

INSPECTION REPORT

**LUTTERWORTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL
AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Lutterworth

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120300

Headteacher: Mr C J Henstock

Reporting inspector: Mrs M Ellender-Gelé
2348

Dates of inspection: 4th – 8th December 2000

Inspection number: 223841

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	14 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bitteswell Road Lutterworth Leicestershire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Beeson
Date of previous inspection:	January 1996

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Michael Lovett 3695	Team inspector	Mathematics	Teaching and learning
Graham Matthews 11832	Team inspector	Special educational needs Equal opportunities	Assessment
Ian Middleton 12969	Team inspector	Art and design	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
John Stout 12957	Team inspector	Geography	

* The school uses the term IT with parents and students to refer to information technology

and its use across subjects of the curriculum. Therefore IT is used throughout the report.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a very large voluntary controlled Church of England comprehensive school. It has 1935 boys and girls on roll, aged 14-18 of whom 730 are in the sixth form. There are slightly more boys than girls in Years 10 and 11, and slightly more girls than boys in the sixth form. The school has increased in size since the last inspection and is very popular. The attainment of students, when they join the school, covers the full range from very high to very low, although the proportion of students of higher ability is above average. Very few students (1.9%) are from minority ethnic groups, and all are fluent in English. The proportion of students with special educational needs, at 6.9%, is low. The percentage of students who have a statement of special educational needs, at 1.5%, is below average. Only 2.98% of students are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. However, students come from the full range of backgrounds. The overall social context of the school is slightly more favourable than the national picture. The school gained specialist Technology College status in 1997.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Lutterworth Grammar School and Community College provides a good quality education. The excellent leadership of the principal, supported by a very effective team of vice principals, senior managers and governors, creates a positive climate in which students want to learn. The school provides good value for money, and post-16 provision is very cost effective. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. The school sets itself challenging targets for results in examinations. Progress made towards these is good. Teaching is of good quality overall, and very good in the sixth form. Challenge in lessons and high expectations lead to rapid learning and high standards. Overall, the school's many strengths far outweigh the areas to be improved.

What the school does well

- Standards are high. Students gain well above average results in GCSE examinations. Achievements on A-level and GNVQ courses are good.
- Teaching is a strength. Consequently, students enjoy their work and make very good progress, particularly in the sixth form.
- Students' behaviour and relationships are very good. The climate for learning is very positive and, in the sixth form, it is excellent.
- The principal provides excellent leadership. The senior team, key managers and governors are very effective.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's strengths and areas for improvement are very good.
- The curriculum is of very good quality. The range, breadth and relevance of academic and vocational routes meet students' needs well.
- Monitoring students' welfare and well-being is very strong. Induction on entry into the school, and when students enter the sixth form, is very effective.
- Extra-curricular activities are wide ranging. These contribute very positively to students' social and moral development.

What could be improved

- Boys' progress, which is insufficiently rapid apart from the more able.
- Opportunities for students to reflect, criticise and analyse their own work when learning.
- Information technology across subjects of the curriculum.

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

The school is already working on these points, but there is more to be done in order to raise standards still further.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Lutterworth Grammar School and Community College continues to be a good school, as identified in the previous inspection in 1996. Since then, significant progress has been made. Good examination results have been maintained and the quality of teaching has improved. Overall, there has been good progress within areas identified for improvement. Curriculum provision is now broad, balanced and relevant to students' needs. Issues identified in design and technology have been addressed fully. Opportunities for students to learn independently are now good. The involvement of governors in the strategic direction of the school is now a strength. From a very low base, progress in the use of information technology across the curriculum has been sound. However, more remains to be done in this aspect of the school's work. Religious education is now provided for, although very thinly in the sixth form. Across subjects, provision for spiritual development is insufficient. Provision for cultural development is now satisfactory. Further work is needed to develop students' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on the average point score in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	1999
GCSE examinations	B	A	A	D*
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	C	

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Similar schools are grouped by the proportion of students entitled to free school meals, which is taken as a measure of social background. Local government profiles show that this criterion disadvantages Lutterworth Grammar School as it places its examination performance lower than is reasonable, considering social circumstances in the area it serves.

Against results in national tests taken at the end of Year 9 just before entry into the school, students at Lutterworth Grammar School and Community College do better than average. This positive picture is reflected in work seen during the inspection for students now in Years 10 and 11. When compared with schools with students of similar prior attainment, results in 1999 were also above average. Although in Summer 2000 a slightly lower percentage of students achieved five or more A*-C grades at GCSE, results were again better than average against results gained by the same students in the 1998 national tests. GCSE results were above the national average in almost all subjects, being particularly high in business studies, drama, English literature, food, geography, geology, graphic products, information technology, music, physical education and Spanish. Results were not as high in art, some aspects of design and technology, German and religious education, but were still broadly in line with the national average.

The wide gap between the results of boys and girls has narrowed. The school continues to address the issue of gender difference at GCSE. However, boys of average and low prior attainment do not reach their full potential, leading to lower examination results for them. This is particularly the case in some aspects of design and technology (resistant materials and systems and control), mathematics and modern foreign languages.

A-level examinations and success in post-16 vocational qualifications offer a very positive picture. Improvement in results, over the last four years, has been steady. In 1999, they were particularly high and well above the national average. In 2000, successes were noteworthy in biology, chemistry, drama, economics, further mathematics, geography, geology, graphic communication, food technology, history, information technology, music, physical education, physics, psychology and social science. Boys and

girls do equally well in the sixth form.

Students with special educational needs make good progress leading to creditable results in examinations. Standards in reading, writing and spelling are good and students use these skills well in the subjects studied.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good in Years 10 and 11. Very good in the sixth form.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good for almost all students in and around the school. A few boys in Years 10 and 11 do not behave well enough in their lessons and this impacts on the progress they make. Students in the sixth form provide very good role models.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Mature attitudes and supportive relationships. Students work well together.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance figures are in line with the national average, with a recent improvement in unauthorised absence.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development are important strengths of the school and create an environment in which the vast majority of students learn well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	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.

The good teaching results in effective learning by students. Very good or excellent teaching was seen in one fifth of lessons in Years 10 and 11 and in two fifths in the sixth form. This results in a rapid pace of learning. Good or better teaching was seen in two thirds of all lessons. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in only 5% of lessons.

Effective teaching and learning is found in all subjects. It is of most consistently high quality in geography, drama, music, leisure and tourism, and in social sciences courses such as sociology and psychology, in the sixth form. There is much effective teaching in art and design, business studies, English, history, information technology, mathematics and science. Although there are good lessons, there are also occasional shortcomings in a small number of lessons in design and technology, modern foreign languages and religious education. The weakest teaching is in the form tutors' weekly lesson for personal, social and health education (PSHE), although some lessons were taught very well and engaged students in their learning. Students with special educational needs are taught well. Learning support assistants and teachers provide good support to improve self-esteem and confidence. Gifted and talented students are challenged appropriately and make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets students' needs well. Extra-curricular provision is very good. The high level of staff commitment to extra-curricular activities is a significant strength.
Provision for students with special educational needs (SEN)	Good. Students with special educational needs make good progress across the curriculum. Teachers know students who have special educational needs well, but the targets set in individual education plans are not sufficiently specific. The management of SEN provision is effective.
Provision for students' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Sound overall. Provision for moral and social development is good. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory, however more remains to be done to promote cultural diversity. Provision for spiritual development across subjects is insufficient.
How well the school cares for its students	The school makes very good provision for the care and safety of all students. It promotes very good behaviour. Procedures for monitoring academic progress and personal development are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The principal offers excellent leadership. He is supported very effectively by the vice-principals and senior managers. Together they provide a clear sense of purpose and direction to the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body provides very effective strategic leadership and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Individual governors undertake their roles in an active way and work hard on behalf of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Attainment and progress of students is evaluated very well. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is a strength.
The strategic use of resources	Available resources, accommodation and staffing are adequate. These are deployed well to support and maintain high standards. The school works hard to gain the best value from purchases and contracts.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects students to work hard • Students like school and they make good progress • Teaching is good • The school helps students to become mature • The school cares for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school should work more closely with parents • Better information is needed about progress • Homework is too much for some and not enough for a few. Parents are not always aware of what needs to be done

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. They are very supportive of the school in most areas of its work. The concerns that some parents have about the lack of specific information on progress and homework is justified. Reports are not sufficiently informative and students' organisers are not used enough as a home-school communicator. Reports are in the process of being re-modelled to improve their quality. The school provides sufficient opportunities for parents to be involved in the work of the school. Information on curriculum provision is particularly good. Recent workshops on working with teenagers were very successful and much appreciated by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Attainment on entry

1. Almost all students, (90%), come from two main feeder high schools. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment on entry to the school, based on Key Stage 3 national tests, have remained above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In the last three years, boys' average point score on entry into Year 10 has been lower than that of girls in English. The attainment of students when they join the school covers the full range from very high to very low, but overall the proportion of students of high ability is above average.

Performance in examinations

2. At age 16, results in the GCSE examinations are well above the national average. These good results have been maintained over the last three years. The percentage of students achieving five or more A*-C grades dropped slightly in 2000, from 58% in 1999 to 56% in 2000, reflecting the lower average point score of students who took National Curriculum tests in 1998. The percentage of students achieving five or more A*-G grades rose from 94% in 1999 to 95.6% in 2000. In 2000, 99% of students gained at least one GCSE at grade A*-G. These figures are above average. The overall trend in average point score from 1997 to 2000 is rising, although not as fast as the national trend. The average point score rose by 1.5 points in 2000. A key issue for the school to address lies in results for boys. In 1999, the gap between boys and girls average point score was twice the national difference. The school instigated several initiatives and the gender gap narrowed in 2000. However, concerns over the progress and success of average and low attaining boys in the GCSE examinations remain. The school is aware of this issue. Strategies to improve boys' results have been discussed and agreed, but they have yet to have an impact in all subjects, particularly in design and technology and modern foreign languages.
3. At GCSE, results are well above average in business studies, drama, English literature, food technology, geography, geology, graphic products, information technology, music, physical education and Spanish. Results are above the national figure in English language, French, history, mathematics, science and textiles technology. They are in line with the national average in art and design, German and religious education. Results in resistant materials and systems and control, the latter subject taken predominantly by boys, are slightly below average. Students obtained good results in vocational qualifications. Those who study for certificates of achievement obtain creditable results against their low prior attainment on entry into courses.
4. Results at A-level have improved year on year since 1996 and, in 1999, they were well above the national figure. The average point score was particularly high in that year (20.5) and not maintained in 2000. However, the pass rate improved to 93%. Boys and girls do equally well in the sixth form. In 2000, a 100% pass rate was achieved in A-level economics, further mathematics, geography, geology, German, graphic communication, home economics, information technology, music, physics, physical education, politics and theatre studies. Results were also high in biology, chemistry, history, social sciences and psychology. In all other subjects results were at least in

line with the national average except in French. Results were good in A/S level graphics and information technology. Results are also good in vocational qualifications. The average point score achieved by students entered for advanced GNVQs is above average. In 1999, 92% of students achieved GNVQs at intermediate level, well above the national average.

Attainment compared with similar schools

5. The school has a very low percentage of students who are eligible for free school meals. Against the national benchmarks, based on the free school meal indicator, results at GCSE are below average. Inspectors consider that the free school meals' indicator does not give a fair picture because it does not represent well the social context of the school. The progress students make from Key Stage 3 to GCSE is a better indicator of the school's performance.
6. Against results in the 1997 National Curriculum tests, students did better than expected, leading to GCSE results well above those of schools with a similar intake in 1999. Although in Summer 2000 a slightly lower percentage of students achieved five or more A*-C grades at GCSE than in 1999, results were again better than schools with a similar intake, based on results achieved, by this cohort, in the 1998 National Curriculum tests. Therefore, against National Curriculum tests, at age 14, students at Lutterworth Grammar School and Community College have done better than expected for two consecutive years and better than similar schools. This positive picture is reflected in the work seen during the inspection week for students now in Years 10 and 11.

Targets set by the school

7. Ambitious targets are set. The 1999 and 2000 targets, for 61% of students to achieve five or more grades A*-C at GCSE, were not met. However, the level of challenge set by governors, the principal and senior management, was, and continues to be, appropriate. Targets have been agreed, with the local education authority, as is required. All subject departments set targets based on information provided by senior managers. This is done well in English, mathematics and science. Overall, good progress is made towards meeting school and subject targets. A more detailed gender analysis, and better use of assessment on entry into Year 10 for other subjects, are needed to ensure that the slower rate of boys' progress is addressed and to achieve the ambitious target of 63% five or more grades A*-C, set for 2001 and 2002.

Achievement by students currently at the school

Standards of work seen in Years 11 and 13 are above average. Overall, students make good progress and they achieve well.

8. In **English**, students enter the school in Year 10 with above average attainment. High attaining students are advanced well as they progress through the school, and those with special educational needs make good progress in their reading and their written and oral accuracy. Boys generally do not attain as well as girls, but strategies for improving their performance are beginning to have an impact. At age 18, standards are above average in A-level language, literature and in media studies. Many students, particularly those in the sixth form, show considerable maturity of expression, both written and verbal.
9. In **mathematics**, attainment on entry to Year 10 is above average, and students' rate of progress is broadly as expected. In the lower attaining classes, many boys lack

concentration, and their written work is often incomplete. This applies rarely to girls in those classes. Consequently, boys in the lower groups underachieve. Higher attaining students make very good progress. Students also work well in several of the middle sets. Current work in Year 12 is above what would usually be seen. Students apply good mathematical rigour to solving problems, they handle algebraic fractions competently, and have grasped the initial stages of calculus. Year 13 students, on the A-level course, are on track to achieve grades in line with their potential. Students in further mathematics apply prior knowledge very well leading to a very good rate of progress and high standards.

10. Standards in **science** are good at ages 16 and 18. In relation to their above average attainment on entry, students make at least satisfactory progress from ages 14 to 16 and very good progress from 16 to 18. Girls' results have improved considerably since the last inspection, but now boys do less well than girls. Students have good levels of knowledge and understanding of key scientific concepts. They have good oral skills and write well to record observations and findings. They grasp environmental considerations in relation to use of energy sources. Students have good investigative skills and carry out safe and complex practical work well.
11. In **art and design**, attainment is above national standards at ages 16 and 18. Consistent strengths are students' ability to handle media creatively and produce work with a strong visual impact. GNVQ students show a wide range of skills and have good awareness of the vocational application of art. At A-Level, students' artistic individuality emerges and the use of a variety of media is strong.
12. In **business studies**, students show a good understanding of a range of topics and use appropriate specialist terminology. They make good progress in recalling, understanding and explaining concepts. Standards are above average. In **economics**, students make steady progress in acquiring and understanding new vocabulary and concepts. At age 16, present attainment is as expected for the course. Attainment at age 18 in A-level economics is well above average. Students extract relevant information from source material very effectively, and make rapid progress in the development of study skills.
13. In **design and technology**, standards overall are above those normally expected at 16, however, there is a marked gender difference in progress and achievements, with girls performing above national expectation and boys below. Attainment in food technology and textiles is above the national expectation, in graphic products standards are similar to national expectation but in resistant materials and in systems and control they are below. In the sixth form, standards are average and progress is satisfactory.
14. In **drama**, students aged 14 to 16 rapidly develop skills of improvisation and response to scripted work. They display a good grasp of the conventions of drama and incorporate some of them very well in their presentations. Standards are above expectation at 16. In the sixth form, students continue to develop their dramatic skills well and reach high standards at age 18.
15. In **geography**, students make good progress in all years, and attain standards above those normally seen at ages 16 and 18. In Years 10 and 11, girls do well, and this year for the first time, boys also did well in their examinations and gained high grades. Students have a sound grasp of geographical skills, including the use of maps. They demonstrate a good understanding of environments, and their effects on people. In Years 12 and 13, students continue to make good progress. They use their knowledge well to investigate and explain the geography of unfamiliar contexts. In **geology**, standards are above expectation and progress is rapid.

