. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
99. By age 16 most pupils have made good progress. They display greater confidence in their own abilities to create interesting objects in both two and three dimensions. Many have acquired the capacity for resolving reasonably complex problems through art and design activities. Most can now sustain concentration over longer periods of time and work with greater discipline and organisation. In Year 11, emphasis is firmly on the acquisition of craft skills using clay, wood, wire mesh and plaster of Paris. By this stage most pupils are capable of developing their own ideas and working with some degree of independence. The majority are interested in finding resolutions to problems without relying too heavily on their teachers. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Achievement is good overall and the GCSE examination results in 2001 show that pupils were working at a level that was high in relation to their prior attainment, and higher than in similar schools.
100. There is a noticeable emphasis on a traditional fine art, craft-based approach to the art and design curriculum. Consequently there is little evidence of design activities involving photography and ICT. The current curriculum is too narrow and needs to be extended to include, for example, graphic design, photography, fashion and textiles, printmaking and computer-generated design. There is very little evidence of any significant use of modern technology as a means of recording or capturing information, or as a means of creating images.
101. Teaching is good in the lower school, with some examples of very good teaching. Teacher assessments of the levels reached by pupils at age 14, however, are unsatisfactory, often well out of line with national figures. In spite of one unsatisfactory lesson, teaching is good at in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are encouraged to develop their capacity for working independently. However, the undue emphasis on craft activities restricts pupils in terms of acquiring skills in photography and ICT. There was no evidence of any assessment or recording of key skills within the art and design department. The department has a very good record of organising visits to museums and

galleries. Since 1994 many artists and designers have been invited in to the school on a regular basis to work with the pupils and students.

102. The department is well led and management is satisfactory. The dispersal of art and design studios in different areas of the school makes communication and sharing of ideas and expertise between the head of department and some teaching staff difficult. Assessment and recording procedures need to be improved generally and applied consistently across the whole school. There is a need for some form of standardisation exercise to ensure that all teachers within the department are assessing accurately using National Curriculum criteria. At present, accurate and detailed records of pupils' progress are not being maintained.
103. Some teaching rooms are inadequate for the size of classes which they have to contain, and this has a negative impact on standards. Storage of pupils' work, materials, equipment and resources is inadequate. Single lessons of 35 to 40 minutes are unsuitable for the development of appropriate skills in art and design.
104. Displays of work in the art rooms and also throughout the school do not do justice to the quality and range of work produced. Greater emphasis should be placed on displaying work that has been produced by pupils and students presently at the school. ICT resources in the art and design department are inadequate. Pupils and students have, therefore, inadequate opportunity to explore their ideas, attitudes, values and beliefs through ICT in an art and design context. Opportunities for communication of ideas and expression of feelings through ICT and design need to be incorporated into the art and design curriculum to provide an extended range of activities that would ensure greater breadth and depth within a more vocational context.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **good**.

Strengths

- Very good management of pupils
- Good support in tutorials and groups both within and beyond lesson time
- Teachers are well qualified and enthusiastic about their subject
- Standards of attainment in food studies are very high and those in resistant materials are improving rapidly

Areas for improvement

- Inconsistency of approach in planning for individuals and groups to use what they know and to apply what they learn
- Inconsistencies in marking work and giving support to individuals
- Curriculum provision is imbalanced, for example pneumatics and computer aided manufacture are weak whilst other aspects are over emphasised

105. Standards in the GCSE examinations and the tests set by teachers for pupils in 2001 matched the nationally-expected standards for all schools. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, particularly in food studies. By the end of Year 9 the pupils are able to analyse commercial products and use computers and free hand sketching to illustrate their design options. They use specialized words appropriately. Finished products are of a high standard, but occasionally pupils' evaluation of their work is subjective and does not take into account the reactions of the consumer or end-user. Written work is often careless.
106. By the age of sixteen pupils design and make food products which meet the requirements of the people who will be eating them. Their project folders are very well presented and computers are effectively used for word processing, desk- top publishing, designing, handling data and evaluating products and projects with the digital camera. They soundly apply methods they have understood from their work in science when testing foods and comparing methods of cooking. Their designing and making in resistant materials is of a high standard.

107. Pupils make good progress. In food science their progress is very good. Pupils with special educational needs do very well both academically and in their personal development, especially in food studies. However, good achievement is not restricted to them. A female Year 10 pupil with relatively high previous attainment cheerfully volunteered: "The teacher makes you feel good about yourself and he helps you to improve." This was in the middle of a woodwork lesson. Attitudes to design and technology are good. However, in a significant proportion of lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils did not make sufficient progress because they worked too slowly, repeated work they had done before or found the work too easy. Older pupils are too often over reliant upon their teachers or their computers. If both of these two sources of support are busy or if there are technical problems time is wasted while pupils wait for help. In the best lessons waiting was neither permitted nor necessary because other support in the form of display books was available. In the lower school the pupils achieve well in spite of weak links between successive lessons and units of work. Older pupils make good progress overall, and very good progress is made where the teaching is of the highest standard.
108. The teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 3. In one lesson the teacher communicated very effectively, demonstrating exemplary materials for the pupils to match and leaving them in no doubt that their work must be completed on time and that it would be marked. They were reminded to use knowledge gained from previous lessons and as a result they confidently set about the production of invitation cards and dishes for a Christmas celebration. In other lessons similar strong features had a less positive effect on the pupils' learning because opportunities to challenge every pupil were missed, for example when the teacher repeated activities unnecessarily or set unchallenging work. Opportunities were also missed to make the learning more active and for pupils to collaborate on projects. Teachers' planning does not always take into account the National Curriculum standards which the pupils should be achieving. Marking of work in books is satisfactory, but teachers' comments, although frequent and encouraging and accurate, often do not help the pupil to take the next step alone.
109. The teaching in Key Stage 4 is very good and results in high levels of achievement. Pupils receive excellent tutorial support and skills training in resistant materials lessons in Year 10. In food studies the teaching is similar so that the pupils prepare materials of high quality for scrutiny by the external examiners. In graphics the pupils have been taught effectively to use computers and digital cameras alongside traditional methods but too many work too slowly. There are other variations between the courses and teachers. Where pupils are too dependent on the teacher or on computers there is time wasted while they wait for help. In contrast, where pupils have been actively involved over longer periods their first reaction when the teacher is busy is to seek support elsewhere and they have sufficient skills to forge ahead. Too little attention is paid to key literacy skills: pupils make grammatical errors in coursework folders because they have not been trained to check for them as a matter of course. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive and relationships are good. Teachers and pupils often work together to complete projects outside lesson times.
110. This department has made good strides since the last inspection. Attainment has improved in all strands of the subject. Achievement in the lower school has been maintained and has improved from unsatisfactory to very good for older pupils. Management is sound, although the department does not take sufficient opportunity to share ideas and approaches to raise teaching standards, especially in the lower school and in those strands of the subject where attainment could be improved. There are insufficient opportunities also to discuss progress with pupils on a regular basis.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall
- Examination results are good
- The subject makes a good contribution to the development of numeracy skills

