

INSPECTION REPORT

CAMBORNE SCIENCE AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Camborne, Cornwall

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 112053

Headteacher: Mr I H Kenworthy

Lead inspector: Mr Terence Parish

Dates of inspection: 15th -19th March 2004

Inspection number: 259134

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11–19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1380

School address:	Cranberry Road Camborne Cornwall
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Franklin

Date of previous inspection:	09/03/1998
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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school became a science specialist college in September 2003 and was visited by the Duke of Kent just after the inspection to celebrate its designation. The school is within an Education Action Zone and, through the Zone, is also part of the 'Classroom for the Future' initiative, construction of which will be completed by the end of the year. The school is also heavily involved with the national Campaign For Learning and has significant connections with the University of the First Age. The school has recent accreditation with the Education Business Partnership and the Engineering Education Scheme. An advanced skills teacher for work with the community is a unique appointment and important as the school is within a poor socio-economic environment that is now attracting massive European Union funding. Pupils are almost all white. Their attainment on entry to the school is below average overall. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and with a Statement of Special Educational Needs is well above average. Most pupils are local and stay at the school at least until the end of Year 11. They then choose to stay or enter a local college or start employment.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15465	Terence Parish	Lead inspector	
12775	Judith Goodchild	Lay inspector	
19214	Geoffrey Price	Team inspector	English
23528	Andrew Bird	Team inspector	Mathematics
31441	Margaret King	Team Inspector	Science Biology
21806	Patricia King	Team Inspector	Design and technology Health and social care
17923	Michael Shaw	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT) Special educational needs
17404	Judith Tolley	Team Inspector	Modern languages
8873	Charlotte Evers	Team Inspector	History
23324	Sylvia Greenland	Team Inspector	Geography
30899	Kenneth Boden	Team Inspector	Art Post-16 design and technology
12475	Stuart Johnson	Team Inspector	Citizenship Music
20192	Terence McDermott	Team Inspector	Physical education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school has some very good and excellent features, is satisfactory overall, and provides good value for money. Pupils achieve well overall in their first three years, but this more rapid progress slows and they achieve satisfactorily from then until they leave at the end of Years 11 or 13. Standards of work are average. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although a significant amount is much better and a smaller proportion unsatisfactory. The school has radically transformed itself over the last few years and now has a good ethos for learning and very good promise for further improvement as the science college aspect develops, the classroom for the future comes on line, and when the new technology block is constructed. Leadership and management are good overall. The school operates at a lower than average cost and has excellent financial management. It provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- In Years 7 to 9 teaching and learning in design and technology and in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory overall.
- There is a substantial proportion of very good and excellent teaching across a range of subjects; teaching in science in Years 7 to 9 is very good overall, as is teaching in citizenship and religious education in Years 10 and 11.
- Standards of reading, writing, and spelling of pupils with special educational needs are effectively raised and, consequently, they achieve well by the time they leave school.
- The attendance of a significant number of pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, is unsatisfactory and absence needs to be followed up more rigorously.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good overall.
- The school's commitment to supporting pupils to become effective learners is good, but independent learning by pupils and students is variable and too often not good enough.
- Some areas of the curriculum do not fully meet statutory requirements, but there are very good links with local colleges to provide courses not available in school.
- The school's services to other schools and organisations through its specialist science college status and its community links through the Community Forum are excellent.
- The school is an excellent provider of initial teacher training and very well supports new staff.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the time of the last report. Pupils are achieving a little better and most issues identified then have been addressed; provision for religious education in the sixth form and for a daily act of collective worship is still not satisfactory, but other provision for religious education is much better.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	D	D	D	C
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	D	E	D	

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall; well in Years 7 to 9, satisfactorily by the end of Year 11. Students in the sixth form achieve satisfactorily. Standards of work are broadly average between Years 7 and 13. Pupils achieve well in English in all years, well in mathematics in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11. Pupils achieve very well in science in Years 7 to 9, satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11. Standards in design and technology are below average in Years 7 to 9 and pupils

achieve unsatisfactorily. Standards are below average in boys' physical education in Years 10 and 11 and pupils achieve unsatisfactorily. Standards in ICT are below average overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well between Years 7 and 11. In 2003, sixth form students' achievement in examinations in geography, ICT and English language and literature was good.

The personal, spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils is good. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good. Attendance is unsatisfactory and absence is not monitored rigorously enough.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory overall, and has significant strengths. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In English, teaching and learning are good in all years; in mathematics they are good in Years 7 to 9, satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. In science, teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 to 9, good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching and learning in other subjects are most often satisfactory or better, but are unsatisfactory in design and technology and in ICT in Years 7 to 9. Teaching and learning are very good in citizenship and in religious education in Years 10 and 11. Pupils vary in their ability to study and organise their own learning; the school is working to improve independent learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, although not all pupils are certain of receiving their ICT entitlement in Years 10 and 11. The partnerships with parents and with other schools are very good, whilst links with the community are excellent. All these connections are raising aspirations of pupils and parents and giving a lift to the community as a whole.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. Leadership is good, management satisfactory. The work of the governing body is satisfactory overall; it is committed and has well supported the school, but there are some areas of non-compliance with statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Relatively few parents responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. Most who did consider teaching is good and their children are making good progress. A minority expressed some concerns about behaviour, which were not confirmed by inspectors; a few pupils play up from time to time and are appropriately dealt with. Most pupils think they are taught well, but some are not happy with marking or homework. Inspectors broadly agree about teaching; marking and homework were not judged unsatisfactory, but there is some degree of variability in quality.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Eliminate unsatisfactory teaching, paying urgent attention to design and technology and ICT and continue to seek to raise the standard of all teaching and learning to that of the best.
- Monitor attendance more closely, particularly of older pupils, and take further steps to reduce unnecessary absence.
- Continue to develop and encourage pupils' independent learning and ensure that all teachers follow the school's best practice in this area.

and,

- to meet statutory requirements:
- Improve ICT provision in Years 10 and 11.
- Provide appropriately for religious education for all students in the sixth form.
- Provide for a daily act of collective worship.