16. In **history**, standards are above expectation at ages 16 and 18. Students demonstrate good factual recall, are confident and capable when interrogating sources and able to offer sound explanations about significant events. Most have good literacy skills and this results in them producing examples of well presented, accurately written and well-argued pieces of work. GCSE coursework and A-level personal studies are of a very high standard and reflect the good development of historical skills and abilities from Year 10 through to Year 13.
17. In **information technology**, attainment at age 16 is above expected standards and well above at age 18. Students use word processing effectively. They acquire good skills with spreadsheets and databases. Their ability to search and sort information stored on a spreadsheet is good. In Years 10 and 11, progress is rapid. Boys and girls taking A-level computing, information technology and GNVQ courses make very good progress. They integrate the use of computers firmly to support their learning.
18. In **modern foreign languages**, standards at 16 and 18 are in line with average. Able linguists can manipulate grammatical structures accurately, and demonstrate good skills orally. There are, however, inconsistencies in standards within groups. Boys particularly lack confidence and motivation. They make unsatisfactory progress against their potential. In the sixth form, students make at least steady progress. A few students have not yet acquired sufficient language and grammar to meet the demands of the A-level course. However, their progress is steady. High attainers can formulate ideas and opinions well and their progress is good.
19. In **music**, students aged 16 achieve standards above expectation in performing and composing. They are able to write down their compositions with confident use of traditional notation, and can also interpret graphic notation imaginatively. They have good understanding of musical structures and their appraisal of their own work is also good. Students in Year 13 are at expected standards for their age.
20. In **physical education**, students make good progress in Years 10 and 11 leading to above average standards at 16. Students continue to progress in the sixth form and standards at 18 are well above expectation. Younger students can evaluate and improve performance. They understand health and fitness theory. Older students know and understand the difference between technique and skill. They can devise objective tests to assess their performance.
21. In **religious education**, students achieve standards which meet the expectation of the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus. Students make steady progress. They show a sound knowledge of a range of moral and social issues and the questions that these raise for believers. In the sixth form, students are not given the opportunity to further their study of the subject through A/S or Advanced level courses.
22. The school caters for students with a wide range of special educational needs. They make good progress across the curriculum in all years. Standards in reading, writing and spelling improve rapidly and students use these skills well in the subjects that they study. The corrective reading programme and the good use of the 'Success Maker' computer program contribute effectively to raising students' capability in basic skills. Students see clearly how their vocabulary improves and this motivates them to learn. In subjects, there are too few opportunities for students with special educational needs to work co-operatively with others, in pairs or small groups, and to develop their independent learning skills. However, they listen well to others and with patience, for example, when a student is slow when reading out loud or when answering a question.
23. The progress made by gifted and talented students is good. They demonstrate high levels of study skills and can solve problems well with increased confidence. They can

remember concepts and facts quickly and use previously taught material effectively. This enables them to move rapidly onto new work. There is no significant difference between the rate of progress of boys and girls of high prior attainment.

24. The majority of students enter the school with **literacy** competence above the national expectation. Students who have deficits in literacy are advanced well through the work of the English and learning support departments, particularly through the effective deployment and good classroom support of learning support assistants. The literacy policy is in place but it is not yet applied with sufficient consistency in all subjects. The emphasis on specific technical vocabulary is generally good in most subjects, with key words reinforced by teachers and used well by students. Speaking and listening skills are developed well in English, media studies, drama, art, science and the humanities. Standards are particularly high when teaching promotes group work and when students make oral presentations of ideas to the whole class. Standards in reading and writing are above average. High attaining students, particularly those in the sixth form, show considerable maturity of expression, both written and verbal. Students of different ethnic backgrounds do not need additional language support. They are fluent in English.
25. In order to reinforce **numeracy** skills, the mathematics' team teaches a substantial topic at the start of Year 10 covering all the basic numerical calculations. This includes fractions, percentages, estimations, square roots, powers and how to write and use very small and very large numbers. This learning is further reinforced as and when the numerical work is needed in subsequent mathematics lessons. Other subject departments make good use of this knowledge, together with graph work and statistics. As a result, standards overall are above average. Students use number effectively in science, information technology, and geography. Work was of notable high quality in A-level geography. A shortcoming in numeracy is that although many students have an excellent grasp of principles, and can do quite complex calculations, a small proportion of students remains weak at basic mental arithmetic, even in the higher sets. Unlike literacy, for which there is a school policy, there is no policy for improving students' number skills. The mathematics' team, once the initial topic is finished, address numeracy in an 'as you meet it' approach, rather than having a planned programme.

Parents' views

26. Of the parents who returned the questionnaire or attended the pre-inspection meeting, ninety-one per cent believe that their children make good progress at the school. They also believe that the school continues to improve. Almost all parents believe that teachers do their best to provide a high level of challenge, but a very small number of parents think that their son could do more. This is particularly the case for boys who are reluctant to learn and who have average to low levels of capability in some subjects. Inspectors agree with these views. A few parents expressed concerns over staff changes in English and mathematics, as well as large class sizes in some A-level groups. Recruitment is managed very well by the senior management team and governors. However, staff changes have had a detrimental impact on continuity of learning in mathematics. Large classes in the sixth form are managed very well by teachers and there is no impact on standards and results.

Progress since the previous report

27. Good standards have been maintained. The underachievement identified in the previous report in mathematics and religious education has been addressed well. More remains to be done to raise standards in some aspects of design and technology. Progress of average and low attaining boys, and standards in use of information technology across subjects, are areas to be improved. The progress of students with special educational needs is now good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Attitudes

28. The response of students to their schooling is very good. Students are enthusiastic about their work and eager to succeed. They show great interest in what they are asked to do and apply themselves conscientiously to their work. They take pride in their achievements and most sustain high levels of concentration. However, when teaching is less effective some students find it difficult to maintain their commitment. A small number of immature boys, in Years 10 and 11, do not always take their work seriously and waste too much time in lessons. This leads to a slow rate of progress for them. Overall, attitudes to learning are very good for most students, especially those in the sixth form who provide excellent role models for their younger peers. The enthusiasm of most students for challenging work and the positive relationships with teachers create an environment in which they learn well.

Behaviour

29. Standards of behaviour are very good and the school is a very orderly community. Codes of conduct are observed well and students show respect for the high expectations that teachers set for them, for example, when moving between lessons and in the sociably comfortable atmosphere created during lunchtime. Permanent exclusions are low and, although fixed period exclusions have been above average, most students respond well to gentle reminders about their behaviour. The introduction of individual pastoral support plans and a policy of withdrawal for students whose behaviour falls below the code of conduct have reduced the rate of exclusions significantly during the current year. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying or racism or lack of respect for school property.

Personal development and relationships

30. The vast majority of students develop into mature individuals during their time at the school and the quality of relationships is high. The climate around the school is harmonious with no obvious aggression or tension between individuals or groups. The high quality of relationships leads to successful collaborative work in classrooms and helps students become confident learners. Students demonstrate patience, tolerance and respect for the feelings, values and the beliefs of others. This is the case in all subjects, and is particularly good in English, drama, history and in religious education.
31. The many opportunities provided by the school for students to get involved in the wider community make positive contributions to their initiative and personal development. For example, students demonstrate high levels of commitment and purpose when doing fund raising or charity work. They are reliable and give much of their time to the many extra-curricular activities offered. Students who attend benefit, but numbers involved are, at times, disappointingly low. Evidence of high levels of personal development were observed in many subjects, as for example in sociology and psychology, where students debated patterns of behaviour or influences of the media on individuals and society.

Attendance

32. Attendance is satisfactory overall. The rate of attendance, at 92% for 1999-2000, is in line with the national figure. Authorised absence, at 7.2%, is in line with the national figure of 7.9%. Most students have a very good record of attendance. The school's initiatives, such as telephoning home on the first day of absence, and students working within the supervision of a pastoral support unit, have improved the attendance of some students with previously unsatisfactory levels of attendance. The percentage of unauthorised absence at 1.5%, which was higher than average last year, is now in line with the national figure.

Parents' views

33. A high proportion of parents, who expressed views at the meeting or through questionnaires, believe that behaviour overall is good and that staff manage the very large number of students very well. This includes starting the day early and promptly, and providing good canteen facilities, to avoid students hanging around town or the new supermarket. The great majority of parents believe that their child likes school.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

34. Teaching is good overall and very good in the sixth form, and this results in effective learning by students. Very good or excellent teaching and learning was seen in one-fifth of lessons at Key Stage 4 and in two-fifths in the sixth form. Good or better teaching was seen in two-thirds of all lessons, made up of 55% of Key Stage 4 lessons and 83% of sixth form lessons. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in only 5% of lessons, which resulted in unsatisfactory learning.
35. Effective teaching and learning is found in all subjects. It is of most consistently high quality in geography, drama, music, leisure and tourism, and in the sixth form social sciences courses such as sociology and psychology. There is much effective teaching in art, business studies, English, history, information technology, mathematics and science. Although there are good lessons in design and technology, modern foreign languages and religious education, there are also occasional shortcomings in a small number of lessons.
36. In many subjects, teaching of basic skills is effective. Teachers insist on the use of correct terminology and accurate spelling of key words in their specialist areas. Many lessons provide opportunities to develop oral and listening skills well. Numeracy skills are reinforced when relevant to the topic and subject, as in science and on GNVQ courses. However, there is no a whole school policy for the systematic teaching of number across subjects. Consequently, opportunities to develop number skills further and re-visit basic concepts are dependent on individual departments and teachers. These opportunities are sometimes missed.
37. The weaker teaching is in the form tutors' weekly lesson for personal, social and health education (PSHE). During the inspection, some of these were taught very well; teachers used a good range of activities that motivated and engaged students. One of these was with a Year 10 class using a computer package to investigate career possibilities matched to students' capabilities and preferences. The teacher set a clear purpose for the activities, and set a brisk pace so students worked hard. The lesson linked their personal development with their academic capabilities. Some PSHE lessons had several shortcomings; they were poorly planned, teachers had no clear expectation of what the students would learn, and failed to engage them in worthwhile learning. In several of these lessons the standard of teaching was well below that seen when teachers taught their specialist subjects.

38. As a result of the good quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 and high quality teaching in the sixth form students gain in knowledge at a fast rate, and especially so in the sixth form. In all years, nearly all students apply themselves very well and productively, working at a rapid pace. They have a good level of concentration and interest. The degree to which they show independence is a mixed picture. They complete their homework and assignments, but in several subjects students do not take enough responsibility for their learning. This is shown by how well, or uncertainly, they understand their strengths and weaknesses, know or discover how to improve, are prepared to contribute to lessons, ask questions to seek further understanding, and exercise choice about how their learning will develop. For example, students taking responsibilities is demonstrated well in textile lessons in the sixth form; students keep a working log of their progress and are able to evaluate their work very effectively. This was not often seen in mathematics; students did what they were asked but did not often take the initiative to raise questions to test their own understanding of why the process they were learning worked, or for what purpose it might be useful. A feature of many subjects is that teachers do not always give students sufficient opportunities, time or challenge to analyse their work and, with constructive criticism, come to understand how they might do it better next time.
39. A main strength of teaching lies in the teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects, which, particularly in the sixth form, provides considerable but appropriate intellectual, physical and creative challenge for students. Assessment and marking of students' work is regular and accurate. As a result, suitably high expectations were seen in virtually all subjects, but most notably in information technology and in advanced level mathematics and further mathematics. Another strength is teachers' thorough grasp of the requirements of the examination courses and of the assessment criteria and syllabuses. This means that students are prepared effectively for the skills, knowledge and understanding required for coursework assignments and final examination papers. Students know their predicted grades and many know how to improve these further. Another widely evident strength is the very good relationships between staff and students, which sensitively reflects the development of these 14-18 year olds as young adults. Teachers use appropriate ways of addressing students, earning mutual respect and trust in managing learning.
40. Teachers have adapted well to the recent change to a school day of four 75-minute lessons, and in most cases plan a good range of different activities to break the lessons into manageable sections. A Year 11 English lesson was an example of a very effective structure. It progressed through silent reading of a set book, a discussion about how Shakespeare used the witches to move the play 'Macbeth' on, individual note taking, group play-reading of a scene, and whole-class discussion about how the witches prophecies are interpreted. The range of different activities kept the students fully engaged, working maturely in mixed-gender groups. Similarly, a physics class in Year 13 learned very effectively about the nature of magnetic fields surrounding conductors carrying electric currents. The teacher introduced the topic and the task, which entailed students using a range of equipment to research the phenomena. They had to prepare presentations of their findings to another student. This worked very well because it gave the teacher the opportunity to intervene with each pair of students to keep them on track, but more importantly it challenged the students to present and argue out their ideas, drawing on their significant background knowledge of complex scientific concepts. This teaching resulted in excellent learning.
41. Students with special educational needs are taught well. Learning support assistants and teachers provide good levels of support to improve students' self-esteem and confidence. Many students volunteer to read out loud to the class. Those who have been absent are helped to catch up with missed work effectively. Through sensitive timetabling, the school ensures that students with a physical disability have access to specialist teaching rooms. Teachers know which stage of the Code of Practice

students are at, and they have copies of individual education plans. However, a small number of subject teachers are not sufficiently aware of the learning targets set in these plans, or of the strategies that should be used to enable these students to learn. Specific resource needs of individual students are met well. For example, enlarged print is provided for students with visual impairment. Learning support assistants are effective in supporting students to think and to learn for themselves and not to rely on others to do the work for them.

42. The teaching of gifted and talented students is good. Teachers are aware of students' high levels of prior knowledge and assess their work regularly to match activities and tasks well to their needs. The appropriate level of challenge enables rapid progress of boys and girls. In Years 10 and 11, strategies to improve the teaching of boys who have average or low levels of ability needs have been agreed and now need to be shared and applied more consistently. The impact of these strategies is not yet sufficiently effective in all subjects.
43. Since the last inspection, teachers have improved the range of teaching and learning activities in several subjects, so students get more personally involved in lessons and take responsibility, instead of simply relying on the teacher for instruction. There are very good examples of collaborative group work in English, drama, media studies, science, physical education and GNVQ courses. Notable examples were seen in music, and in IT when students were designing internet web pages. In several subjects, students prepare and deliver presentations to the rest of the class. This brings about high quality learning because the students' research and preparation help them learn and consolidate their own understanding. Other class members learn from the presentations and subsequent questions and discussions. Good examples were seen in GNVQ courses and A-level IT. The practice of students evaluating their own work, or evaluating it with other class members, is a strong and effective feature of some art and drama lessons.
44. The use of such teaching methods to engage and motivate students is more limited in other subjects. In mathematics there is effective teaching where co-operative and ambitious students have new learning explained to them by the teacher, and then practise using it. In the best of these lessons, the instruction part of the lesson is broken into short steps where the students, given a starting point, complete several two or three minute tasks, with the teacher providing a brief lead into each section, as part of the development of the topic. Most of the successful lessons of this type are with higher achieving students. When the class is less capable, or less self-motivated, and particularly with some boys, a narrow repertoire of teaching methods, though satisfactory, leaves students too dependent on the teacher for their confidence and progress. Students are given few opportunities to discuss the mathematics, as a whole class or in small groups, to explore its meaning or to challenge their thinking about why things are as they are. In science and mathematics, teachers are not adapting their methods sufficiently to help the lowest achieving students to reach their potential or to enjoy the subject. This also applies in some lessons in modern foreign languages, and for boys in some design and technology lessons.
45. Homework is frequently used well to support learning, and some teachers use it positively as an introduction to subsequent lessons. Year 10 students reported that they found the homework challenging, but that this was what they expected and were not dissatisfied. Parents stated that there was either too much homework or too little. Inspectors believe that homework set is appropriate and contributes well to progress made. However, parents are not always aware of what needs to be done because the use of the students' organisers is inconsistent.
46. Parents' views are that the teaching is good on the whole. Some expressed concern that some classes had many different mathematics teachers in the last year. The

school has had difficulty in recruiting and retaining sufficient mathematics teachers, and problems remain. The department is ensuring that classes are taught by a member of the permanent mathematics team for most of their lessons, though this will not always be the same person, owing to the staff shortages.