Areas for improvement

- Literacy skills - especially writing - to improve expression of ideas and development of thoughts
- Assessment procedures to inform pupils of their National Curriculum levels and how to achieve higher
- The use of information and communication technology to present data and information and to access current information from Internet sources

111. GCSE results in geography in 2001 were above average compared with similar schools but were below national average levels for grades A* to C for pupils aged 16. Pupils' attainment in geography is often higher than in their other subjects. Over the last few years geography has maintained these levels consistently. Most pupils are entered for the foundation level papers of the GCSE examination, which have an upper limit of grade C. A few pupils are given the opportunity to attempt the higher-level paper, and most of these are successful in attaining grades A, B or C, but the increased demands of longer writing and presentation of conclusions in a detailed format are not attainable for the majority. The few pupils who do not complete their geography course work are entered for the Certificate of Achievement in geography.
112. Attainment at age 14 is generally below average for pupils of this age. Given their levels of prior attainment they make at least satisfactory progress and many make good progress in their first three years at the school. Most can use atlases to locate places locally, nationally and internationally, understanding the importance of latitude and longitude. Most use Ordnance Survey maps to identify places showing which of our many invaders first settled, for example in the Boston area. They are able to say which are Roman, Saxon, and Viking. At a more complex level pupils describe climates in various places, and by using climate graphs can tell what sort of climates they represent. Higher levels of attainment are limited because the majority are not given the opportunity to write longer explanatory pieces of work. The use of worksheets is dominant in class and homework to ensure that basic skills and knowledge are secure.
113. Pupils with special educational needs receive individual attention which helps them to make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. Classroom assistants support pupils well so that they can take a full part in lessons. Writing for different audiences or purposes, such as letter writing in the work on National Parks, was seen, but it is insufficiently developed to allow pupils to identify with people in different circumstances from their own and this in turn holds back understanding at a spiritual as well as an intellectual level. Numeracy development is well supported by the use of graphs and statistics. The use of ICT to support learning is unsatisfactory.
114. From work seen in Years 10 and 11 most pupils achieve levels of attainment which are at least satisfactory in relation to their previous learning. For example, they develop their knowledge of physical geography and know the technical terms needed to describe the erosion that takes place on the coast, such as the fetch of the wave, hydraulic action and corrosion. Map work is well developed and helps pupils identify the reasons for towns being sited in their present position. Using maps pupils can identify where erosion and deposition are occurring. However, longer explanations and the close relation of erosion to the rock types are not so well understood, expressed or explained. When studying photographic evidence of cities, many pupils find it difficult to deduce from details shown in the picture which cities are represented. Some pupils use statistics well to determine whether a country is more or less developed economically.
115. Course work by a substantial number of pupils is competent. Of the three basic skills, numeracy is the best developed, with lower levels of literacy and information and communication technology being factors that hold back higher levels of attainment.
116. In all lessons pupils show positive attitudes to learning and to working to instructions. All pupils participate well in lesson activities and listen attentively to the teacher and to their peers. In lessons where there is practical work, like the Year 7 lesson where they used potatoes to develop understanding of contours, pupils co-operate well and concentrate on the task in hand. In a Year 8 investigation using maps of different scales the vast majority of pupils were keen to find out as much as they could. Homework is normally completed in time and presentation of work is mainly legible and neat.
117. Teaching is mostly good, especially in the upper school, and never less than satisfactory. Planning is sound and there is a satisfactory level of resources on which the staff can call. Each

lesson has clear objectives, which ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. Sound questioning is characteristic of assessing pupils' knowledge at the beginning and end of each lesson. For example, in a lower set in Year 7, repetition of simple vocabulary raised pupils' confidence in tackling the concept of scale on maps. In a Year 8 class the use of local maps caught pupils' interest and made the investigation into origins of settlements an exciting occasion. The pace of lessons is pushed along by good use of such simple techniques as brisk question-and-answer sessions, so that pupils are engaged and concentrating throughout. In the main, teachers include all pupils in every lesson and use their knowledge of the pupils to good advantage. Teachers know, because of the recapitulation at the beginning and end of lessons, how much pupils learn in the short term, but the periodic testing of modules of learning is not expressed in terms of National Curriculum attainment levels. This makes it more difficult for pupils, with the support of parents, to know just how to achieve the next level.

118. Management of the department is sound, with satisfactory book and audiovisual resources, but inadequate information and communication technology to underpin its use as a normal way of learning. Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory.
119. Since the last inspection teaching has improved, with a closer match of work for most pupils and better support for pupils with special educational needs. Although there is less time spent on low-level tasks, there is still a preponderance of worksheets to the detriment of higher writing skills. Progress has been made in assessment but more individual target setting has not been achieved.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **very good**.

Strengths

- The teaching of history is very good, with some excellent features; it is well planned and organised, and reflects real enthusiasm and expertise
- Worksheets and support materials are of a high quality and are well matched to different pupil capabilities
- Essential historical skills are well developed, especially the handling of and the interpretation of primary evidence
- Very positive relationships between pupils and staff encourage and support learning
- GCSE examination results are regularly well above those in similar schools
- Leadership and management are strong

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of ICT to support learning
- Insufficient specialist history teaching space

120. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 is below average. Standards of attainment at the age of 14 in the teacher assessments remain below the national expectation. However at the age of 16, pupils' attainment is well above that of similar schools and only a little below the national average in terms of grades A* to C. In the 2001 GCSE examination over half of the pupils achieved higher grades, in line with the results achieved in previous years. Against the national trend, boys made more progress than girls, but progress for all pupils was at least satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment because their teachers and learning support assistants know them well and provide worksheets and support matched to their capabilities in lessons. Higher attaining pupils are also able to make good progress particularly through their oral contributions in class and through close examination and analysis of source material.
121. Observation of lessons and a scrutiny of samples of pupils' work confirm that by the end of Year 9 all pupils make good progress in their first three years in the school. Pupils develop a wide range of historical skills, including the interpretation of appropriate historical evidence and data, the analysis of difficult historical issues and the understanding of chronology. They are able to use a wide range of materials including thematic worksheets, pictorial evidence, timelines, writing frames and a range of primary and secondary source material. The handling of different forms of historical data is particularly impressive and pupils are able to work individually, in pairs and in groups to develop their understanding of history. Pupils are given opportunities to handle historical sources, to interpret them and to make judgments about their reliability and their bias. In Year 7 pupils are introduced to the reasons for and the chronology of castles. Some excellent practical castle building was seen. Pupils are also exposed to the complexities of mediaeval religious beliefs. Pupils' historical understanding is extended in Year 8 by a close analysis of the role of women in the 16th and 17th centuries and historians' conflicting views of women's roles. A very effective and entertaining teacher/pupil debate was observed which gave two contrasting versions of the same event. By the end of Year 9 pupils are able to debate and analyse the complex social issues of eighteenth century factory conditions. They are able to extend their understanding through role-play discussing different views of factory conditions. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these sessions and are able to appreciate the different positions taken by factory owners and workers. Excellent examples of planted questions about factory conditions are debated.
122. In Years 10 and 11 pupils build upon the strong foundation of skills and knowledge acquired in the earlier years. By the end of Year 11 pupils have developed a good understanding of historical causation in relation to the Great War, the relationship between political cartoon evidence and analysis in America in the 1930s and they have had the opportunity to develop their own understanding of a wide range of historical material. At this stage there is a greater emphasis on developing advanced reasoning skills through careful structured questioning. In Year 11 classes pupils thoroughly discuss the political issues contained in a series of cartoons about President Roosevelt, or become very involved in examining the different types of aerial warfare in