47. Overall, teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. Aspects for further development are:
- to improve the teaching of PSHE,
 - to give more opportunities for students to reflect, criticise and analyse their work,
 - to use a wider range of teaching methods to engage and motivate the average and below average attaining boys in all subjects.

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

48. Lutterworth Grammar School and Community College provides a curriculum of very good quality for all students. Students have a wide range of choices throughout the school, with a greater range of learning opportunities than is typically seen. The curriculum is relevant to the future needs of students, whether they continue in education or seek work. All students have full access to the experiences required by the National Curriculum and the school's equal opportunities policy. A particular strength lies in the provision made for more able students through extension activities.

Years 10 and 11

49. Since the last inspection, revision to the curriculum has been very effective and has improved the balance and choice for students. The eighty per cent of time devoted to subjects that the school designates as core subjects is appropriate and flexibility provided for choices of options is very good. A high proportion of parents believes that the school offers a wide range of interesting activities, which all students can access if they wish. Inspectors agree with these views. As recommended in the last inspection report, the National Curriculum is now fully in place in design and technology and modern foreign languages. There is now a good balance between GCSE and vocational courses.
50. Having gained specialist Technology College status in 1997, technology is now a strength of the school, with excellent results. The school won the Technology Colleges Trust award in information technology. There is sufficient flexibility, for example to allow students to take three separate sciences or to take only English language. A special programme is available for high attainers, who can take an extra GCSE. Provision for gifted and talented students is good, while suitable alternatives are offered to students for whom it is not appropriate to take so many subjects. This is in the form of an applied course, which includes General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) at foundation level.
51. Good provision is made for students with a wide variety of special educational needs. They have full access to the curriculum and school activities. Additional provision is made through small groups and support in class. An integrated learning system is used well to enhance literacy and numeracy skills. The clear focus on the development of these basic skills has a positive impact on progress across subjects. An individualised programme of supported self study is available to all students who are likely to achieve better if they reduce the number of GCSEs they take by one. These students are helped to plan their own programme of work, which is designed to assist them to improve their study skills and their independence in working, in order to raise their standards in other subjects. This is effective. Through Certificates of Achievement, students gain worthy accreditation, and these meet their needs well, enable them to demonstrate success and be rewarded for their efforts. The full

National Curriculum is deemed not suitable for eighteen students who follow an appropriate work-related programme. The range of accreditation available to students in addition to GCSE, for example Certificate of Achievement, is appropriate. The pastoral support programme is proving successful in improving the attendance of the small number of reluctant students, but their curriculum is not clearly structured and needs further development.

Post-16

52. In the sixth form, the range of subjects is very broad, with nearly forty subjects offered. The new A/S and Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education courses have been introduced in Year 12 and thorough planning has taken place to ensure that there will be eventually smooth transition into Year 13. All students now follow, at least in Year 12, an enrichment course through a programme of seminars and lectures. Key skills are planned well and experiences offered to students are matched appropriately to the required elements of the course. This course leads to A/S or A-level in General Studies. A number of one-year courses are offered, including GCSE re-sits and Intermediate Level GNVQs. Technology College status has had a powerful effect in the sixth form, with a high proportion of students taking an information technology course. Provision for physical education for students who do not follow examination courses and for religious education is limited. Parents have agreed that students need not take religious education in the sixth form. While there are opportunities for a lesson during the week, almost all students opt out (all but one this year). This is a missed opportunity to enhance an important aspect of students' personal development. There are many opportunities for students to get involved in wider school activities, and take up is good. These include young enterprise, Duke of Edinburgh Award, work experience, community service, the engineering education scheme, competitive sports, sports leadership awards, music and drama. Careers provision is good and there are thriving links with higher education.

Extra-curricular activities

53. The school provides a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. Provision is very strong in sports, music and drama: sixteen sports are available, a concert band, string orchestra, a choir, brass ensemble and jazz ensemble. The drama department and students have put on, or contributed to, a millennium celebration, Youth Arts productions, a pantomime, an evening of dance, an arts festival and workshops in schools and in the local community. Students also benefit from frequent theatre trips. The youth centre provides opportunities for students to socialise with friends, or to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, summer youth activities and residentials, including visits, exchanges and work experience abroad. There is a good range of other smaller-scale activities, such as pottery, photography, textiles and video-making. The school and its students have been involved in fundraising for a variety of charities, including for children in Kosovo, for the Mozambique flood appeal, for Oxfam and Children in Need, raising over £3000 last year. Most activities take place after school in the afternoon. There are also extra workshops and study sessions after school, such as the science enrichment programme. The information technology sessions are particularly well attended. Access to these opportunities is encouraged by the provision of late buses three afternoons a week. The school does not formally monitor participation rates. However, for the students who wish to get involved, this breadth of provision contributes significantly to the richness of their experience at the school and to their personal development.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

54. Curriculum provision for a lesson each week in personal, social and health education is good, with well co-ordinated programmes of study supported by schemes of work,

which include careers, health education, sex education and drugs education. These aspects are effectively managed and provision now has the coherence missing at the time of the last inspection. Unfortunately, teaching in lessons and other periods of tutorial time still do not have the impact that they should because of inadequate planning, shortcomings in some of the teaching and poor use of available time. Planning for the introduction of citizenship, as a statutory aspect of curriculum provision from September 2002, is already taking place.

Careers education and guidance

55. The careers education programme, in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form, is very good. It operates from the first year students attend the school and builds on work done in previous years. This programme is supported well by the Local Education Authority careers service and students have access to the latest careers information databases. They are involved effectively in planning and evaluating the work needed to further their individual post-school aspirations. There is a very successful programme of work experience, individual careers interviews and advice about higher education opportunities. The very high standard of careers education and work experience resulted in the award of Careermark in 1999.

Links with the community and other schools

56. Community links are similar to those typically seen at this age range. Most work experience placements take place in local companies. Visitors to the school make valued contributions to students' understanding of the world of work. Theatre groups and visits out, for example a visit to the Leicester Mercury for students on the media studies course, bring relevance and interest to the programmes studies. Fieldwork, in several subjects, enables students to research and gain direct experience of relevant areas. Links with local schools and colleges are very good. Students from the local high schools receive an excellent induction into Year 10. Pastoral links are very good. Parents are particularly pleased with the curriculum liaison and the one week that their child spends at the school before entering Year 10. Parents of students who come from further afield and outside the normal catchment area also made positive comments about the planning in Year 10, which ensures continuity of curriculum provision. The school does its best to ensure smooth transition into the next phase of learning. Many subjects, although not all, ensure that the curriculum is planned well to ensure good progression from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. Transfer into the sixth form is planned well.

Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

57. Provision for students' **spiritual** development has improved since the last inspection. The frequency of assemblies has been increased. The many visiting speakers, invited to lead these assemblies, contribute to students' understanding of spirituality and what it means for themselves and others. Good examples were observed, during the week of the inspection, which took place during Ramadan. Guidance has been provided to staff about the "*Thought for the day*", however there are still inconsistencies in the quality of spiritual reflection in form time. Across subjects of the curriculum, opportunities to enhance this aspect of students' personal development are missed. Good examples were observed in art, philosophy and religious education. In these lessons, students were encouraged to reflect on personal beliefs, consider their own emotions and express inner feelings. These good examples are, however, too rare and effective practice is not sufficiently shared across all subjects of the curriculum.
58. Provision for **social** and **moral** development is good. The students' council, the residential experiences, public events and community activities provide many opportunities for students to develop their understanding of social and moral values. Charitable activities enhance their awareness of others and of those in need. Participation in sports and physical education develops team spirit very well. The policy to fund transport after school improves access to these opportunities. In lessons, many opportunities are provided for students to work in pairs or groups. This is the case in many subjects and is particularly effective in modern foreign languages, drama and music. Students know the difference between right and wrong. Adults and students in the sixth form set positive examples for younger students. Many subjects provide good opportunities to discuss moral dilemmas and topical issues as well as the importance and consequences of decisions. Debates are managed well by teachers. This was particularly effective in English, health and social care, history, physical education and sociology.
59. Since the last inspection, provision for **cultural** development has improved and is now satisfactory. A working party was set up to develop understanding of cultural diversity and several subjects now promote this well in their programmes of study. In a few subjects, provision for this aspect of students' development is still limited. Some students enjoy first hand experience of different cultures through visits to India, America and France. Teachers and students' exchanges abroad provide excellent opportunities to develop understanding of other cultures and traditions. Local culture is promoted well through the school's contribution to the "Lutterworth 2000" project. The arts subjects link very effectively with local culture as part of this particular initiative. This enhances students' understanding of local heritage and its impact on the community.

Progress since the last inspection

60. The curriculum has improved greatly since the previous inspection. The structure and organisation of subjects has been revised, rectifying all the issues raised and ensuring a wide range of curricular opportunities for all students. The cultural diversity of the local community is recognised, however, limited provision is made in some subjects and this is an area for further development. Since the last inspection, provision for spiritual development has improved, however more remains to be done, across subjects of the curriculum, to ensure consistency and further progress in this aspect of students' personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

Welfare, health and safety

61. Provision for the welfare and safety of students is a strength of the school and students are cared for very well. The quality of this aspect of the school's work makes a positive contribution to standards and personal development. Procedures for the health and protection of students are managed very effectively with identified, well-trained and experienced staff in important roles, such as for child protection, health and safety and first aid cover. The expert work of the nurse and school counsellor ensures that students receive appropriate attention as and when needed. Any concerns are identified and dealt with promptly through very effective systems for reporting and recording.

Monitoring behaviour and attendance

62. The school has very effective measures to promote good behaviour and improve attendance. There are regular reviews of any concerns over students' attendance and much good work is done to help those experiencing difficulties, for example through pastoral support plans. Behaviour management is successfully based upon high expectations of principled conduct, backed by a graduated system of support for students who persistently misbehave. Procedures to prevent, monitor and eliminate oppressive behaviour are very good.

Monitoring academic progress and personal development

63. Students receive very good quality guidance in their academic and personal development. Academic development of individual students is monitored very well through regular reviews of progress through grades achieved in subject areas. Tutors know their students well and provide or organise appropriate levels of support, although the time spent in form tutor sessions is not always planned or used well by some teachers.
64. Procedures for assessing attainment and progress are very good. The analysis of attainment on entry in English, mathematics and science, is thorough. Achievement in other subjects is carefully recorded and monitored from Year 10 onwards. However, not all subjects make sufficient use of teacher assessments received from the high schools. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, results of assessment are used very effectively to inform improvement in standards for groups and individuals. Identification and provision made for more able students are good. The school is very well focused on raising the attainment of boys, although further analysis is needed to guide curriculum planning for average and low attaining boys. The target grades set for each subject and the interim monitoring during the academic year inform the predicted examination grades well and are discussed with each student. The very good analysis of examination grades informs strategies to improve standards. These procedures are rigorous and thorough, although the impact on the progress of average and low attaining boys has yet to materialise.
65. Good examples of effective assessment are found in many subjects. For example, in English assessment is rigorous with predicted examination grades clearly linked to the examining board's assessment criteria. In mathematics, module and unit test results are collated and analysed well. In science, regular assessments are completed with results being carefully analysed. In information technology, monitoring systems are used well to inform students of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. There are very good examples of students being involved in their own assessment, for example, in drama. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is also very good across subjects. For example, in modern foreign

languages this information has been used to adapt the syllabus and setting arrangements, and in music it has led to a thorough review of the curriculum. In English, assessment data has been used to inform the choice of texts and pathways through schemes of work, and in mathematics to judge the success of courses.

66. Good links exist with partner schools to transfer academic and personal information about students, including those with special educational needs, who are clearly identified before admission. On-going assessment also identifies students whose special educational needs arise at a later stage. The school receives good support and regular visits from outside agencies. Annual reviews of statements of special educational need are well organised. The targets set in individual education plans (IEPs) are regularly reviewed. A range of targets, including reading and spelling, are set to monitor the performance and progress of students. Targets are not always sufficiently specific or measurable and the layout of the IEP does not clearly match the target to an appropriate strategy. When targets are reviewed, progress made by students is not recorded in sufficient detail. Not all students know their targets or are regularly reminded of them.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

67. There continues to be a satisfactory partnership between the school and parents and the school enjoys the confidence of parents in most areas of its work. Almost all parents are aware and sign the "*Partnership for Learning*" home-school agreement. In the pre-inspection questionnaire and at the meeting, parents were pleased with the work done by their child. They stated that their child likes school, and makes good progress. They believe that teachers help their child to become mature and that they care for their students. These views are confirmed by inspection findings.
68. A few parents expressed concerns about how closely the school works with them, about the quality of the reports and a lack of information received about homework. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for parents to be involved in students' work, for example, through meetings on how to support their child and to attend activities such as drama and information technology. Inspection findings confirm that the quality of information about progress is satisfactory overall, with regular information about any changes in grades achieved in each subject and an annual summary report. However, the annual report does not always provide enough detail about progress, or targets for improvement, in specific areas of the curriculum. The quality of other school information sent to parents is very good. Although the setting of homework is regular and used effectively to support learning, the use of the organiser as a home-school communicator is under developed. The impact of parents' involvement is as expected for this age range. Many support their child, the school and its activities very well.
69. There is a high level of attendance by parents of students with special educational needs at annual review meetings, but parents are not sufficiently involved in contributing to the targets set, and these are not always shared with parents. The information contained in the governors' annual report to parents is too brief and should include information on the success of the school's policy for students with special educational needs and on how the school is being made more accessible. However, parents feel comfortable to approach the school and speak positively about their relationship with the special needs staff.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

70. Leadership and management of the school are very good. The principal is an excellent

leader. He has a very clear vision for the direction of school and has developed an ethos that promotes a high quality education for all students. With the support of a very able senior management team he has created an effective management structure in which both delegation of responsibilities and accountability for delivering them feature strongly. The composition of the leadership team has recently been broadened. Subject leaders have autonomy to lead, manage and develop their subject areas in ways that promote school improvement.

71. The governing body provides very effective strategic leadership and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well, except for ensuring that the school conducts the daily act of collective worship. Individual governors undertake their roles in an active way and work hard on behalf of the school. Statutory duties are carried out well through committees, all with joint governor and staff membership. These committees enable staff, drawn from across the school, to work effectively with governors on a range of whole school issues. Governors are responsible for making the decisions, but the chair of governors is keen to ensure that staff are actively involved in all discussions and that their views are taken into account when decisions are made. The governing body formally monitors the work of the school through regular performance reports presented by the principal, senior staff and middle managers. This enables them to have a clear view of strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governing body and school staff are clear about future priorities for the school, which include the further raising of standards and of boys' achievement.
72. Approaches to monitoring and evaluating are very well developed across the school. The foci for this activity are drawn from the school development plan priorities. Senior managers, linked to subject departments, work effectively as 'critical friends'. They observe lessons, attend department meetings and meet students to discuss progress. Senior staff also work alongside middle managers providing welcomed support and coaching where appropriate.
73. The leadership shown by heads of faculty, heads of department and heads of division is very good. They play an active role in monitoring and evaluating the work of their teams. Through lesson observations, strengths and areas for development are identified. To support this process the school makes effective use of external consultants where appropriate, for example in art, design and technology and modern foreign languages. Leadership and management of special needs provision is good. The recommendations of the Code of Practice are implemented fully. The senior management link to the department is very supportive. Communication with other subject departments is satisfactory, but the special educational needs co-ordinators do not monitor the quality of teaching and support which students receive in subject lessons. The special educational needs development plan does not include developments from all areas of the curriculum, however, regular departmental meetings have been established.
74. The effective four year strategic plan emphasises high standards and the further promotion of good working relationships. Priorities and expected outcomes are identified clearly. Progress towards these outcomes is monitored and evaluated thoroughly. The principal discusses annually achievements and progress made towards targets with relevant staff and governors. This enables the school to be clear about the overall progress made towards its priorities. However, the strategic plan is not used sufficiently as a working document. For example, the original 2001 statutory targets should be reviewed in the light of previous results.
75. The quality of financial planning is good. The budget is linked appropriately to the development plan targets and supports the strategic direction of the school well.

Governors have a clear understanding of their role in carrying out the financial management of the school. They participate well in budget setting and ensure that the school gains best value for money, such as through rigorous competitive tendering. The senior management team, middle managers and governors are kept well informed by regular and detailed financial statements from the bursar. Day to day financial administration is very good. Special grants and additional funding, including those linked to the Technology College funding, are used appropriately to enhance the quality of the curriculum and resources. The current overspend is wholly linked to a much needed building programme. Once decisions have been finalised by the LEA concerning the pay back period, the governing body will be in a position to ensure that the overspend is cleared within the agreed time. The school is developing models to provide projected savings, while maintaining high quality educational provision. In addition to the much-improved accommodation, the school has started to provide administrative support to departments. This enables teachers to concentrate rightly on the quality of teaching and learning. Sixth form provision is particularly economic and of high quality. The school provides good value for money.

Resources and accommodation

76. The adequacy and suitability of the accommodation is good. The school has taken positive action to address many of the issues raised in the previous report. It has added over 30 new rooms including canteen and toilet facilities, enhanced the design and technology, business studies and special educational needs learning environments. Each department now has a suite of rooms, which eases communication and supports teaching well. The security fencing around the school has been completed and funding has been secured to refurbish three science rooms and replace the all weather pitch with astro-turf. Drama, modern foreign languages, mathematics and science still have some inadequate accommodation and the library falls short of its capacity to provide an effective learning resource for the size of this school. The school is a victim of its own success with many of the sixth form teaching groups now too large for the classrooms allocated to them, particularly in O block. The school has maintained its bright and lively appearance and is now making better use of display to celebrate and inform teaching and learning.
77. The adequacy and suitability of resources for learning is good. The school has taken positive action to address many of the issues raised in the previous report. It has increased the quantity and quality of the computers available to deliver information technology to all students but lacks the flexibility to use the computers in other subject areas to assist learning. It has upgraded the reprographics support to make access easier for students and staff and improved the resources in design and technology, mathematics and science. The school has made some steps to increase the use of the library by providing extended opening times and monitoring the books being borrowed, however this facility is still not used fully as an open learning centre.

Staffing

78. Teachers are well qualified and teach their specialist subjects, except for a few lessons in mathematics and the occasional science and IT lesson. Retraining of staff to teach IT has been very effective. The school has Investor in People status and a commitment to continued professional development for all staff. Both induction and support for newly qualified teachers and staff new to the college are well planned thanks to the commitment and support of relevant heads of subjects. The school has a very good programme of staff and subject reviews, which leaves the school well placed to implement its performance management policy. There is a good match of support and technical staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and ensure the efficient running of the school. The special educational needs co-ordinators have recognised the need to match better the deployment of support staff to the specific needs of

students. Learning support assistants are effective and encouraged to attend further training.

79. Parents expressed concerns about staff changes in English and mathematics. They were also concerned about class sizes in some A-level groups. Although recruitment is managed very well by senior management and governors, the impact of staff changes on continuity of learning is felt in mathematics. Class sizes in the sixth form, although uncomfortable in some cases due to lack of space, have no impact on standards.
80. Lutterworth Grammar School and Community College has the capacity to sustain the quality of its provision. Aspirations for the overall development of all students are clear and areas to be improved are known. There is a shared commitment to improve standards further.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

81. To build on and improve further the good standards already achieved in many areas of the school's provision, the senior management, governors and staff should:
- (1) Improve the rate of progress made by boys of average and low prior attainment;
Ref. Paragraphs: 2,7, 27 and relevant subject paragraphs.
 - (2) Increase further the range of teaching and learning methods so that students are given more opportunities to reflect, criticise and analyse their own work;
Ref paragraphs: 37, 38, 44 and relevant subject paragraphs.
 - (3) Make better use of information technology across subjects of the curriculum.
Ref paragraphs: 77, 92 and relevant subject paragraphs.

Other subsidiary issues

82. The school should also consider the following minor issues:
- Improve teaching of PSHE,
 - Improve further provision for cultural and spiritual development of students,
 - Improve reports to parents to inform them more about students' progress,
 - Eliminate the budget deficit.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Curriculum provision and standards achieved on vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form

83. Vocational education is offered as an option in Years 10 and 11 and it makes an important contribution to the curriculum. Business, health and social care, leisure and tourism are available at GNVQ Foundation level. Part One business intermediate level is also offered. Post-16, the range of vocational courses is good. Students can study business, leisure, recreation, health and social care, information technology, and art and design. These courses may be pursued at intermediate or advanced level.
84. The number of students entered on vocational courses, 115 in 2000, shows a growth in this area. Examination results are good, with 98 passes overall, including 63 merits or

distinctions. Courses provide an appropriate level of demand and are matched well to the needs of students.

85. In Years 10 and 11, standards of current students are in line with course expectations. Students, including those with low prior attainment, achieve well, because of their high motivation for sustained and productive work. They are increasingly well organised, and almost all make good progress on GNVQ courses. Many improve their standards, when compared with their prior general knowledge. Students have appropriate understanding, skills and abilities in a range of work related contexts. For instance, in a business lesson, they demonstrated good awareness of employment procedures when participating in a role-play to negotiate a pay rise as part of work on trade unions in Year 10. During a brainstorm session in Year 11, students showed good understanding of why employees might get into trouble at work, in the topic on disciplinary procedures. Overall, satisfactory progress is made in the key skills of communication, use of number and information technology, which are related to realistic situations in the world of work.
86. In the sixth form, students make good progress on GNVQ courses. Higher order skills of analysis and evaluation are developed well. Students become more independent and are able to take responsibility for their own learning, for example in planning and carrying out investigations, gathering information, meeting deadlines and taking care in the presentation of their findings.
87. Students on GNVQ courses respond well to the wide range of activities. They are willing to discuss ideas and take responsibility for specific tasks. They plan effectively, with the support of their teachers, in order to meet the specifications of the units they study. A good example was observed when, using a visit that they had made to London, students summarised the information they had gathered on the importance of visitor management at Earls Court. Another good example was the analysis of the results of questionnaire data in health and social care. Students demonstrate an understanding of the GNVQ course structure and assessment procedures. They co-operate well in group activities.
88. Teachers plan the different GNVQ courses well and these are all carefully documented. Teachers are well qualified, enthusiastic and committed. There is a judicious balance between providing sound knowledge and information to students, whilst enabling them to become active and reflective learners. This is a requirement of post-16 courses, and is also used very effectively with students at Key Stage 4. There are satisfactory reviews and feedback procedures to students on the progress they have made. Teachers provide individual help and guidance both informally and through effective one to one tutorials. During tutorial sessions, feedback on previous work is given as well as discussion of progress and plans for the next stage. All work is assessed appropriately against the relevant criteria. The internal verification system checks the standards of students' work across the vocational areas to ensure that standards are maintained. Work is matched well to the learning needs of the individual student thus allowing each to make good progress. The thorough planning of all aspects of work contributes well students' attainment. There is a good rate of completion for the units.
89. Leadership and management are good. Work is co-ordinated well by head of department. Although there are other teachers with particular responsibilities, communication and co-ordination are effective between them. The department has already introduced many changes and is continuing to review and plan well for future curriculum developments. The school offers a good range of GNVQ courses at different levels. The large number of visits, work placements and case studies on local companies, enhances work in the different subjects. For example, in health and social care students undertake a residential week at Winged Fellowship Homes for the

disabled. There, students act as volunteers and this proves to be a rich learning experience. This activity makes an excellent contribution to personal development as well as general learning for the course.

90. Resources for vocational courses are reasonable. Provision of computers in several areas of the school for student to use is good. Accommodation is satisfactory and all groups have a base in which they keep their portfolio.
91. Since the last inspection, levels of attainment on GNVQ courses have been maintained during a period of growth. The development, in Years 10 and 11, of Foundation and Part One courses offers a pathway for progression and continuity from ages 14 to 19.
92. The department should build on success by:
 - monitoring the recruitment onto the option choices at Key Stage 4 and post-16, to ensure that students are on the most appropriate courses;
 - improving further the availability and use of computers, to raise attainment;
 - and developing relationships with industry to ensure that all vocational courses are rooted in real contexts.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	289
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	60

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	25	39	29	5	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Students on the school's roll	Y10 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students on the school's roll	1205	730
Number of full-time students eligible for free school meals	36	N/a

Special educational needs	Y10 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	29	1
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	127	8

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of students with English as an additional language	37

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	95

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.5
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 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	294	312	606
	1999	299	306	605

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	149 (144)	267 (279)	287 (298)
	Girls	190 (207)	297 (291)	304 (301)
	Total	339 (351)	564 (570)	591 (599)
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	56 (58)	95.6 (94)	99.2 (99)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score Per pupil	School	44.2 (44)
	National	38.4 (38.0)

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 students who achieved all those they studied	School	31	72
	National		N/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

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
	2000	133	147	280
	1999	126	147	273

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	17.4 (19.6)	16.1 (21.1)	17.1 (20.5)	1.4 (2.1)	2.6 (3.0)	1.9 (2.4)
National	17.7 (17.7)	18.6 (18.1)	18.2 (17.9)	2.6 (2.7)	2.9 (2.8)	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 students who achieved all those they studied	School	47	89%
	National		N/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	34
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	2
White	1898
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	134	3
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y10 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	117.6
Number of students per qualified teacher	16.45

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y10 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	27
Total aggregate hours worked per week	751

Deployment of teachers: Y10 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.5
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Average teaching group size: Y10 – Y13

Key Stage 4	22.2
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Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	5,079,987
Total expenditure	5,050,699
Expenditure per pupil	2,680
Balance brought forward from previous year	-247,919
Balance carried forward to next year	-218,631

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1,935
Number of questionnaires returned	160

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	53	6	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	48	4	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	43	7	1	14
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	43	21	5	4
The teaching is good.	38	48	7	1	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	45	23	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	41	10	2	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	43	1	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	23	42	23	7	5
The school is well led and managed.	39	44	8	2	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	45	5	3	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	42	5	1	14

Other issues raised by parents

At the parents' meeting, which 21 parents attended, and in letters sent to the registered inspector, the following concerns were expressed by a very small number of parents:

- the school should work more closely with parents, including parents of students who have special educational needs. Better information is needed about progress;
- homework is too much for some, not enough for others;
- lack of continuity in staffing in English and mathematics;
- some boys are not pushed enough to achieve good standards;
- classes are too large in some A-level groups.

The inspection judged that the partnership with parents is satisfactory. The concerns that some parents have about the lack of specific information on progress and homework is justified. Reports are not sufficiently informative and students' organisers are not used enough as a home-school communicator. Reports are in the process of being re-modelled. The school is addressing the issue of boys' achievement. Recent workshops for parents on working with teenagers were very successful and much appreciated by those who attended. Staffing changes are managed well, but there are issues of continuity in English and mathematics. Class sizes at A-level do not have a detrimental impact on standards. Teachers managed these large groups well.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

93. Students enter the school in Year 10 with above average competence in literacy. Students make good progress in English and, by the end of Year 11, GCSE results are above national averages. In 2000, GCSE English Literature results were very good, with the percentage of A*-C grades well above the national average. For the last two years, students have attained well at the end of Year 11 when compared with their results in the Key Stage 3 English national tests. Standards in the sixth form are above average.
94. Standards of current students aged 16 are good. Boys do not attain as well as girls. However, there is evidence that strategies used by teachers to improve the performance of boys are beginning to have a positive effect. The department is appropriately identifying which individual students are capable of producing better work and teachers are providing appropriate support to raise performance at GCSE. For those students for whom GCSE is inappropriate a good alternative is offered in the Certificate of Achievement course. In GCSE literature, boys achieve nearly as well as girls. High attaining students are advanced well as they progress through the school. Students with special educational needs make good progress.
95. In the sixth form, the department offers relevant A-level courses in English language and English literature, as well as a very successful A-level media studies course. Although results in A-level English Literature dipped slightly in 2000, standards of current students are as expected for their age at this stage of the course. Standards on the A-level language with literature and A-level media studies courses are above average and results show an upward trend, with the department exceeding their grade targets in 2000. Girls, who form the majority in the English literature and the language with literature courses, out-perform boys. However, in media studies, the numbers of boys and girls are equal and boys out-perform girls. Class-work produced by current students is of a very good standard in all three courses.
96. The quality of teaching in the English department is good, and it is very good in A-level lessons. The fact that teachers are all English specialists is a significant factor in all the teaching being at least sound, with much that is good or better. The department has suffered from long-term staff absence and difficulties with recruitment. However, teachers have coped well as a team and the situation is now becoming more stable. At Key Stage 4, teachers demonstrate an excellent grasp of GCSE course requirements, with rigorous moderation of grades to ensure accurate and very effective use of assessment. The best marking shows sharp comments to help students improve and specific targets given for improvement. These are valued by students. Emphasis is placed on students developing ideas in small groups and then requiring them to synthesise the resulting information for class presentations. Teachers plan their lessons conscientiously and have high aspirations for their classes. This was seen to be very effective in a number of the lower GCSE sets where students, through the encouragement of teachers, were working hard to improve their course work, so that their possible D grades in the examination could be modified to a C. Overall, classes are managed well and kept focused on the learning. There are excellent working relationships between teachers and students. Concentration, in the 75 minute lessons, is maintained by the well-planned range of activities, including good whole class teaching, small group work, sharing of group work outcomes with whole class and individual written work. Teachers place significant emphasis on personal reading for pleasure and many lessons start with appropriate quiet reading. Good use is made of film to support GCSE literature. This was seen in the Year 10 lesson on *Frankenstein*

where short video clips from the 1931 Whales and the 1995 Branagh versions were used to study the birth of the monster and compare these versions with the text. Learning support assistants provide good support for those with learning difficulties and are an integral part in the department's drive to raise literacy standards in the lower sets. Teaching in A-level lessons is a strength, with students being given the opportunity to develop independence and explore their own ideas. A good example of rigorous teaching was seen in the Year 13 lesson on Ibsen's *Ghosts*, where the group developed a deep understanding of character and motivations through skilful questioning by the teacher, who also gave the students room to develop their own ideas and feelings towards the play.