the Great War. There were good examples of paired work and presentations to other pupils in the group. Written work is well organised, thorough in its content and a good basis for examination success. Techniques for raising examination performance are built into the framework of the lessons observed.

123. Teaching is very good overall and in several lessons it is excellent. There is teaching consistency and quality across all the year groups and across the history teaching team. The overall standard of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It must be seen as a particular strength of the department; there is considerable evidence of very well-planned and well-structured lessons. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to create a real sense of purpose and learning in history. Map work is used to illustrate the development of the mediaeval castles in Year 7 and a historical 'Life and Death' game to further pupils' understanding of moral and religious values in the Middle Ages. Close reading of a text describing Elizabeth I's achievements is used to develop understanding in a bottom Year 8 group. Year 9 re-enact the parliamentary enquiries into child labour in the 18th century factories, an experience thoroughly enjoyed by pupils and teacher. The wide variety of teaching method encourages and develops pupils' historical understanding and overall enjoyment of the subject. Many lessons begin by reinforcing pupils' previous knowledge and understanding through an effective use of structured questioning. There is evidence of a high level of involvement from all pupils and the teachers' very good management skilfully encourage pupils of all abilities to explore a range of ideas and evidence before moving to develop a conclusion.
124. Teachers know their subject very well. They have an obvious love of the subject and this commitment is strongly communicated to the pupils providing a firm basis for learning. Historical concepts are clearly explained and developed using a wide range of approaches and methods. There is very good evidence of teachers using their knowledge, enthusiasm and teaching skills to develop pupils' understanding at all levels of competence. In the best lessons pupils' attention is caught right at the beginning and is then held through a series of well-thought out and varied activities until the end of the lesson. Year 7 became very involved right from the start of the lesson re-enacting a mediaeval sermon and the perils involved in hell and damnation. The lesson finished with the teacher holding the pupils in the palm of his hand while he described a strategy for getting out of hell, the whole lesson was an excellent example of teaching skills. During the range of the varied activities observed, pupil concentration and focus was very strong in all classes and with pupils of differing capabilities. Teachers constantly challenged pupils to raise their standards and these high expectations were rewarded with pupil commitment and involvement.
125. Overall the standards of behaviour are very good. The strong relationships observed in the department underpin learning and the acquisition of skills. Very good interpersonal relationships are one of the strengths of the history department. Very good examples of pupils listening intently to each other were observed and co-operation amongst pupils in all years was high.
126. The subject is very well led and managed. The head of department is very experienced and he has built up a very successful department. He has a clear vision and is looking to introduce further changes and developments, particularly in the use of ICT. There is a good staffing match in expertise and qualification. Homework is set regularly and marking is well focused to support progress, learning and achievement. Teacher comments are supportive as well as diagnostic and pupils are encouraged to set their own targets for improvement and development.
127. The two specialist classrooms support an effective learning environment with very attractive displays of pupils' work; however, a significant proportion of history lessons take place outside the specialist area and this reduces their impact. There is limited access to information and communication technology and existing resources cannot be used fully nor can the department continue to develop as it would like if this situation continues. Overall the history department is delivering a very efficient and effective service to the pupils. Despite the high standards already achieved the department believes that it can develop still further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is satisfactory as a discrete subject but its use across the curriculum as an aid to learning is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers' good management of pupils
- The updated hard and software in the library for access to the Internet
- Good quality teaching

Areas for improvement

- To develop the use of information communication technology across the curriculum
- To intensify teacher training in the use of ICT
- To develop the use of control technology
- To update the schemes of work with an emphasis on the use of ICT in its wider context
- To implement procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress

128. The results of the 2001 GCSE examination show that attainment was below the national average but above that in similar schools. Although these results show a slight decline on last year's there has been a gradual improvement over recent years. Boys' achievement is better than that of girls.
129. Pupils enter the school with limited skills in ICT but with the benefit of regular specialist lessons they make good progress and reach appropriate levels of attainment by age 14. Pupils have good knowledge of the word processing application and use this with confidence. They enter the text in varying styles and use the appropriate procedures to edit their work. Pupils are developing desktop publishing skills, producing documents with a particular audience in mind. An example of this was a Year 9 production of a brochure about Boston. Here pupils used a range of techniques, giving information about the local area with easy to read text with added art graphics to make the publication more attractive. Although pupils are using their communication skills with understanding, they have not had the opportunity to extend their knowledge using a multi-media program. Pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of the use of a spreadsheet and have modelled situations in their project work. This was noticeable in a 'tuck-shop' topic, using the appropriate formulas to calculate the cost of items and presenting their findings in graph form. Pupils have knowledge of a database, creating fields to enter the data but they experience difficulty using the 'query' facility to select particular information. Although pupils are using these applications, their understanding of use in a wider context is limited, few pupils being able to give examples of where it might be used beyond the school. Pupils' understanding of control technology is at a basic level using the *Logo* program (a simple control program), but there are few opportunities to use more sophisticated programs.
130. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive a weekly ICT lesson and have the opportunity to study a GCSE course.
131. Discussion with pupils and in work seen shows that progress continues and at age 16 pupils have reached the expected level of attainment for their age. Pupils' use of the word processing application is further developed; the majority are independent users, using ICT to present their coursework in other subjects. Pupils in Year 11 are using a range of programs in their topics and are beginning to develop an understanding of how they can be used in different ways, for example, in the creation of a database for a hotel accommodation topic and a spreadsheet to calculate the costs of a wedding reception. Pupils have an understanding of the need of the Data Protection Act but few were able to give examples of where sensitive data might be stored.
132. Throughout the school pupils use the facilities of the Internet with confidence and understand the benefits when researching information for topics and projects. The use of e-mail, however, is under-developed. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are often paired with more confident pupils, are fully included in lessons and achieve appropriate individual targets. The overall standard of pupils' attainment has improved since the previous inspection.

133. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, using their skills well to guide pupils through procedures and moving them on to the next stage of learning. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and manage them well, encouraging a positive attitude to the subject through their personal enthusiasm. Pupils respond with interest to this approach, are keen to start work and anxious to succeed. Learning is better when previous work is carefully reviewed and when the task is clearly explained. When this occurs pupils are able to show a clear understanding of the task and a high level of independence, enthusiasm and will to improve. However, the lack of an interactive whiteboard to demonstrate new procedures meant that on occasions pupils did not always fully understand how to access a program. This was noticeable during a desktop publishing topic designing an Advent card. Here time was wasted visiting pupils individually to re-explain the process, slowing the pace of the lesson and learning.
134. The planning of lessons is generally satisfactory, but the short time allocated for the subject often means that pupils do not always have the opportunity to develop their work in any depth, some pupils expressing disappointment that they were unable to finish a task. These short lessons also effect the plenary sessions that are rushed with insufficient time to assess pupils' progress. Although planning builds on pupils existing knowledge the activities of the majority of lessons are skill based, failing to take into account the need to develop pupils understanding of the use of ICT in its wider context. Where teaching is less effective, explanations about the task lack clarity, resulting in pupils' being unsure of the work, becoming restless and learning less.
135. The head of department has had responsibility for the subject for only a short period and has yet to have an impact. He has, however, a clear commitment to maintaining and raising standards and the need to develop the use of ICT in other subjects to support learning. Although additional ICT resources have recently been acquired, some of the remaining computers are still dated and unable to support more sophisticated programs.

ICT across the curriculum

136. At the last inspection the provision for the use of ICT across the curriculum was judged to be unsatisfactory. Although some subjects are now making limited use of ICT to support pupils' learning the provision overall is still unsatisfactory. Few subjects have details in their schemes of work of how ICT can be used. This lack of use is partially due to restricted access to the computer suites that are being used predominantly for the GNVQ courses.
137. Pupils use word processing for their individual projects, in particular in English with examples of letter writing, designing of posters and newspaper reports, in design and technology and some examples in geography. The use of computers is a major part of the course for business studies and use is frequent but the hardware in this area is dated and not able to support use of the Internet, an integral part of the course. The recently updated equipment in the design and technology department is having a positive impact on pupils' learning with good use of a computer design program. Good use was observed in food technology, using probes to measure the temperature of defrosted food. The use however of computer aided manufacture is unsatisfactory. Although the music department makes effective use electronic keyboards, with facilities to record performances, programs to support composition are under-used. Many subjects have computer programs which could be used, but this does not often happen. Teachers' lack of confidence and competence is the main reason for under use of information and communication technology. Training of teachers is in its early stages but where teachers do have confidence ICT is contributing positively to pupils' skills and learning.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- GCSE results are good
- Pupils make good progress in Years 10 and 11

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' speaking skills and the use of the target language in lessons
- Use of ICT to support pupils' learning
- Procedures for monitoring the teaching of the subject

138. Results at GCSE in French over the last three years have shown a steady rise and in both 2000 and 2001 the percentage of candidates grades A* to C was well above the national average, although there was a relatively small number of pupils entered for the examination. Pupils generally achieved better in French than they did in their other subjects.
139. The progress made by pupils by age 14 is satisfactory although the standard of work seen is below the national average. Reading and listening skills are satisfactory. Written work is not ambitious, but it is accurate, particularly in tasks that are tightly controlled by the teacher. Higher attaining pupils use past tenses appropriately. Speaking skills are under-developed, although all pupils can successfully engage in short exchanges on topics currently being studied. When pupils are asked questions of a general nature based on previous learning, they are much less confident and their replies are hesitant. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They understand short extracts of spoken language and make short, appropriate responses to brief questions on well-rehearsed topics.
140. Less than a half of the pupils continue to study a foreign language beyond the age of 14. The standard of work of pupils at the age of 16 during the inspection was at least satisfactory. They understand spoken and written language well. Progress is good in the main, but speaking skills remain unsatisfactory. Within situations controlled by their teacher and in practice for their GCSE examinations, pupils speak reasonably well, but they lack confidence when speaking in unpredicted situations, even on everyday topics.
141. Teaching is satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Although there are several elements of good teaching in lessons throughout the school, the teaching of pupils preparing for their GCSE examinations is more focused and more effective; pupils demonstrate high levels of commitment, motivation and persistence. Throughout the school, most lessons have a brisk pace that keeps pupils on their toes. In the majority of lessons, teachers provide a variety of appropriate activities that enable pupils to practise a good range of language skills. Effective use is made of the foreign language assistants to help individual pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding.
142. The teaching of modern foreign languages makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills by encouraging them to think about language, to use grammatical terms and to recognise patterns in the foreign language and compare them with their own language. Teachers do not use the foreign language enough themselves in their lessons and do not insist enough that pupils also use the language for "real" purposes or for routine talk in the classroom. Opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills are missed and consequently pupils' speaking skills are insufficiently developed in all year groups. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is unsatisfactory.
143. The languages curriculum has been successfully broadened by the introduction of Spanish. The arrangements whereby a majority of pupils do not continue their study of a foreign language after the age of fourteen restricts the range and balance of educational experiences open to these pupils. The languages curriculum is enhanced by a programme of visits to France and Spain as well as a work experience placement for business studies sixth formers in Le Touquet, all of which make a valuable contribution to the personal development of the participants.

144. The department is satisfactorily managed. The responsibilities are shared by two experienced teachers who work well together as a team in forging good relationships within the department, in organising the day-to-day work, in the sharing of resources and in keeping detailed records of pupils' attainment and progress. However, the leadership of the department is not sufficiently clear. The monitoring of classroom practice is unsatisfactory at present as it is insufficiently extensive. Work on the provision of specific targets for pupils' improvement and which relates to National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades is in need of further development. The schemes of work are mostly adequate but further modification by reducing reliance on the course books and by matching more carefully lesson activities to the needs of individual pupils would help to raise standards in Years 7 to 9.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **unsatisfactory**, with a lack of specialist areas and access to instruments for practical sessions.

Strengths

- Pupils' performance skills at Key Stage 4
- Pupils' rhythmic qualities
- Good quality teaching

Areas for improvement

- To develop composition with the emphasis on practical element
- To improve the accommodation to provide specialist rooms
- To revise the schemes of work to include music from other cultures
- To develop the use of ICT to support the development of composition at all levels

145. Attainment in the 2001 GCSE examination was below the national average, but slightly above that of similar schools. Although the 2001 results show a slight decline there has been an upward trend over the three previous years. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to G was above the national average. Girls' attainment was better than boys'. Teachers' assessment of 14-year-olds in 2001 showed that standards were well below the national average. Although attainment is below average at age 14, discussion with pupils and observation of their work show that pupils' attainment has been underestimated and is better than the teacher assessments indicate.

146. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with limited skills in performance and composition. However, with the emphasis on the development of rhythm in the early years pupils make good progress and by age 14 have developed sound rhythmic qualities that are contributing to established performance skills. This was evident in a Year 9 class on rhythm exercises, accurately clapping rhythms reading from formal notation. This was also noticeable in a Year 7 group, following a graphic score, maintaining a steady beat whilst playing their home made percussion instruments in an ensemble performance. Pupils are able to describe the different styles of music they have listened to using correct musical vocabulary, but their knowledge of music from other cultures is limited.

147. Composition skills are not as good as they should be. Pupils lack the required basic techniques to develop their creative work, for example, the use of repeated patterns in music, an *ostinato* or a ground bass. They are able to describe the structure of a composition and the construction of a primary chord but few use this knowledge in their creative work. This weakness can be attributed to a number of causes: although there are two timetabled lessons a week, both are very short, with insufficient time for pupils to develop or refine their work in any depth. Additionally, a considerable amount of teaching takes place in non-specialist areas, with limited access to instruments for pupils to develop their improvisation skills. When pupils do have access to equipment their learning is better. This was evident in audio recordings of a 'round' composition. Here, higher attaining pupils were able to play the basic tune, improvising a melody with added single finger chords on the keyboard.

148. Pupils' attainment at age 16 is appropriate for their age. The majority of pupils in the Year 11 group are instrumentalists, performing confidently in a range of different styles. Although the creative element of the work is not so well developed as performance, the majority of the pupils have produced at least one composition with a clear structure, some showing creative development with complex rhythms and a percussion accompaniment. Pupils have listened to a range of different musical styles. They are able to name the different periods of music, accurately identify the main elements and explain the impact that the development of musical instruments has had on different periods of music. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons and make satisfactory progress, achieving appropriate targets.
149. Pupils' attitude to the subject is good; they enjoy music. Behaviour is good; pupils are anxious to improve and respond well to teachers' encouragement. They listen attentively to the performances of others and suggest ways to improve, contributing to their listening and appraising skills. The lunchtime singing sessions are well attended and pupils show enjoyment. Older pupils are confident in performance as seen in the audition sessions.
150. The overall quality of teaching is good. One lesson observed was unsatisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to explain skills. This was seen in a Year 10 class with a good demonstration on the keyboard to emphasise the structure of a composition and the effective use of chords. The outcome of this was that pupils were prepared to experiment with minor sounding chords, resulting in an overall improvement in their creative development. Teachers have good discipline, insisting on quiet when explaining or demonstrating a procedure. As a result, pupils are quickly on task and making progress.
151. A particular quality of the teaching is the good relationships that teachers have with their pupils. The outcome of these good relationships is that pupils feel confident to seek help when required, and this contributes well to their progress and learning. The planning of lessons is appropriate. However, the lack of practical activities in non-specialist areas is having a negative impact on pupils' creative progress. Although pupils work with interest in these situations, many comment that lessons are more interesting when given the opportunity to play an instrument. Where teaching is less effective the content of the lesson is inappropriate, lacking clear objectives and failing to build on pupils' previous knowledge. The effect of this is that pupils do not understand the work, become restless and lose interest, resulting in unsatisfactory learning. In order to develop pupils' technology skills, the department has converted a practice room into a small recording studio. However, the use of ICT to support the development of composition is unsatisfactory.
152. The management of the subject is good. The head of department is enthusiastic and has successfully raised the profile of the subject. Every effort is made to ensure that pupils receive a balanced musical education despite the constraints of the accommodation available.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good
- Pupils make good progress throughout both key stages
- Attitudes and behaviour are positive in physical education
- There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities offered
- The department is well managed.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE results are below the national average
- Assessment criteria need to be clearer and shared with the pupils

153. The attainment of pupils at age 14 and age 16 is in line with national expectations. A few boys and girls achieve very good standards of performance, especially those involved in extra-curricular activities. Only a small minority attain below average standards. In outdoor and adventurous

activities many girls are keen to take on challenges and can apply the theory of compass work in practice. Many boys throughout the school achieve sound standards in games, especially football and volleyball. Higher attaining older boys achieve good standards in volleyball where they demonstrate good service and setting skills. Particularly good work was seen in trampolining where girls were working on complex sequences. When given the opportunity pupils show a good ability to plan and evaluate their work. They recognise the importance of rules and apply them appropriately. All pupils showed good understanding of the importance of warm-up and recovery from exercise as well as knowing the effects of exercise on the body.

154. The relatively new GCSE groups have made a good start. Two-fifths of the first cohort in 2001 achieved grades A* to C and all achieved A* to G grades. Evidence from the inspection shows that the current Year 11 GCSE group are capable of achieving a similar standard. The current Year 10 group shows knowledge and understanding of theory which they are capable of linking to sporting practices.
155. Most pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, make good progress both in lessons and over longer periods of time. Girls make consistent progress over time in planning and performing and in their ability to evaluate the work of other pupils. Boys make good progress in knowledge and in the application of rules in volleyball.
156. Nearly all pupils work with enthusiasm and commitment in lessons. The majority are keen to participate, except for a small number of boys in Year 11. Pupils use practice well and engage in tasks for sustained periods to improve accuracy of specific skills. Pupils listen well and most observe demonstrations perceptively. Relationships are good among pupils and between teachers and pupils. Boys and girls work well collaboratively, showing good sportsmanship and fair play. They are always appropriately dressed for physical education.
157. In almost all lessons the teaching is good and on occasions very good. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into mainstream lessons. Teacher expectations are high with clear learning objectives and secure subject knowledge. Good use is made of well-matched and progressive practices that enable pupils of all levels of attainment to make progress. A good range of teaching styles includes appropriate time for direct instruction and opportunities for pupils to practise and solve problems. Teachers maintain good standards of discipline and pupil management.
158. The department offers a broad and balanced physical education programme which fulfils the National Curriculum requirements and which meets the interests and needs of the pupils. The department is working towards the full implementation of the QCA schemes of work but some review needs to be given to ensure sufficient time for consolidation of activities to promote attainment. There are assessment procedures in place which reflect the National Curriculum levels for recording but these are not activity specific enough to inform teacher planning sufficiently, and they are not shared with the pupils. However, the department is well placed to develop an effective assessment model which will improve standards through more detailed planning. A strength of the department are the numerous extra-curricular activities offered to all pupils. Every effort is made to encourage inclusion in all activities. For example, girls' soccer teams have been launched with considerable success.
159. The department is well managed. There is a true desire to keep improving pupil standards. Day to day administration is effective: there is clear educational direction and a working departmental development plan. There are adequate resources and spaces for teaching physical education and good use is made of the school library.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **not satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils in Year 7 attain satisfactory standards as set out in the local agreed syllabus
- All teaching staff have good generic teaching skills
- Pupil management is good and high standards of behaviour expected automatically
- Most pupils are keen to participate and enjoy their lessons
- Non-specialist staff are well supported
- The newly-appointed head of department has a clear view as to how to move the subject forward