97. Most students respond very well to their English lessons, showing care with presentation and a willingness to learn. They want to do well in their GCSE examinations and develop good skills for accessing texts and answering examination questions. Teachers generally control classes well and this creates a positive ethos for learning. The emphasis on group work and sharing work encourages independence and confidence in presenting ideas. This way of working also helps social development by assisting students to work collaboratively and to listen to each other. This was evidenced well in the Year 10 English lesson focusing on adverts, where individual students gave analytical presentations of an advert that they had watched on television the previous night. Not only were the analyses of very good quality but students showed interest and were very good listeners, generating debate on the techniques and effects, in which they showed considerable depth of knowledge. In the sixth form, particularly in media studies, group work is a strength and students collaborate very effectively. A particularly strong example was seen in the Year 13 lesson where students, in small groups, demonstrated very good collaborative skills, listening to each others ideas and developing highly creative approaches to making a video presentation of the poem *Jabberwocky*. In some of the lower sets in Key Stage 4, a minority of students show reduced commitment and some disruptive behaviour can occur which affects their learning and standards. However, it is dealt with appropriately. While not explicitly planned, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is furthered well by the work of the faculty, because materials used and topics studied contribute effectively to improving these aspects of students' personal development. Currently use of information technology (IT) is encouraged, particularly for presenting course work, but access to computers is limited until the new English IT room is finished.
98. The head of department provides good leadership and management to the English team, with a clear vision for the future direction of the department. A very good feature is the high quality of planning of examination courses and moderation of students' work. The broad range of courses offered at Key Stage 4 and post-16 is a very good feature which ensures wide choice for all. The departmental development plan contains effective targets for raising standards of attainment and, once the staffing issues have been settled, the faculty has a good capacity for further improvement. Monitoring and evaluating of the work of the department are strengths and annual reviews result in thorough end of year analyses. The department benefits significantly from the English accommodation being together, however, the media accommodation is barely adequate for the growth in numbers of students wanting to take the course in the sixth form.
99. The last inspection report was largely positive. The good teaching, competent planning and good faculty leadership have been maintained. The previous report highlighted the need to develop oral work in Key Stage 4 and this is now secured well. Reading also needed further development, especially for boys, and this is being attended to effectively through the emphasis on reading for pleasure at the start of many English lessons, the investment in books and the focus on books which interest boys. To facilitate further improvement the department should:
- work on further strategies to raise boys' attainment and increase their rate of

- progress;
- use IT more through the establishment of the English IT room;
- and review accommodation for media studies in the light of the growth in popularity of this subject.

Literacy across subjects

100. The majority of students enter the school with **literacy** competence above the national expectation. Students with literacy deficits are advanced well thanks to the work of the English and learning support departments, and particularly through the good deployment and effective support provided by learning support assistants. The literacy policy is in place but it is not yet sufficiently developed across the curriculum to ensure consistency of approach in all subjects. The emphasis on specific technical vocabulary is good in most subjects with key words being reinforced effectively. Speaking and listening skills are developed well in English, media studies, drama, art, science and the humanities. This is particularly effective where the teaching emphasises the importance of focused group work and teachers insist on good quality in oral presentation of ideas by students to the whole class. Standards in reading and writing are above average. Higher attaining students, particularly those in the sixth form, show considerable maturity of expression, both written and verbal.

MATHEMATICS

101. Students receive a good education in mathematics. Since the last inspection, GCSE examination results have been sustained at a level significantly above the national average, with a slight dip in 2000, but still above average. Attainment on entry to Year 10 is above average, so students' rate of progress is broadly as expected. Boys did better than girls in 1998, girls better than boys in 1999. Boys and girls did equally well in 2000. However, in the lower attaining classes, many of the boys lack concentration, distract some lessons, and their written work is often incomplete and untidy. This applies rarely with the girls in those classes. Consequently, boys in the lower groups underachieve. Overall, students attain half a grade above the national average. Given the large number of students, this is a significant achievement. The higher attaining students make very good progress, and take advantage of this to study for an additional GCSE in statistics, at which they do very well. Students with special educational needs make good progress.
102. Standards of work in class reflect the way students are grouped into sets by prior attainment. Students in higher sets achieve high standards, up to grade A quality as early as Year 10. There is some excellent work on vectors, algebraic factors and solving equations using iterative methods. Students also work well in several of the middle sets, multiplying out expressions having pairs of brackets, and factorising by extracting common factors. In the lower sets, students' work on number patterns, transformations of geometrical shapes or factorising simple linear expressions is at a low level, and they do not readily recall other mathematics they have covered to apply it to the matters in hand.
103. Results at A-level are in line with those achieved nationally, and those in further mathematics are high, with around half the students gaining a grade A in the last two years. Current work in Year 12 has addressed the new A/S curriculum course well, and students' attainment is above what is usually seen at this stage on the previous A-level courses. Students were seen applying good mathematical rigour to the concept of the range and domain of values for which functions are valid, handling algebraic fractions competently, and they have grasped the initial stages of calculus. Year 13 students on the A-level course are on track to achieve grades in line with their potential. They are coming to a good understanding of probability density functions with

continuous random variables, and can derive a binomial algebraic series with negative or fractional powers. Students in further mathematics can use standard formulae to solve compound trigonometric equations, and apply prior knowledge very well when using the normal probability distribution as an approximation to a binomial or Poisson when appropriate criteria apply. Standards in mathematics in the sixth form, are on the whole, above what is usually found.

104. Teaching is good at Key Stage 4 and very good in the sixth form. Half the Key Stage 4 and all the sixth form lessons observed were good or better. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The most important strengths are the teachers' own knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject, the high level of work they prepare for the more able students, and their good professional relationships with students which lead to a very good working atmosphere in most classes. Students respond well, in most classes. They behave well and co-operate fully with the staff. Nearly all lessons follow an effective standard format. The teacher demonstrates clearly a new piece of work to students, asking questions to engage the class in the topic. The students then work out some examples. This is repeated to develop the topic further. A few lessons also include a short practice session on number work or helpful revision of earlier learning, though this rarely follows a plan or scheme for improving on students' weaknesses.
105. Teachers rarely relate the mathematical symbols and procedures to a practical application or anything meaningful to students. These methods work well for the students who can learn mathematics in this abstract manner. They learn the methods, gaining knowledge and skill, but without understanding why the mathematics works, and why it is important and has value in real life. The most frequent justification for mathematics was to meet requirements and achieve a grade in an examination. The less well motivated students are finding this style of learning more difficult, and become distracted when the value of what they are asked to do is not obvious. Teachers were not often seen explaining the purpose of the work, or challenging the students to explain it. Nor were teachers, even in the sixth form, seen to invite students to explore mathematics, to suggest reasons why things work as they do or don't work, to argue their case or to challenge the teacher's argument. Much of the learning is therefore passive, with students receiving instruction and complying with it. It has resulted in students relying too much on the teachers and not taking enough responsibility for developing their own understanding of the subject. These shortcomings mean that half the teaching at Key Stage 4 is just sound, rather than being of high quality, and is a reason why standards achieved are not higher.
106. Good results are supported by efficient leadership, organisation and management of the department. Schemes of work show full coverage of the required mathematical topics and assessments are regular. Documentation lacks guidance on lesson planning or on systematic reinforcement of basic numeracy. It does not address different teaching and learning approaches for students of different levels of attainment. Investigations into the effective use of IT for learning mathematics have begun well, but to date have not been integrated into the scheme of work. A plan exists for teachers to observe one another teach, with the intention of spreading good practice, and a sample of students' workbooks is monitored weekly. The target of 60% to achieve a grade A*-C at GCSE is not backed up by a convincing plan of how this will be achieved.
107. The continuity of teaching, and hence students' progress, has been held up in a few classes because the school has been unable to recruit the full number of mathematics teachers it needs. The department has an educationally sound plan to minimise the effect of this by ensuring that a full time member of the team teaches each class for at least four out of every five lessons, with a supply teacher for the other lesson. This gives students good access to mathematics teachers, but means that this is not always the same person. Much of the accommodation makes a very good environment for learning mathematics, but the four temporary classrooms are poor and

staff have done little to improve them. Students' attitudes, concentration and learning were noticeably less positive in lessons in these temporary classrooms.

108. Since the last inspection, examination results have remained about the same. Standards in algebra are better. Quality of teaching has been maintained, although teaching approaches designed to enable students to use and apply mathematics to real life situations, are still limited. To raise standards further, the key priorities are:
- to fill vacant teaching posts;
 - to use more effective teaching and learning approaches for average and less able students, particularly boys;
 - and to improve students' understanding of the practical relevance of what they are learning.

Numeracy across subjects

109. The mathematics' team teaches a substantial topic at the start of Year 10 covering all the required numerical calculations. This includes fractions, percentages, estimation, square roots, powers and how to write and use very small and very large numbers. This learning is reinforced as and when the numerical work is needed in subsequent mathematics lessons. Other departments make good use of this knowledge, together with graph work and statistics. Students use number effectively in science, information technology, and geography. This work was of notable high quality in A-level geography, where students analysed urban growth with effective use of advanced statistics, to investigate economic diversity across Europe.
110. A shortcoming in numeracy is that although many students have an excellent grasp of principles, and can do quite complex calculations, a small proportion remains weak at basic mental arithmetic, even in the higher sets. This shows in several ways. A few students do not recall multiplication tables up to 10x10 readily or accurately, and do not know common shortcuts that enable calculations to be done mentally. Unlike literacy, for which there is a school policy, there is no policy concerned with improving students' number skills. The mathematics' team, once the initial topic is finished, addresses numeracy in an 'as you meet it' approach, rather than having a planned programme to improve number skills in the 10-minute number sessions with which several lessons begin.

SCIENCE

111. Standards in science are good. In relation to the national average in examinations and results achieved by similar schools, students gain above average results in GCSE and well above average in A-level physics, chemistry and biology. Students on Certificate of Achievement courses at 16 and GNVQ at 18 are successful in obtaining relevant accreditation. In relation to attainment on entry to the school, which is above average, students make at least satisfactory progress from ages 14 to 16. They make very good progress from ages 16 to 18. Girls' results have improved considerably since the last inspection but now boys' attainment is below that of girls. The school has sustained good standards since the last inspection.
112. Students' good standards in science are characterised by high levels of knowledge and understanding of key scientific concepts. Students demonstrate good oral skills to explain their understanding and write in prose of quality to record observations and findings. A good example was observed in a Year 11 lesson, where students were able to explain, demonstrate and describe how solar energy can be used to provide energy that can be measured by a voltmeter. Further discussion demonstrated their grasp of the environmental considerations of using alternative energy sources. In a Year 12 A-level biology lesson students explained with clarity and some precision the structure and function of root hairs in relation to water uptake. Students' sound information

technology (IT) skills are beginning to make a contribution to their understanding in science, as observed in a Year 10 lesson where students were able to use internet facilities and web-site pages to research information about healthy diets.

113. Students develop good investigative skills. They can select and control appropriate variables and carry out safe and complex practical work well. A good example was observed in a Year 10 lesson. Students demonstrated a very good grasp of the investigative process, predicting with some accuracy the resistivity of a wire, repeating tests to check experimental accuracy and beginning to evaluate the effectiveness of their practical expertise to ensure the quality of the data collected. Students made good use of their numeracy skills to create tables and graphs and to evaluate results. In this example, students calculated the resistivity of the wire using appropriate equations to test their predictions. Students with special educational needs, as well as high attainers, make good progress on appropriate courses, which are adapted well to their needs.
114. Students' attitudes to the subject are good overall. They are attentive, behave well, are usually well organised and are capable of completing work on their own with little guidance. On occasion progress is too slow in middle and lower sets, as students struggle to synthesise information effectively and interpret complex patterns. This affects the quality of information that they can use to evaluate scientific evidence.
115. Teaching is of good quality and on a number of occasions very good in the sixth form. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use it well to challenge, broaden and enrich students' understanding of science. For example, in an A-level biology lesson, knowledge of antibiotics and their relative strengths and weaknesses in combating bacterial infection greatly enhanced class discussion. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, and of the quality and quantity of work to be completed. Planning and preparation are usually very thorough and time is used well. On occasion, innovative teaching methods are used to achieve high standards in students' work. For example, in an A-level physics lessons, significant intellectual demand was placed on very capable students to research and carry out experiments about the strength of magnetic fields, and then justify their findings through teaching fellow students and answering their complex questions. In a Year 10 lesson, where students built and tested loudspeakers, the teacher made the best use of time and ensured that students learned through appropriate and innovative activities.
116. On rare occasions, teaching is less effective when tasks and demand are of a low level and the pace of learning is not sustained. In a Year 10 lesson for example, students struggled with unreliable data, to produce an appropriate table of results and draw conclusions. As a result there was little time to make any meaningful deductions from the information and interest and motivation suffered as a result, especially for boys. Over emphasis on recording information for significant periods of time reduces the impact of the key learning objective and this affects students' enjoyment and the progress they make.
117. The science faculty and the departments of physics, chemistry and biology are well managed. The vision for improving provision further and raising standards for all is shared effectively with all science staff including the technicians, who make a considerable contribution to standards in the department.
118. Since the last inspection more appropriate courses for low attainers have been successfully introduced at GCSE and in the sixth form. Considerable effort has gone into improving extra-curricular provision, with a good enrichment programme. Accommodation has also been improved, but more remains to be done, particularly to improve more laboratories. The department is building on successful chemistry residential experiences for post-16 students, with the introduction of CREST (Creativity

in Science and Technology) awards and a science club, although numbers at present are low.

119. To improve further the department should:

- improve the methodology used to teach lower attaining GCSE groups;
- develop further students' ability to synthesise data and information, and to research and present ideas in innovative ways,
- and maximise the use of IT in all aspects of learning.

ART AND DESIGN

120. This is an improving department and, in 2000, GCSE examination results improved to be in line with the national average. Progress of current students is good.

121. Good quality GCSE work in two and three dimensions is displayed in the art area. A consistent strength is students' ability to handle media creatively and produce lively abstract work which has a strong visual impact. For example the still life collages inspired by Cubism. Students understand art movements and artists, for example a range of pop artists' work is known and applied by Year 11 students. Their knowledge of several artists, added to practical challenges set by the teacher, provoke their own creativity, for example, masks produced in Year 10 and the constructions inspired by natural forms across a range of years. When students are encouraged to reflect on their work, they do this well. For example, in the Year 10 project inspired by the theme of 'shrines', students addressed a range of spiritual, contemporary and cultural issues through art notebooks. The use of the sketchbook is inconsistent, and students need to show more analysis in their research. Drawing and observational enquiry are areas for further improvement, because students rarely develop these fully. Standards in lessons indicate that attainment of current students aged 16 is above average. There is capacity for further improvement, especially for talented students and for the proportion of students achieving the highest grades, A* and A, at GCSE. There is no difference between the progress and achievements of boys and girls. Students with special needs make good progress.

122. GNVQ students show a wide range of skills in line with the expectation of the course. When teachers emphasise these skills well, students' understanding improves, for example when they learn about the ceramic processes. They are aware of the vocational element of projects, for example work created in partnership with the local garden centre, although this aspect has greater potential to provide more first hand experiences. Knowledge and understanding is good when specifically taught, for example logo design was explained very well in relation to commercial considerations at GNVQ level. Students are over dependent on teachers, however, and weak when having to do individual research to support a personal viewpoint.

123. At A-level personal source books are of very good quality. These underpin increasing confidence and emerging individuality. This is an improvement upon the findings of the previous inspection. Use of mixed media is a strength, for example a student was observed combining digital images which had been colour manipulated by the use of the computer with paint and collage. The depth of involvement in the subject is very good where students connect less well-known artists to their own work. For example a student had deconstructed the graphic design of Andy Smith into a range of sketchbook marks, from which to select and apply to own work. The impact of contemporary artist on students' thinking is an area to improve. Attainment, at age 18, is above expectation and results at A-level are above average.

124. Generally positive attitudes towards art are evident. Students were observed

continuing work after school and, in the sixth form, several take the good advice of staff to attend life drawing classes. Teachers provide good support, clear guidance and individual encouragement. Many students complete the homework conscientiously. Most listen very attentively, although a few do not express their views about art willingly and have to be encouraged. Students co-operate well when working in groups and are very tolerant of limited space, where group sizes are large, and of potential distraction of working noise in the open plan space. Students' own initiative in preparing for and following up lessons is limited. There is scope to improve the creative aspirations of individuals by increasing the display of work, particularly of A-level students, around the college campus.

125. Teaching is good. Effective use is made of demonstrations to clarify expectations, followed by informative and, at best, good questioning focused on individuals. Explicit reference is made to relevant displays particularly at GCSE level. The use of other students' work is good and has a positive impact upon students' thinking, particularly when it is linked to work of artists, and in some cases teachers' own experiences. Some teachers reveal the key characteristics of artists and art movements very skilfully. This enables students to understand and apply complex art concepts. For example, Year 10 students were observed discussing the significance of Mexican art in the context of the 'Day of the Dead' for their own work. Key words were used very well to provide a range of tools to describe 'Expressionism'. Teaching in the sixth form is enriched by a wide range of visits to London and Birmingham galleries, as well as degree shows in Leicester and Rugby. The GCSE course provides insufficient opportunities for all students to encounter original art, artefacts and artists.
126. Leadership and management is sound overall, with some good features. The monitoring and evaluation of the department's work is particularly good, as is the shared commitment to improvement and to meeting the departmental targets. Different, but equally valuable teaching strategies are not yet sufficiently shared across all teachers in order to give students equal access to the full range of effective learning opportunities. The coverage of media, methods, artists, and visual concepts needs to be monitored, to build on work done in previous schools and improve long term planning for a more rapid progression. Secondary sources shown to large groups are often too small. The range of visual references within the department's resources is, however, good. Access to information technology has improved since the last report, although opportunities for teachers to integrate this into students' learning, in studios, is restricted by the few computers located in the subject area.
127. The teaching team should continue to share the good range of knowledge, skills and enthusiasm they bring to their work in order to build on recent success by:
 - developing drawing and research skills;
 - increasing exposure of Years 10 and 11 students to original art, artists and artefacts;
 - and improving the long term planning of the art curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

128. Standards in design and technology at GCSE are above those normally expected. There is a marked gender difference in GCSE results, with girls performing above the national average and boys below. There are differences across different aspects of design and technology. Results in food technology, graphic products and textiles technology are above average. Results in resistant materials and in systems and control are below average but improving. Standards at A-level are satisfactory. The overall pass rate is good though the grades achieved are below the school average.
129. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are inconsistent. In graphic products, textiles and food technology, they are always average and sometimes above. In these lessons, students use materials and tools competently and with confidence. In graphic products, students research design ideas well and use these appropriately to improve the outcomes of their work, for example in their games project. In food technology students' knowledge and understanding of concepts of healthy eating are good. During practical sessions, in a project on healthy eating, students assess their work and understand how to use the findings to develop their prototype recipes. In textiles technology, students can experiment with techniques and use practical tasks to develop their design ideas. Both designing and making skills are developed well. Students can produce and creatively adapt their own patterns from their own designs to make an attractive range of quality artefacts, including trousers, dresses, cushions and bed linen. In systems and control, and in resistant materials standards are generally satisfactory. Students can use a variety of sources, including the Internet, when researching their projects and they can use these ideas to develop their designs. When constructing their design, students use a range of tools and processes, for example in a Year 11 lesson, students were making products, such as storage for fishing tackle, records and jewellery, accurately and competently. Standards in a minority of lessons are, however, below average. Designing skills are underdeveloped. Most students can draw using isometric and orthographic principles, but not all do so with sufficient care and accuracy.
130. Work in post-16 classes is above average. In Year 12 standards are good in systems and control and textiles, where students explore their own ideas in creative, developmental ways to design a wide range of interesting products, such as safety devices for doors and cars, wall hangings and coats. In most lessons, across all aspects of design and technology, students' knowledge and understanding is used effectively to support 'design and make' projects. For example in food technology students understand the how to interpret nutritional information and can analyse a product to evaluate its nutritional content. In one lesson, on types of wood, standards were unsatisfactory because the topic and task set were insufficiently challenging for post-16 students.
131. Teaching in design and technology is satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good and is used effectively to support students' learning. Teachers have developed their expertise in the use of information technology and it is used competently in lessons to create a wide range of learning opportunities. Teaching is particularly good in textiles and food technology where high expectations, good planning and very well organised lessons make a significant contribution to students' learning. In textiles, students are given specific targets, which is very effective in enabling students to take responsibility for their own learning. Good teaching was also seen in graphics where sharing of clear objectives and short demonstrations of techniques enabled students to undertake practical work in a focused way.

132. Teaching is stronger in Year 10 than in Year 11. Students in Year 11 work on their major projects and, whilst teaching is satisfactory, the somewhat repetitive nature of the lessons discourages pace and productivity. This has a more negative effect on boys' learning than girls'. Good teaching of major projects is characterised by sharing of learning objectives, timed activities with a clear purpose and class assessment of quality. This was seen in both textiles and food technology. Teaching is unsatisfactory in a small number of graphics lessons. In these lessons students are not motivated or challenged by the teaching. On two occasions the organisation of the lesson into two distinct activities resulted in students losing concentration and being off task for long periods of time. Very little was achieved in either lesson. In a post-16 lesson the content was inappropriate and pitched too low for the students' prior understanding.
133. In all year groups, students have a good attitude towards design and technology. They enjoy the subject and are keen to come to lessons; punctuality and attendance are good. Behaviour in lessons is good and effective relationships exist between students and teachers. Management of students is good at Key Stage 4 and very good in the sixth form. Students show high levels of interest and concentration. Students work collaboratively during practical sessions and a significant number of students attend extra-curricular activities.
134. Leadership across the faculty is very good. There is a clear ethos and direction identified for design and technology and strong, supportive team spirit. The priorities for the faculty are clear and appropriate. Strategies for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are beginning to be effective. There is excellent leadership of the work in textiles and food technology.
135. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is now very good. It is planned well, broad and appropriate. All students study design and technology. A wide choice of GCSE and vocational subjects is offered. Provision for students with special educational needs is good. In the sixth form options are very broad. Courses are popular and have viable numbers of students in Year 12. The curriculum is enriched by links with local industry and the Neighbourhood Engineers scheme. Opportunities exist for moral and social education, but limited attention is given to students' multicultural and spiritual development. Specialist Technology College status has enabled the accommodation to be improved and an attractive learning environment now exists for all design and technology subjects. Standards of display across the faculty are very good. Some resistant materials workshops are untidy with equipment and goggles left in disarray at end of each lesson. Technician support to deliver the curriculum is very good.
136. Priorities for further improvement are:
- raise standards in resistant materials;
 - improve GCSE results of boys;
 - strengthen the teaching in the weaker graphics lessons.

GEOGRAPHY

137. In geography, students benefit from a well-planned curriculum and very good teaching. They work hard, and attain high standards. Examination results at both GCSE and A-level are well above average and continue to improve. For example, in this year's GCSE examinations, well over three-quarters of the students entered for geography gained grades A*-C. Girls continue to do very well in examinations and this year for the first time, boys also did well and gained high grades. This compares very favourably with results in similar schools across the country. Results at A-level are equally commendable, with over half of the students entered gaining high grades, and only very small numbers are unsuccessful in their examinations

138. Students who choose geography make good progress in Years 10 and 11, and attain standards above those normally seen. All students have a sound grasp of geographical skills, including the use of maps. For example, in Year 10, students complete choropleth maps (showing bands of economic potential) in Europe, and make good use of these to explain patterns of migration between countries. They gain a good understanding of landscapes and their effects on people from contrasting case studies in Norfolk and the Amazon Basin. Case studies locally and in Africa give the students a good understanding of countries at different stages in their development. Students with special educational needs take a full part in lessons and make good progress.
139. Students who to study geography in Years 12 and 13 continue to make good progress. They use their knowledge well to investigate and explain the geography of unfamiliar places. For example, in Year 13 students gain a good understanding of the variety of rural landscapes in the United Kingdom, and can apply this to evaluate the merits of a range of management plans for a specific example, North-West Scotland. Similarly, in their studies of ecosystems, students can apply principles learned earlier to understand the landscape of the temperate grasslands.
140. The attitude of students is very good. Behaviour in lessons is excellent. Students work with interest and enthusiasm. They respond well to the high expectations of the school.
141. The standard of teaching is very good, particularly at A-level. There is an effective team of subject specialists who plan their lessons carefully and challenge the students to achieve the highest standards. The main strength of teachers is their understanding, not just of the requirements of the examination syllabus, but also of the individual needs of their students. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on the River Nile, the teacher set a sequence of activities well matched to the overall ability of the students. She introduced the lesson with a simple mapping activity to locate the Nile and Egypt, then showed an informative video with scenes and commentary which the students could follow. She then asked the students to write about the country, and provided guidance on vocabulary that would help. As a result the students tried hard, and gained a good understanding of the importance of the river to the people of Egypt, in both the past and the present. Similarly in a Year 13 lesson on the temperate grasslands, the teacher provided suitably challenging tasks, that stretched the students. Working in groups, students drew a series of diagrams to summarise aspects of the structure and nutrient flows in a grassland environment. She then set a good homework task, to use this understanding to evaluate the effect of land use changes on the natural system. This enabled the students to demonstrate their understanding at the highest A-level standards. Students benefit from a well-planned curriculum, and particularly from a good programme of field visits and coursework activities.
142. The head of department was absent during the inspection, but it is apparent from the quality of the team work, and the progress of the students, that she provides good leadership and manages the subject well. There is a strong sense of purpose, and determination that the students do well, in all the work of the department team.
143. Since the last inspection, the department has made good progress. High attainment in examinations has been sustained, and the achievement of the boys improved. A-level results overall are now better. The quality of the teaching has been sustained, and a broader curriculum includes opportunities for students to take GNVQs in a number of leisure related courses. The subject now benefits also from improvements in the accommodation, with most lessons taught in the new humanities block.
144. In order to continue to sustain and improve standards further, the department should:
 - increase opportunities for students to identify their own learning targets, and to

- work more independently to achieve these;
- continue the very good work on developing note-taking and high order thinking skills;
- and make more use of IT to support learning in the subject.

GEOLOGY

145. In geology, students benefit from very good teaching, and achieve high results in their examinations. Over three-quarters of the students entered for GCSE gained grades A*-C, and all the students entered for A-level were successful this year.
146. The teacher responsible is a knowledgeable and experienced specialist, so the students are well prepared for their examinations. She teaches with enthusiasm and energy, and the students respond well. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, the teacher gave good explanations of the ways in which animals and plants come to be fossilised. She used an effective combination of handouts, board work, photographs and samples to illustrate the main points. As a result all the students gained a good knowledge of new terms and vocabulary, and were beginning to understand the complexity of the fossilisation process. The students also benefit from a curriculum, which includes opportunities for fieldwork, locally and in Scotland.
147. Students respond well and work enthusiastically. It is evident from the number of students who continue with geology at 'A' level, that they enjoy studying the subject. This is an important factor in the success of the subject.

HISTORY

148. Standards in history are above average. The department has several strengths and no significant weaknesses. Students enjoy the subject. They work diligently in lessons and respond with enthusiasm to the varied and challenging tasks that they are set.
149. Attainment at the age of 16 is above the national average. The A*-C pass rate in the most recent GCSE results was above the national average. These results were achieved despite an as yet unresolved dispute with one examination board over coursework moderation. GCSE results over the last three years show a rising trend with a significant improvement in the attainment of boys. Students' attainment in history is in line with their attainment in other subjects. Attainment at the age of 18 is well above the national average. The percentage of students gaining A and B grades at A-level is well above the national figure. There is a rising trend in these results.
150. Standards reached in class are above average. Many students demonstrate good factual recall, are confident and capable when interrogating sources. They are able to offer sound explanations about significant events. Most have good literacy skills and this results in them producing examples of well presented, accurately written and well argued pieces, for example when writing about conditions in Tudor England. Current standards of A-level students are also good. In Years 12 and 13 students are articulate and effective in producing well structured, carefully argued and well referenced essays. The capabilities of students in history are best demonstrated in the GCSE coursework and A-level personal studies that they produce. Some of this work is of a very high standard and reflects the good development of historical skills and abilities from Year 10 through to Year 13. The progress made by students, including those with special educational needs and those who have high prior attainment, is good.
151. Students respond very well in lessons. They show good motivation in the way they listen carefully, respond positively to questions and opportunities for discussions and sustain their concentration through each lesson. In all age groups students are effective when working in whole class, small groups or paired situations. Many are very

capable of working with independence, and this is a significant factor in the high quality of work produced in coursework and personal studies. Relationships amongst students, and between students and teachers, are very good.

152. Teaching in the department is good, frequently very good and never less than satisfactory. All lessons are well planned and benefit from the consistently high expectations and strong subject knowledge of all teachers. In the best lessons observed, teachers made very good use of their subject knowledge to question students and set tasks to interest and challenge them to think deeply about important issues. These strategies were very successful in a GCSE lesson where students studied sources on the events in Sarajevo in 1914 and in an A-level lesson on the renaissance and reformation. The department has worked diligently to produce a range of high quality materials to complement students' work in lessons. This does much to resolve potential resource problems in the subject, provides effective support and guidance on all aspects of work and does much to equip students to participate fully in lessons. Very occasionally some lessons are too closely controlled by the teacher resulting in some opportunities to engage and challenge students being missed. All teachers know their students well and succeed in meeting their needs through varying the resources used and tasks set, and by working closely to support particular individuals and small groups. Regular marking ensures students' progress is carefully monitored. However, the quality of diagnostic comment and guidance for improvement offered is varied. This is also the case in reports sent to parents.
153. The department is very well led and managed. Much has been done to ensure good progress has been made since the last inspection and to provide a sound basis for continued improvement in the future. The rising trend in attainment is due to the commitment and diligence of the department in revising courses and schemes of work, improving resource provision and planning effectively in response to close monitoring of the work of the department.
154. To further improve on its existing good practice, the department should:
- make more use of IT to support students' learning on the GCSE course;
 - continue to develop strategies to help students with weaker literacy skills learn and achieve;
 - and introduce ways of involving students more closely in assessing their own progress as learners, particularly at A-level.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

155. The school is now adequately equipped with computer facilities and modern, high quality software, largely as a result of becoming a specialist Technology College. It now provides information technology courses for all students in Years 10 and 11 and a good range of computing and information technology options in Years 12 and 13.
156. Attainment in Year 11 is above average in both the full and the short GCSE examination courses. All students use word processing effectively, with a high level of retrieval and editing skill. They are able to combine text with graphics into letterheads, logos and business cards as part of their coursework portfolio for the GCSE. Students acquire good skills with spreadsheets and databases that are applied in a number of contexts. Their ability to search and sort information stored on a spreadsheet becomes more sophisticated as they create, analyse and evaluate tables and graphs based on a business or service. By the end of Year 11, students show a good awareness of audience when designing an animated slide-show using text and graphics. In Years 10 and 11, students make good progress in their learning because they consolidate then build on their existing knowledge and develop further skills in the use of computers. There is no difference in the rate of progress of boys and girls. Students with special

educational needs, and those who are gifted, also make good progress.