Areas for improvement

- The creating of a smaller team of staff to teach the subject
- Developing the subject knowledge and understanding of any non-specialist staff
- Making adequate time provision for the teaching of the subject in the upper school and the sixth form to comply with the requirements of the local agreed syllabus
- Planning provision for the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils
- Using data on pupils' previous levels of attainment to plan appropriate tasks to support better progress in learning and the raising of levels of attainment overall

160. GCSE examination results for the past four years have produced results well below the national average, with pupils gaining comparative grades below those attained in other subjects. The current Year 11 pupils, however, are achieving satisfactory standards, although somewhat below the course requirements. Some pupils following a general RE course and at the end of Key Stage 4 display characteristics in oral work in line with expected levels set out in the LEA agreed syllabus for RE. They are able to respond to religious and other perspectives of ethical issues in a positive manner, relating them to their own experiences and understanding of the world. Others are less secure in these skills and find it difficult to evaluate either religious or other views on moral issues, although they do ask relevant questions and recognise in basic ways the questions of right and wrong involved. In written work, levels of attainment are less secure. Pupils' progress is often inhibited by tasks not developing the skills required at this level and merely asking for knowledge to be repeated.

161. A similar pattern is seen in Years 7, 8 and 9. At age 14, standards are below those set out in the agreed syllabus and that which would reflect many pupils' prior level of attainment. Work in Year 8 is poor overall, especially in presentation of written work. Year 7 pupils, however, are generally working in line with their previous levels and making good progress. The progress of lower attaining pupils throughout the school is often inhibited by the nature of the work set which fails to take into account previous levels of attainment. Some lower attaining pupils, however, including those with statements of special educational need, are achieving well, especially when not taught in mixed ability groups.

162. Despite a large number of non-specialists teachers most teaching is at least satisfactory because of the use of good, technically competent teaching skills. When weaknesses occur they are consistently linked to limited subject knowledge and the ability of staff to use RE subject material flexibly. When this is not possible staff have difficulty in responding to pupils' needs and helping them to develop the language, concepts and understanding of the subject. Pupils have good attitudes to their work, taking an interest even when material is poorly presented. Considerable interest is shown about other faiths and a positive attitude is displayed to ideas and issues which are different from their own.

163. Curriculum provision fulfils the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in both key stages, although it is not completely satisfactory in the sixth form. Time allocation in Key Stage 4 does not, however, allow for the curriculum to be covered properly. Some staff feel the pressure of this constraint and it affects the quality of their teaching. Planning is satisfactory overall, but there is little if any planned provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupil data is not always used well to plan work.

164. The newly-appointed head of department has a clear view of what she wants for the subject in school and high expectations as to what can be achieved. These ambitions will only be fully achieved if staffing issues are addressed and a comprehensive RE team can be identified who have appropriate subject training and experience.

BUSINESS STUDIES

The school makes **very good** provision for business studies.

Strengths

- Commitment, experience and expertise of the teaching staff
- Mature and dedicated approach of the pupils

Areas for improvement

- Greater use of the Internet to support learning

165. Business studies is an increasingly popular subject choice for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Courses are offered leading to GCSE qualifications and to the intermediate level of GNVQ. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, are able to access the course as long as they have achieved level 4 in English by the end of Year 9. Results in public examinations have shown a clear improvement over recent years and in 2001 they were below the national average but above the average for similar schools. Standards seen in lessons indicate that the improvement is likely to continue: all pupils were making good progress, including those with special educational need, and were attaining standards at least in line with what might be expected for their age.

166. Attitudes to learning in the subject are extremely positive. Pupils use what they have learned skilfully to take them forward, and they are clearly developing good levels of understanding of the business world and how it works. Their learning is enhanced by visits to local enterprises and benefits considerably from being based in businesses and activities which are familiar to the pupils.

167. The teaching in business studies is of a high order. Teachers use their own commercial experience well to ensure that pupils develop their ideas and understanding. Good teaching skills were observed when teachers used questioning which challenged pupils' prior learning, bringing it to the fore and linking it with the next step which pupils had to make. All pupils are encouraged to make use of ICT to support their learning, although the age of the computers at their disposal does not allow wider use such as access to the Internet to follow up personal research.

PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2001.

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design A-level	6	100		50			
GNVQ Advanced art and design	6	100					
GNVQ Advanced business studies	6	100		100			

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
GNVQ art and design	3	100		100			
GNVQ business studies	10	100		10		10	

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCES

The course leading to the Advanced Vocational Certificate in science was introduced at the beginning of the current academic year. The intermediate GNVQ course in health and social care was sampled as part of the science inspection because it is taught principally by science staff. It is not reported on in a discrete paragraph but is commented on in the science paragraph below.

Science

The provision which the school makes for science is a developing strength and standards of attainment are satisfactory to good. Students make good progress in response to consistently good teaching and their attitudes to learning are very good. The new courses are well managed.

Strengths

- The attainment of most students following the AVCE Advanced Science course is in line with national expectations and it is above for two of the students
- Students' knowledge and application of the biological, chemical and physical principles in the vocational context are developing well. Their gains in advanced practical skills are satisfactory for some and very good for others
- Students' motivation is very good and they are pleased to have the opportunity to studying this course, which is well matched to their aptitudes and aspirations
- Well-planned, consistently good teaching and a well-led team of teachers

Areas for improvement

- The new scheme of work needs to be completed and evaluated
- The range and number of links with external agencies should be expanded so as to enrich the vocational aspects of the advanced course
- The degree of challenge presented by all specialist teachers should be more consistently high

- The provision for ICT should be significantly improved

168. The provision in the sixth form is a new Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education in Science (equivalent to two Advanced level subjects) and a GNVQ Intermediate course in health and social care. Both provide good progression from courses in Years 10 and 11. The department also contributes to the teaching of the PE department's BTEC course in sports science.
169. The standard of attainment of most students on the advanced course meets the course requirements and for a few girls it is well above the minimum expectation. In relation to their prior attainment at GCSE, these standards, after just over half a term, represent good progress. This progress is characterised by good gains in knowledge and practical skills, an increasing confidence as independent learners, sustained intellectual effort when wrestling with difficult concepts and an increasing effectiveness in weighing evidence and testing hypotheses.
170. The attitudes to learning on the advanced course are very good and these are sustained by a strikingly mature group ethos and excellent relationships with the teachers and technicians. The quality of support and guidance is also good. Particular account is taken of students' aspirations and of their personal circumstances. There is regular assessment and monitoring of their attainment against course expectations and the quality of feedback is good.
171. The quality of teaching is good or very good, reflecting the characteristics of the best teaching seen in Years 10 and 11 but overlaid with a more mature style and a deliberate drive for independence of learning. More opportunity is given for reflection and evaluation and this contributes to a more assured style of writing in some of the substantial assignments. There needs to be more development of very challenging questioning in some lessons, in order to maximise the progress of the highest attaining students. Whilst the course is in its first year, good progress has been made in providing all the students, in their first term, with work placements which reflect their aptitudes and career aspirations.
172. The standards of attainment on the Health and Social Care course are also consistent with course requirements and the progress of most pupils is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. Their attitude to learning is satisfactory to good but they do not display significant independence of learning. The quality of teaching is good, as is the quality of assessment and feedback, guidance and support.