157. Year 13 students attain high standards. Boys and girls taking A-level computer studies, information technology and GNVQ courses make very good progress and are achieving highly at this point in their courses. In all courses, students integrate the use of computers firmly into their learning programmes demonstrating the use of e-mail and web sites to gain information for their studies. They can select software effectively for a particular job taking into account its ease of use and suitability for the task. In computing students can analyse and review computer-programming methods and draw conclusions about their usefulness. Their knowledge and understanding are clearly expressed through essays and presentations.
158. In the last two years GCSE results in both the full and short courses have been significantly above the national averages. A/S, A-level and GNVQ results in 1999 and 2000 have also exceeded national averages. A/S and A-level information technology in 2000 achieved 100% pass rate.
159. Attitudes and behaviour were very good in all lessons seen. Students demonstrated keenness for computer based learning. Their skill level is often very high, and most know the capabilities and limitations of computers they use at school. Equipment is very well looked after. Students take real pride in their growing competence. Motivation is high and students show very good concentration. Relationships between students and teachers are very good in all lessons.
160. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. Teachers create a calm, orderly atmosphere and share clearly with students the learning to be covered in each lesson. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject, in Years 10 and 11 overall is adequate with variations between non-specialists and specialist teachers. In Years 12 and 13, it is excellent. For example, teachers use the correct terminology to describe tasks and the features of the software being used. During all lessons observed students were well managed. When required, support for individuals was sensitive and effective. Planning within the subject is very good. The scheme of work is effective in ensuring that students make progress across year groups and this helps to raise standards. Students are given many opportunities to gain qualifications in the subject. The use of homework is consistent across the department and provides students with opportunities to progress their coursework so it reaches the necessary standards.
161. Leadership and management of the subject is very good. The department's documentation provides a clear vision for the use of IT in the subject, but not its use across different subjects of the curriculum. Development planning is thorough and clearly supports the schools' priorities. There is a calm and collegiate ethos in the department and a shared commitment to improvement of students' computer skills. There is a good provision for lunchtime and after school clubs for students to access information from the Internet and work on coursework projects. Monitoring the quality of teaching and its impact on learning is very effective. It provides subject teachers with continuous professional development to maintain a high quality provision. Assessment procedures are thorough and detailed and there is significant monitoring of progress made by the students. As a result students are well informed about their achievement and progress and they know how to improve attainment. Reports to parents do not provide sufficient detail of what students achieve and how they can improve.
162. Provision of equipment for IT is good with a ratio of computers to students that is at the national average. The network is fully deployed to deliver the IT curriculum but has no remaining capacity to deliver IT in any other subject. A number of curriculum areas manage their own cluster of computer systems, and these offer additional opportunities for students. These clusters are not always managed effectively and therefore the use

of computers by subjects that do not have their own IT facilities is restricted. The quality of technical support is exceptional and ensures that the whole school network is fully effective at all times.

163. Since the previous report, the subject has addressed all of the issues raised. There has been a dramatic improvement in the quantity and quality of computers throughout the school. The subject now provides accredited courses for all students in Years 10 and 11 and has significantly improved standards in the GCSE. Provision now meets the needs of all students and the curriculum requirements.
164. Action to raise standards further should include:
- developing the use of computers as a learning medium within all subjects;
 - and continuing to monitor and support non-specialist teachers to ensure consistent high standards;

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French, German and Spanish

165. Almost all students study a foreign language' either to GCSE or Certificate of Achievement level and they benefit from a choice of three languages. Students enter the school with a wide range of previous language experiences and skills. Most have studied French and continue the study of this language. A small proportion has done German in their previous school, and a few have had a brief taster of Spanish.
166. GCSE results in French, at 50% A*-C grades, are above the national average, although they dropped in 2000. Almost all students now study a language up to age 16, and entry patterns at GCSE have changed over recent years. German results are in line with the average. Spanish results, with a small number of students entered, have improved dramatically in 2000 and 92% of students gained A*-C. Students on the Certificate of Achievement course were very successful, with 80% gaining a merit or distinction. Boys' results are lower than girls, although the gap narrowed in 2000. Results at A-level are below the average in French and in line with the average in German.
167. Attainment of current students is in line with average. At age 16, high attainers can understand and apply grammatical structures accurately. For example, in a Year 11 top set French, in role plays about making arrangements to go out, the best students demonstrated great confidence and accuracy and coped impressively with the unexpected. Middle attainers understand spoken and written passages well and speak reasonably confidently in response to questions from the teacher but they rarely use the foreign language outside set dialogues. Independent writing is good enough to convey a simple message but often contains inaccuracies. Low attainers, including students with special educational needs, have a reasonable understanding of basic language covered and some speak quite confidently, when given support. Students who start a new language, or have had very little previous experience, make rapid progress and, although their range of expression is more limited, they achieve good standards.
168. Students on A-level courses, in French and German, start with differing levels of language skills, as the department encourages students to continue language study if they wish to. Overall, attainment at age 18 is in line with expected standards. Most students make at least steady progress, gaining a broad understanding of the language and literature that they study. More able linguists make good progress in developing the range and accuracy of expression, formulating ideas and opinions with considerable fluency. Others make satisfactory progress, while a few have difficulty in maintaining

motivation, finding A-level work very demanding.

169. Most students show positive, although not always enthusiastic, attitudes to their language learning. They listen well and most respond accurately to teachers' firm but approachable style, so relationships are generally good. Students accept tasks set and most apply themselves diligently. In some groups, students do the tasks out of respect but show little interest, and a few students show sullen reluctance or hostility which distracts others. Although the department has tried to redress the balance, there are more boys than girls in middle and lower groups. Confidence and motivation remain issues to address in these groups, because progress is too slow against potential. Students in the sixth form are well motivated and are keen to improve. In the best lessons, they demonstrate urgency about their work, as when Year 13 German students chose activities from a superbly organised revision programme, working with hushed concentration on the skills they needed to develop most. A few A-level students lack confidence and need much encouragement to maintain momentum.
170. Teaching across the three languages is satisfactory overall, with some good features. This results in at least effective learning and good progress for most students. There are, however, significant weaknesses in a very small proportion of lessons in French. Post-16 teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. Teachers have high knowledge of the language they teach and they skilfully lead students through what they have to learn, ensuring that they understand what is expected in the examination. They start lessons promptly, provide well-structured activities and organise materials very thoroughly. For example, in a Year 11 Spanish lesson, the teacher carefully checked what students understood and gave them firm but encouraging support to improve their language skills. Homework is set regularly, building well on class work, often based on booklets containing activities prepared for each unit of work, as well as extra reading and listening tasks for students to do on their own. Most lessons are managed well and the teacher provides a respectful atmosphere, in which good standards of work and behaviour are expected. They cope calmly with challenging behaviour and, where necessary, seek support from other colleagues. Some teachers have already made good use of the recently acquired computers to produce structured and attractive tasks, which help students improve and add variety to the 75-minute lessons. The use of information technology is limited to date. A good listening centre is used well for individual, intensive practice, particularly for post-16 students, who also benefit from very helpful speaking practice with foreign language assistants. There are some weaknesses in the teaching. While teachers start with a clear outline of the lessons, objectives are rarely expressed as expected standards, and there is no consistent checking of what students understand and can do during and at the end of the lesson. Some students, particularly boys, lose concentration, because activities are not varied enough and do not interest them. An example of successful motivation was in a Year 10 German lesson, where a memory competition encouraged everyone to join in actively. In some lessons, effective question and answer work does not lead to intensive practice to build students' confidence up and encourage them to use the language routinely in lessons. In a few cases, unsatisfactory behaviour is not properly managed and this slows the learning, as in a Year 11 French class, where high attainers were insufficiently challenged. Marking and reports do not provide sufficient guidance about how to do better.
171. The department provides a good range of extra-curricular experiences, including visits and exchanges to France and Germany, work experience for Year 12 French students and other educational visits abroad. This contributes to cultural development and gives a real audience for language use, which is often lacking in lessons. The head of department has only been in post for just over one year and leads by example. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas needing development. Over the past year, strategies have been put in place to improve the way the department works and to raise standards. These agreed strategies have yet to have an impact on all

groups and classes. Assessment information is used very effectively to plan ahead and there is a programme of lesson observation to share good practice and monitor the quality of teaching. Teachers contribute different strengths, which are not yet sufficiently shared.

172. The last inspection report recommended a more active and independent use of the language by students. Teaching was satisfactory overall, but did not allow for personal engagement. Good marking and assessment practices were not applied consistently across all classes. Strategies have now been agreed to address these issues and the department is well placed to improve. Key areas to improve are:
- the progress and motivation of boys;
 - the shortcomings in some of the teaching;
 - and the further use of information technology.

MUSIC

173. The music department offers a high quality of education to students. Standards have remained high since the last inspection, especially in performing.
174. For the last three years GCSE results have been well above the national average. Current Year 11 students achieve standards above expectation in performing and composing. They are able to write down their compositions with confident use of traditional notation, and can also interpret graphic notation imaginatively. They have good understanding of musical structures and their appraisal of their own work is also good, though their knowledge of the historical context of music is a little more sketchy. Students in Year 10 are already showing similar characteristics and are strong performers.
175. The number of candidates entered for A-level in recent years has been too small to compare with national averages, but the pass-rate has been 100% though few students have achieved the highest grades. Current students in Year 13 achieve standards in line with levels expected for their age. They are strong performers. Their aural work, history and theory are weaker; they have the basic knowledge required by the syllabus but they are slow to make connections between what they know and new pieces which they hear. Students in Year 12 achieve well above average standards after only a single term of their course. They do not just recognise features of new music through careful listening, but make mature evaluative judgements about the impact of particular composing techniques, using relevant specialist vocabulary.
176. Comparatively few boys have elected to study music, except in Year 13 where they are the majority. However, there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The progress of students with special educational needs and those who are gifted is very good.
177. Teaching is very good. Well-qualified musicians give expert demonstrations of technical skills. They set high levels of challenge, and expect students from the start of their courses to take responsibility for planning to meet coursework deadlines. Group work is carefully planned. Teachers share some GCSE lessons, thus giving all students access to the full range of their teachers' musical strengths. Lessons observed showed high quality methods. For example, in a Year 12 lesson learning about dominant 7ths there was constant checking to ensure students understood the theory, new methods were tried when some of them did not, leading to further checks before the aural effect of the new chord was explored. On the rare occasions when teaching was relatively weaker, it was due to an over-ambitious task or to a lack of resources for which alternative possibilities were not planned. Teachers quickly

recognised the need to amend their strategies, and their responses to individual students' needs are a strength of their work. Effective use is also made of the technology support teacher to assist students with use of computers, composing software, and recording their work.

178. Most students respond enthusiastically to challenges in lessons, particularly to group work which enables them to learn from each other's strengths. Relationships between students, and with their teachers, are very good. Shared humour adds warmth to the positive working atmosphere. Students set and monitor their own schedules for completion of coursework to meet examination deadlines. Only in Year 13 are students sometimes passive, generally inclined to receive teaching rather than seeking to develop their knowledge by making their own connections with previous learning. Extra-curricular activities are well supported by students.
179. Record keeping is exemplary. Teachers' assessment of students' work is of high quality. Students are given detailed feedback on all projects, with clear points for improvement. As a result Year 11 students have improved their composing skills significantly over their course. However, teachers' comments on reports to parents do not include the same high level of detail about targets to be achieved.
180. The curriculum meets all examination requirements. There is very good breadth of extra-curricular activities, both large groups and chamber ensembles, which promote the development of performing and social skills which raise students' self-esteem. There are plentiful opportunities for public performances, except for GCSE students for whom there are no specific opportunities, though many perform in the termly concerts and at other venues. The department recently presented a successful musical created and produced by the music staff. It is sad that these occasions do not always draw fuller audiences, particularly events held in school. Students have performed in France and there is a planned tour to Spain, giving good access to European culture, but they rarely study music from other ethnic traditions. The contribution which music can make to their spiritual development is also overlooked, though unplanned spiritual moments occur in individual lessons.
181. The department is led and managed with vision and enthusiasm. Planning is reflective and effective, drawing on teachers' day to day experiences to plan changes to meet circumstances. The department has sufficient space but poor soundproofing between practice rooms means students cannot listen properly to each other. The layout of furniture in the largest room does not make best use of this space. The head of department has no office and suffers from constant interruptions. There are not enough computers with appropriate software for the large GCSE and Year 12 groups, and the recording equipment is only just sufficient for A-level courses. The department also lacks the breadth of recorded music for listening on CDs which sixth formers need. The library has ample books, and is used well.
182. Since the last inspection high standards have been maintained. The department could usefully seek to expand its influence in the whole school, which at present is not sufficiently aware of, or supportive of, the high quality of musicianship present among students. The main points for development are:
 - to provide more opportunities for world music and plan for spiritual development;
 - and to improve technology resources, especially for the sixth-formers;
 - and to make better use of space.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

183. This is a department with strong, enthusiastic leadership, which is committed to improvement.

184. During the Inspection lessons were observed in badminton, boys' hockey, girls' orienteering and self-defence, rugby, swimming and trampolining. Extra-curricular sessions were observed in badminton, basketball, football and rugby. A-level results in 2000 were above the national figure with 53% of students gaining high grades and 100% of students gaining a pass. GCSE results were very good and well above the national average with 69% of students gaining grades A* to C.
185. At age 16, standards overall are above average. Students' planning, performing and evaluation skills are in line with those normally seen, with some students showing very high levels of skill especially in girls' football, boys' football, swimming, badminton, hockey and rugby. Most students know and understand the importance of warm up activities. They know, understand and can perform a variety of appropriate stretching exercises to work specified large muscle groups. GCSE students know the names of these muscles. They also understand the principles of the circulation of the blood and the difference between general and specific fitness. Students' knowledge and understanding of anatomy and physiology is as expected at this stage of the GCSE course. In hockey, boys know and understand the rules relating to short corners. They receive the ball well and several students show very high levels of skill in the use of reverse stick work. In badminton students' performance of basic skills is as expected with their limited experience of the game, but one or two players show high levels of skill and good knowledge and understanding of court play. Students know the main principles of survival swimming. GCSE students know the coaching points for tumble turns in front and back crawl, with several performing them well. In trampolining, students can create sequences using at least four different skills. In self-defence, girls show that they know how to respond to physical attack and most do so with a great deal of energy. Overall students, including those with special educational needs and those who are talented, make good progress in Years 10 and 11 in the acquisition and application of skills, evaluating and improving performance and knowledge, and understanding of health and fitness well. Girls and boys make similar progress.
186. On the A/S and A-level courses, attainment is well above expectation. Students know and understand the difference between technique and skill. They are able to devise objective tests to assess the performance of skills. Year 13 examination students have good knowledge and understanding of the factors affecting the development of sport. They make very good progress in Years 12 and 13. In the extra-curricular rugby session seen, students showed very good ball-handling skills even in very poor weather conditions.
187. The school has a very good record in extra-curricular successes with students from the school taking part at county or regional levels in rugby, football, hockey, cricket, swimming, athletics, basketball, golf and cross-country running. There is national representation in girls' football and one girl is in the England rugby squad.
188. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is very good in Years 12 and 13. All specialist teachers have very good subject knowledge, especially in games, swimming and trampolining. Teachers have good working relationships with their students. Most lessons are planned well with clear learning objectives, but these are not always shared with students. Acquisition of practical skills is good because tasks are usually explained clearly and presented in small, manageable stages, exemplified well by good teacher or student demonstrations. Clear coaching points are given for most skills, with effective individual and whole class feedback. Students are given good opportunities to evaluate the work of their peers and give them points for improvement. Verbal feedback is given by teachers in theory lessons, but students on examination courses are given insufficient written comments on how to improve their work. The pace of lessons is excellent in Years 12 and 13, but it was too slow in a Year 11 hockey lesson observed and a GCSE theory session when students were

given far too long to complete tasks. Consequently, behaviour began to deteriorate. In theory lessons, students in Years 12 and 13 are given ample opportunities to work collaboratively and to present their work in interesting ways. For example, Year 13 students devised and played the game of "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" in order to revise their knowledge of the skeletal structure. In a GCSE lesson, however, a great deal of time was spent copying notes given by the teacher. Teachers' questioning techniques are good, especially in sixth form lessons when they are used very well to check, challenge or extend knowledge and understanding.

189. Years 12 and 13 students show particularly high levels of concentration. Those who are not able to take a practical part in lessons are usually given relevant work to do, but in some lessons they are not fully integrated into class question and answer sessions. Students' response to lessons is good. They are usually enthusiastic and motivated even in difficult weather conditions. Students who are not taking part practically in lessons usually have valid reasons for not doing so. Students usually expend a great deal of physical energy. All take and give constructive criticism well, either from a teacher or from their peers. They are very supportive of each other and make encouraging comments to their peers. This was shown particularly well in the extra-curricular girls' football match when a penalty was missed. They take responsibility well. They are willing to take warm-up sessions when given the opportunity to do so. Year 12 and 13 students ably assist in coaching younger students in extra-curricular football sessions and two sixth formers officiated very capably in a girls' football match.
190. The head of the department provides very strong, enthusiastic leadership. Good relationships exist within a well managed department. All staff show a commitment to improvement. The curriculum is appropriate for all students in Years 10 and 11, but there is no physical education programme in curriculum time in Years 12 and 13, unless students follow the A/S or A-level courses, or as part of the Community Sports Leaders Award. Schemes of work are written, but learning outcomes are not identified well for all activities. There is insufficient liaison with contributory schools on curriculum content, and this hampers progression. The curriculum is considerably enriched by the very good extra-curricular provision, which is available to all regardless of ability. Staff give unstintingly of their time to support this programme. Some reports to parents do not give a clear indication of what students know, understand and can do or make reference to progress made. Clear targets for improvement are given on the reports of students entered for an examination, but none for students who are not following the GCSE course. Formal monitoring of teaching takes place and good written feedback is given showing clearly how improvements can be made. The subject makes a good contribution to moral and social development. Students are encouraged to play fairly and to accept officials' decisions unquestioningly. Successes are celebrated through information and displays on notice boards, through announcements in assemblies and in the school's newsletter.
191. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Improvements have been made to the extra-curricular programme to give a wider ability group more opportunities to take part. Activities are now open to all. Three division tutors run lunchtime activities in 5-a-side football and uni-hockey. The department also provides recreational badminton, swimming and basketball. 'B' teams, three extra girls' football teams and a girls' rugby team have been introduced. Opportunities for students to evaluate their work are now evident. Students in Years 12 and 13 develop their work independently of the teacher, but this is not so evident in Years 10 and 11.
192. Action to improve the good standards still further should include:
- greater liaison with contributory schools over curriculum content;
 - clarification of objectives in units of work to identify more precisely predicted gains in knowledge, understanding and skills;
 - and improving reports to parents to indicate clearly the progress made.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

193. Students study religious education in personal and social education lessons. They follow the short course GCSE in religious education. In Years 10 and 11 students experience a broad curriculum and satisfactory teaching.
194. The majority of students achieve standards that meet the expectation of the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus in Year 11 and they make steady progress. They study a series of topics such as matters of life and death, marriage and family life and social harmony, as part of their short course GCSE. Students show that they have sound knowledge of a range of moral and social issues and the questions that these raise for believers. In Year 10, students know about the different attitudes that people have towards marriage and divorce. Through pair work and class discussion they show that they recognise the reasons for and against religious and civil marriages. They are aware of the distinctive teaching of Christianity and Islam on marriage and the way that these teachings may influence the way a person views marriage and divorce. In Year 11, during their work on social harmony, students show a good understanding of the terms prejudice and discrimination and in class discussion are able to explain how these are exemplified in a variety of situations. In their written work, when they are working on evaluation questions, students are able to express a personal response to a question such as 'Is death the end?' In constructing their answer, they are able to draw on the teaching of Christianity and Hinduism and consider different points of view. Overall, students with special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards. The majority of gifted and talented girls achieve the very high standards of which they are capable. This is not always the case for some of the more able boys because their written work lacks depth and development.
195. 1999 was the first year in which all students sat the short course GCSE examination. Over the past two years, the proportion of students gaining grades A*-C and A*-G was in line with the national average. The proportion of girls gaining the highest grades of A* and A was greater than that normally expected. Girls' results were much better than those of boys with almost two thirds as many girls as boys gaining grades A*-C. This difference is much greater than occurs nationally.
196. Teaching and learning are both satisfactory and, in some lessons, there are good features in the teaching. Teachers of the subject are specialists. They use their knowledge of the GCSE syllabus to prepare students well for the examination. For example, in a lesson about beliefs about death, the teacher used her subject knowledge to help students consider different points of view and write a balanced answer to an evaluation question. Lessons are well planned and the aims are made clear to students. This helps them to learn because they know what they are expected to do by the end of the lesson. Lessons are well managed so that students are able to work on activities individually or in pairs with the minimum of disruption. In one good lesson, students made gains in their understanding of the way that Christians are often stereotyped by the media through whole class discussion and a paired activity sorting positive and negative images. Although the teaching is satisfactory overall, there are some aspects that are in need of improvement. In some lessons, pace is too slow and work is insufficient matched to the needs of all. For example, in a lesson on religion and the media, too much time was spent on teacher exposition and making basic notes from a class textbook so that able students were not challenged to really think about the issues raised. Although there are occasional opportunities for group work, there is a lack of variety in teaching methods and a heavy reliance on whole class written tasks using the course textbook. This means that students have few opportunities to extend their learning through doing their own independent research. Teachers do not make

use of information technology to support learning. Students' work is marked regularly and comments on test examination questions in particular, usually give encouragement but there are too few comments about how work might be improved.

197. Most students show an interest in the subject and have positive attitudes to their work. These students are willing to participate in discussions and share their views with the rest of the class. A significant minority of boys, mainly in Year 11, shows an unsatisfactory attitude in lessons. They have little interest in the topics studied and are often reluctant to work on the tasks set. This negative attitude often slows down the progress of the rest of the class because the teacher has to spend too much time ensuring that everybody has completed their work.
198. The curriculum offered, through the GCSE short course, meets the requirements of the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus. Through regular opportunities to consider topics such as prejudice and discrimination and marriage and divorce, good opportunities are provided for moral development. In the sixth form students are not given the opportunity to further their study of the subject through A/S or A-level courses. Almost all students are withdrawn from the subject.
199. The subject leader for religious education is currently on long term sick leave. Part time members of the department have worked well to continue the day to day administration of the subject. There are several aspects of the management of the subject that are in need of improvement. Current schemes of work only give an outline of the units of work. They need to be improved so that they give the teachers in the department more detailed guidance on how each unit of work is to be approached. Although students' work is assessed regularly, through test questions, insufficient use is made of results to help students set targets for improvement. The department does not have a development plan in place to address the areas identified for improvement such the attainment of boys. Teachers rarely have formal meetings and there are few opportunities to work together to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and learning in the department.
200. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The course offered in Years 10 and 11 has been reviewed and the new short course GCSE in religious education now meets the requirements of the agreed syllabus. Students' knowledge of the beliefs and practices of religions other than Christianity has improved. However, reports still do not give enough information to parents about student's progress in religious education.
201. Action to raise standards further should include:
 - improving leadership and management of the subject;
 - raising standards achieved by boys and improving their attitudes to the subject;
 - making greater use of information technology to support students' learning;
 - and using assessment information better so that students know what they need to do to improve.

OTHER SUBJECTS INCLUDED IN THE INSPECTION

DRAMA

202. In drama, students enter the school with a variety of experiences and at different levels of attainment. The very good teaching leads to very good progress and well above average results in GCSE drama and A-level theatre studies. The small number of students who take the BTEC performing arts obtain good grades.
203. Standards of current students, at ages 16 and 18, are well above average. Students,

aged 14 to 16, rapidly develop skills of response to a range of stimuli through improvisation and scripted work. They display a good grasp of the conventions of drama and incorporate these very well in their presentations. They work very well together and group responsibility for work is quickly established. This ensures that all students prepare thoughts and materials upon which the group success may depend. Students assess and evaluate their own work, and that of the group members, constantly. This is done in a mature manner and leads to praise for progress given by one student to another, as observed in Year 11. In the sixth form, students maintain the rapid rate of progress. They understand drama techniques well and use these to develop their own dramatic skills. Very high skills were demonstrated in Year 13. A BTEC performing arts course is also followed by a few students. On this course, students organise and perform presentations to others, such as when portraying a version of a nursery tale to local young children.

204. A large number of students take the GCSE examination and results are well above average, having been so for the past three years. In the sixth form, a moderate number of students take the A-level theatre studies examination. Results, in the last three years, have been well above average, with a good number of highest grades gained. Boys and girls do equally well. Students with special educational needs are included fully and helped appropriately to improve their skills. Talented students also do well because they are given good opportunities to take part in high quality drama in class, as well as in school and community productions.
205. All the teaching of drama is at least good and much is very good. The impact of teaching over time is excellent. Teachers give generously of their time and work in class is enhanced by extra-curricular activities that include a residential experience for sixth formers. Teaching in dance is at least sound with some very strong features. Overall, lessons are planned very well with vigorous inputs from the teachers. Students are managed very effectively in the drama situation, ensuring rapid progress. Learning and understanding of important drama skills are very good thanks to very high expectations and rigorous challenge, so that students perform and write to the highest possible quality. Both teachers and students evaluate the work of groups in a sensitive yet demanding manner. Students work purposefully and are well re-directed by their teachers and each other. Overall, students respond very well in drama lessons with good behaviour, enthusiasm, high levels of commitment and confidence in their abilities. Many of these qualities are also noted in the teaching and response to dance.
206. Courses in drama are planned thoroughly. Social topics covered, including the consideration of others, are relevant and make a positive contribution to students' personal development. The subject makes a strong input to the general ethos of the school. It contributes to the enrichment of the local community through frequent productions and some involvement in the annual Edinburgh Fringe festival. The management of the subject is excellent with very high qualities of vision for the subject, enthusiasm and personal commitment of time. Dance is still developing as an essential element of drama. Considering the good skills observed in the teaching and the positive response of students, this development is worth continuing.
207. The small drama studio is well equipped. Several other rooms, of various sizes, are used and most are suitable, but the current provision for dance is unsatisfactory. Overall there is sufficient space but none of the accommodation is ideal. For example, provision for storage of costume and props is available but is not all conveniently located. The current accommodation is used well and includes some convenient provision for storage of scenery and equipment. A special feature has been made of display of students' work and technical terms in appropriate locations.
208. The last inspection reported very positively about drama, but even so considerable improvements have been made in the planning of the subject and provision of suitable

courses. Standards have risen from good to very good. The high expertise and commitment of teachers have been maintained and the subject continues to offer much to the school and its community.

209. To maintain existing standards or improve these further, attention should be paid to:
- revising course planning further to identify clearly where cultural and moral issues are addressed;
 - and continuing the development of dance.

ECONOMICS and BUSINESS STUDIES

210. Students show a high level of interest in the topics studied in business studies and economics. There is a good range of accreditation in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form.
211. By the end of Year 11, attainment in business studies is above that seen normally. In 2000, 68% of students gained A*-C grades. However, fewer than average gained the highest A* grade. Students achieved higher than their predicted grades in year 2000 with a 99% overall pass rate at Grades A*-G. The department has worked hard in encouraging boys to see academic success as important and this has led to an improvement in their results both in terms of examination and coursework grades.
212. Current students show a good understanding of the topics and they can use appropriate associated terminology, as in Year 10 when they can distinguish social costs and social benefits. Their folders show good work on the business enterprise coursework assignment. They make good progress in recalling, understanding and explaining concepts at various levels. They are able to give examples to illustrate ideas, as in Year 11, when they can plot a graph to identify the 'break even' point for fixed and variable costs of a hotel with different numbers of guests.
213. Students who choose economics as an option at GCSE enjoy the subject. The current Year 11 is the first cohort and therefore there are no previous external examination results. Students make steady progress in acquiring and understanding new vocabulary and concepts. They are able to define and explain appropriate terminology such as short and long term economic growth. They are able to give reasons for the views they put forward. The group is mixed ability but the proportion of most able students choosing this subject is above average and significantly more boys than girls study this subject.
214. Attainment in economics at A-level is outstanding. In 2000 the pass rate was 100% and all students gained high grades. In the combined economics and business course results are well above average with 100% of students gaining grades A-E and 75% obtaining high grades. Current students are enthusiastic learners. They have good understanding of the work they have completed and are able to extract relevant information from source material. They also make good progress in the development of study skills, including essay writing. There is an emphasis on making accurate and succinct notes from the board. They enjoy the challenge of the work and this was observed in Year 13 where a case study 'Hold and Deliver' enabled them to work in pairs to make calculations of stock using formulae. Students have a good understanding of the grades they are predicted to achieve and standard of their current work.
215. Students' response to learning is good. Most students show good levels of interest and concentrate productively on tasks. The few students, particularly in Year 12 who appear less well motivated and are occasionally restless, still produce work of a satisfactory standard. Relationships are excellent. Students treat their peers with warmth and respect; they are mature and conscientious young adults who respect

property and follow the instructions of their teachers.

216. Overall, the quality of teaching in both economics and business studies GCSE and A/AS-level is good. Teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. Coursework booklets are used effectively by the teachers to familiarise the students with the requirements of the examinations; for example, detailing the work to be undertaken on a week by week basis and how the work will be marked. Where teaching is very good the teachers give clear introductions to lessons describing the work to be undertaken. This provides students with a clear picture of what they are expected to achieve within the session. For example, in a Year 10 lesson where students were working on the specific implications of “effective demand”, the teacher showed a good command of the subject giving clear explanations and directions. The lesson was well structured and students managed well to ensure they kept on task. Key words were identified to ensure that all students understood and could explain what “effective demand” meant. As well as the content being developed the teacher also emphasised the need for skills to underpin their work. At the end of the lesson the teacher summarised the learning that had taken place and the progress made. Teachers use individual tasks and assignments that are demanding to ensure that gifted and talented students demonstrate achievement at the right level. Numeracy skills are reinforced well so that students use and interpret data accurately. Oral feedback is given to students when work is completed but insufficient written help is given to them to help them understand what they need to do to improve and reach higher grades.
217. This is a well-managed department. High quality documentation and planning underpin a broad and balanced curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by opportunities for activities such as Young Enterprise and a stock market game. The department is resourced well and textbooks are generally sufficient in number and are of good quality. However, more use should be made of information technology to enhance learning.
218. Since the last inspection, GCSE results have improved at a faster rate than nationally and the number of students entered for examinations in business studies and economics at A/AS-level has increased. There is much improvement in the performance of boys at A*-C grades. Assessment data is used effectively to monitor students’ progress over time. The department has worked hard to develop relationships with the world of work. This should be developed further to help students see how relevant their courses are to real industrial and commercial contexts.
219. Actions to raise standards further should include:
- increasing the use of information technology;
 - and providing further opportunities for students to be actively involved in their own research.