BUSINESS

Provision is very good. Examination results are above average - better than would be expected from students' GCSE results. Course work is very good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and teaching is good with very good features.

Strengths

- The teachers' secure knowledge of the subject, enthusiasm and good commercial experience
- The meticulous planning and sound organisation of lessons
- Very positive relationships between staff and students
- Examination achievement in the GNVQ/AVCE course
- Curriculum links with the modern languages department, offering a wide range of business modules
- The leadership and management of the department

Areas for improvement

- The updating of ICT provision in the business suite, including the provision of Internet access

173. Pupils' attainment in the GNVQ Advanced examination in 2001 was well above the national average as all six candidates gained distinctions; this confirmed the high standards set in previous years. All students following the intermediate course have completed and passed since 1999. Most of the Year 12 students studying on the advanced course have made more progress than their baseline performance would suggest. Students also have the opportunity to take the AS and A2 examinations in addition to the vocational qualifications, broadening their range of qualifications. The department has built up a strong reputation for providing a quality business

education experience where retention and success rates are very high. Academic progress through the sixth form is very strong; several of the students take up the subject for the first time in the sixth form and their achievement is very good. There has been a large increase in the numbers studying the new advanced course.

174. Observation of lessons and a scrutiny of students' work confirm that most students are working hard and are achieving very well. In the Year 12 advanced group, students are able to identify the different phases of market research and they are able to interpret statistical data, using information and communication technology and various types of graphs to present the information clearly and comprehensively. The Year 12 advanced students are also able to identify different groups of company stakeholders, to role-play and to work effectively in small groups to develop presentations supporting the interests of these different groups. Co-operation and teamwork observed is impressive and is strongly supported by the teachers' expertise. The Year 13 advanced students confidently examine and analyse different job descriptions and person specifications. They are able to identify the key elements of a post from local advertisements and they are able to relate what they learn to real-life commercial situations. They are able to identify the specific contributions made by government and to relate it to their special area of study, the National Health Service. The group has visited a local hospital and is able to relate the larger issues to the local economic situation. The quality of argument and discussion in the Year 13 group indicates that good progress is made over the two years. By the second year students have gained in confidence and in their ability to express their ideas both orally and in writing. The Year 13 group has produced an impressive amount of high-quality and highly perceptive written work.
175. Teaching is good overall with some very good features. Teachers are very secure in their own knowledge of the subject and the meticulous management of the learning process is impressive. There is a team of four teachers, each of whom plays to their own strengths and interests and there is a great enthusiasm for the subject, which is communicated to the students. The team has very strong commercial experience, which is used to good effect in the classrooms. The teacher support material used is of a high quality and provides a sound basis for learning. In addition, a range of textbooks is being built up: as yet the range is not comprehensive and there is a need for more business resources in the library. There is an adequate number of computers in two of the business classrooms but they are now dated, slow to load and not connected to the Internet. Independent research using the Internet is therefore limited to the library area. This needs to be addressed if the full resources of information and communication technology are to be used in the business suite. Little use of the computers was observed during the inspection.
176. Relationships between students and with staff are very good and this environment encourages students to exchange ideas, to listen to each other and to work together effectively. In the Year 12 group, teamwork is impressive and students work well with all their teachers. There is a clear desire to do well. Staff have high expectations of their students. Coursework is well organised and is strongly supported by rigorous monitoring and assessment processes that underpin the progress that the students make. Students are very clear about their own strengths and weaknesses and what targets they must achieve to reach the next stage of their development. The business suite, the aged computers notwithstanding, provides a quality environment for effective learning.
177. There are very good links with local industries: visits are undertaken to public and private sector enterprises and business people are encouraged to visit the school and share their expertise. The department is very fortunate to have two of its staff with extensive business experience; this provides a sound business dimension to the way the course is taught. The department also works very effectively with the modern languages department to provide a language component on the course and has developed a pattern of work experience in France as a result of this co-operation. This adds an additional element to an already very effective course.
178. The department is well led and provides a clear strategic framework for further curriculum development. The head of department is a recent appointment and has brought enthusiasm and drive to the post. The staff handbook is well organised and the scheme of work is thorough and comprehensive, promoting careful and effective planning. The department works very well as a team: teachers are able to share their ideas and their resources to support good student learning and progress. Recently a GNVQ Part 1 course has been introduced in Year 10 and this, together

with the established GCSE course, will provide a very sound basis for further interest and development in the sixth form business courses.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Sports Studies

Overall, the quality of provision in sports studies is **very good**.

Strengths

- 100 per cent passes at BTEC National Diploma
- Very good quality of teaching
- Very good use of resources, work placements and external facilities to enhance learning

Areas for improvement

- The attainment of those studying BTEC First Diploma is below expectations.

179. There are two courses offered in the sixth form: the BTEC First Diploma and the BTEC National Diploma. Overall attainment for those studying the BTEC National course is in line with course requirements and some students attain standards well beyond course requirements. In the last two years, BTEC National results have been good. The proportion of students achieving a pass has been 100 per cent and the expected numbers of merits and distinctions is increasing. Inspection evidence shows that the students currently following the Year 13 BTEC National course are producing work which is at least at merit standard or better. They demonstrate good understanding of diet, diseases and malnutrition links, are able to apply a range of theoretical principles and convey their views effectively.

180. Students following the Year 12 BTEC National course have made good progress since they started the course and they are achieving well. They are able to answer questions about and discuss wide aspects of sport with knowledge and understanding. Students achieve well and have a good range of skills. They are well motivated with positive attitudes towards the course.

181. Students studying the BTEC First Diploma are not achieving as well as they should. They lack self-motivation, knowledge and understanding of basic principles such as the components needed for a balanced diet.

182. Teaching is very good. Care is taken to plan interesting activities which match the student needs and which have a direct link to sport. All students are encouraged to take advantage of the school sporting facilities, which they do every day. Relationships with teachers and students are very good and there is a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Opportunities are also available for all sixth form students to participate in recreational sport every Wednesday afternoon. Participation rates are very good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design

Overall the quality of provision in art and design is **good**.

Strengths

- The subject is well-managed and well-led
- Students work with a high degree of independence
- Group work is good and students work well with one another
- Vocational courses are available
- Extra-curricular activities – such as visits to galleries and museums are good

Areas for improvement

- The curriculum is too narrow
- Assessment and recording procedures are unsatisfactory

183. Attainment at GCE A-level in art and design in 2001 was above the national average and high compared with similar schools. At GNVQ Intermediate all three students achieved a merit and at GNVQ Advanced Level five out of six students achieved a distinction.
184. Year 12 students show enthusiasm for the set tasks and most work with a reasonable degree of concentration to produce interesting objects. They work at a good pace and apply themselves to the task of improving the quality of their ideas, concepts, attitudes and beliefs through art and design activities. They also work to acquire those skills that will enable them to communicate these ideas effectively. By this stage many of the students have the capacity to carry out independent research. All students, including the lowest attainers, work to their potential and some have developed the capacity for resolving quite complex problems. Most work with a range of three-dimensional materials such as clay, wood, wire mesh, and plaster of Paris to produce large constructions in three dimensions. Some show initiative and have the confidence to explore the characteristics of the materials that they use. Most demonstrate interest in what they are doing and acquire skills that enable them to think and learn for themselves.
185. As students progress into Year 13, they display greater confidence in the quality of their ideas, concepts, attitudes, values and beliefs as legitimate starting points for investigation. Students draw upon historical and contemporary contexts to inform their actions. At present one student is carrying out research into the work of William Morris, while another is investigating optical illusion. Both are incorporating this research material into their own work. One student is making good use of photography as a means of exploring his ideas. The other student is using the computer, scanner and printer as a means of developing and extending the range of her ideas.
186. Teaching is good. The students are encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own learning and to make every effort to resolve problems for themselves. Students carry out most of their initial research at home or in the local environment, away from the school. Teachers encourage students to make critical evaluations of their own and others' work at the end of each assignment. Opportunities for assessing and recording key skills are missed, however. All students produce written material, word-processed documents and apply number skills in much of their work. This evidence of key skills however, is not assessed nor is it recorded within the art and design context. There remains some confusion concerning the rationale for entering Year 13 students for the AS Level, the GCE A-level and the AVCE qualification concurrently. Departmental policy needs to be made clearer on this matter
187. Teachers give oral feedback to students on their performance, but a more rigorous and a more formal assessment structure is required. It is important that detailed information be provided for students on a regular basis to inform them about their progress. The relationships between students and teachers are good but some of the more capable students are not being sufficiently challenged. Students respond positively to the set tasks and assignments. They enjoy their work and feel that they are making satisfactory progress. Their visual diaries show that they are capable of carrying out substantial research unaided. Insufficient use is made of ICT as an effective means of carrying out research that can lead to interesting outcomes.
188. More students at this level should be making much better use of photography and ICT as means of investigating and developing ideas. On the basis of work seen, many of these students are capable of resolving complex problems within a design, rather than in a pre-dominantly craft orientated context. At present, with so much emphasis on craft and fine art based activities, there is little evidence of substantial design work. Greater effort should be made, therefore, to extend the range of activities on offer to these students to incorporate graphic design, photography, printmaking, product design, fashion and textiles, and even garden design within the curriculum.
189. Management of the department is sound, but the assessment and recording of students' achievement needs to improve. There is a need for a detailed recording system that shows clearly what students have achieved within a pre-determined time frame. These records should contain an evaluation of the students' work against set criteria and serve to indicate how the overall standard of work can be raised. Regular visits are made to museums and galleries in London and Paris. Many artists, craftspeople and designers have been invited into the school to work with the students. Displays of work within the art rooms and in the school generally could be improved.

PERFORMING ARTS

Overall, the quality of provision in AVCE performing arts is **good**.

Strengths

- The subject is well led and has mainly adequate resources
- There is good teaching in the drama component
- The dance-drama studio provides an appropriate teaching area
- Students are highly committed and hard working

Areas for improvement

- There is some lack of specialist equipment, for example suitable lighting
- Not all the course options are currently available to students and there is some imbalance in the time given to drama compared with other components
- Shortage of space leads to some teaching taking place in unsuitable areas
- There are limited opportunities for sixth form public performance within the context of school

190. After the first few weeks of the course standards are in line with what might be expected and represent good progress in relation to students' prior attainment.
191. Formal course assessment has not yet taken place but teachers keep a thorough record of attainment and carefully match the work offered to the needs of the students. In Year 12, standards in dance are near average for this stage in the course. Dance work has begun well with basic techniques appropriately absorbed. Fluidity of movement and use of small-scale gesture are developing. Students have opportunities to observe and learn from the recorded work of leading practitioners, for example, the choreography of Christopher Bruce, and this helps them to refine and develop their own performances. Standards in drama are mainly secure and are near average for this early stage. Students improvise with some fluency and are often inventive in their realisation of dramatic situations. Scripted work is quickly assimilated, with students displaying understanding and expertise in extracts drawn from the work of John Godber. Standards are more variable in extended writing related to the analytical aspects of the course. Overall standards in sixth form performing arts compare favourably with students' prior attainment.
192. Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. All teachers suitably stress the importance of the improvise-rehearse-perform process together with the need for careful evaluation and the development of critical analysis. Work is well matched to students' abilities. Teaching embodies good preparation, suitable teaching materials, good pace and thorough organisation. Teaching skilfully promotes consideration of performance venue and audience when developing pieces for public performance, so that the students become aware of the many factors that must be investigated. Teachers make sure that students have opportunities to develop most necessary skills. However, dance is given insufficient time when compared with drama, and options in music are not currently offered. This means that some student potential remains unexplored. Sixth form teaching stresses the need to develop analytical thinking. Students are helped to consolidate their knowledge of technical vocabulary, but this aspect of literacy development is not sufficiently routine to support students' evaluative work. Marking of student work is thorough and whilst giving appropriate encouragement to students indicates clearly the areas that require improvement. The department has already noted students' written work as an area for development.
193. The three students currently on the course are highly enthusiastic and diligent. They work with focus and respond well to challenging work. The students carefully record the content and outcome of each lesson. Relationships are good. Students' response to all elements of the course is admirable and they show high levels of commitment. Most students have a mature approach to learning and work hard.
194. The department has good organisation with many suitable administrative processes in place. There is awareness of pupil potential but as yet insufficient use is made of target setting. The assessment of students' work is satisfactory and attainment is carefully recorded. Suitable assessment records are kept. Management of the environment is good. The department has

limited technological resources but plans to improve lighting and information and communication technology provision. Students are able to use computers to draft their written course work. Accommodation in the dance/drama area is good and suitable for most performing arts activities. The department is currently promoting opportunities for students to take part in performances and give workshops; they also regularly visit theatres to see others perform. Such opportunities have a very positive effect on student development.

Information and communication technology

195. ICT was sampled in the sixth form. Students studying the level 2 key skills course are making satisfactory progress. They have sound knowledge of the communication element, using the word processing application with understanding. Students have knowledge of PowerPoint presentation and understand the use of spreadsheets, knowing how they are used in a wider context and able to give examples of where they might be used beyond the school. They have a clear understanding of the benefits of using ICT as a tool for communication.