THE SIXTH FORM AT CAMBORNE SCIENCE AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

OVERALL EVALUATION

Sixth form provision is satisfactory and is cost-effective. Teaching is good and learning is satisfactory overall, students achieve satisfactorily and standards are broadly average. Retention on individual subjects is very good, with over nine-tenths of students completing the courses they begin. Over half of students completing two-year courses go on to higher education whilst a further one in ten remain in further education or other training. The remainder enter employment. The number of students in the sixth form fell in 2003. New leadership is very good, tackling recruitment issues and ensuring that students are placed on more suitable courses, which should enable them to do better. Management is good as changes in procedures have yet to take effect.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the sixth form is very good and is giving strong direction for improvement.
- Sixth form social facilities are very good, but private study provision is unsatisfactory.
- A minority of students are not achieving as well as they should because the guidance they received was inadequate.
- Assessment practice is now good following relatively recent improvement; it is beginning to effect improvements in teaching and achievement.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English language and literature is good . Standards are average. Good teaching and learning and students' own positive attitudes enable them to achieve well. Leadership and management are good.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is satisfactory . Standards are average. Teaching is good and enables students to achieve well. Leadership and management are satisfactory.
Science	Provision in biology is satisfactory . Standards are below average, but achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Leadership and management are good. Students' attitudes are good; they enjoy biology.
Humanities	Provision in history is good . Standards are below average in Year 12 and average in Year 13. Teaching is good and promotes good learning. Most students achieve well. Leadership and management are very good. Provision in geography is good . Standards are average. Advanced level results are above average. Students achieve well because of good teaching. Leadership and management are good. Provision in A-level religious education is good . Standards are below average. Students achieve well and have positive attitudes. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. The subject is well led and managed.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Provision in physical education is good . Standards are average; students achieve well because they are well motivated and are well taught. Leadership and management are good.
Health and social care	Provision in health and social care is good . Standards are below average, but represent good achievement. Teaching is good. Leadership and management are good. Relationships are a strength and have a positive effect

on students' attitudes.

Engineering design and technology

Provision in **product design: graphics with materials technology** is **satisfactory**. Standards are average and this represents good achievement. Previous examination entries have been low. The course is now more popular and numbers are rising. Teaching is satisfactory. Leadership is good and management satisfactory.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Advice, guidance and support for students are unsatisfactory. Systems for placing students on appropriate courses were inadequate and this has resulted in some students being placed inappropriately. Students are given good guidance about how to improve in individual subject areas, but overall, analysis of their performance has been inadequate and has led to some underachievement. Systems are now in place to redress all weaknesses and new students should find advice, and guidance is appropriate. Pastoral support is satisfactory, but there is a lack of rigour in ensuring high attendance of students.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership of the sixth form is very good. There is a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the sixth form and actions are underway to do so. Management is as yet only good because systems being put into place to improve, for example, evaluation and assessment, have yet to come to fruition.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students' views are generally very positive and they are pleased that they chose this sixth form to continue their advanced studies. They feel that they are taught well, and are helped and encouraged to progress. They have confidence in adults in the school with whom they interact. Students participate in sport, have a strong sense of group identity, and appreciate the very good facilities the sixth form centre provides. However, some students feel that they were not recruited on to appropriate courses and some would appreciate their views being taken more into account in the running of the sixth form. Inspectors broadly agree with both sets of views.

Glossary

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

The term 'Key Stage 4' is sometimes used as an alternative to 'Years 10 and 11'.

Throughout this report 'pupil' is used in Years 7 to 11, 'student' is used in the sixth form.

The school has an area designated as the 'learning zone'. This is a modern library well equipped with computers.

'Classroom for the Future' is a national initiative in which this school is included. The classroom is nearing completion and is, initially at least, designated as a 'Space Centre' and resembles a space base with extensive provision for the use of ICT.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall; well in Years 7 to 9, satisfactorily by the end of Year 11. Students in the sixth form achieve satisfactorily. Standards of work are average between Years 7 and 11, broadly average in the sixth form where only some subjects were inspected.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall in Years 7 to 9, very well in end of Year 9 tests.
- Standards in design and technology are below average in Years 7 to 9 and pupils achieve unsatisfactorily due to unsatisfactory teaching.
- Standards are below average in boys' physical education in Years 10 and 11 and pupils achieve unsatisfactorily, but teaching is now satisfactory and improvement is being fostered.
- Standards in ICT are below average overall, and pupils are achieving just satisfactorily partly due to the use of non-specialist staff in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well between starting and leaving school because their standards of reading, writing and spelling are effectively raised.
- Students' achievement in geography, information and communication technology and English language and literature was good in Advanced level examinations in 2003.
- A minority of sixth form students do not achieve as well as they should, because the guidance they have received in the past was unsatisfactory and they joined inappropriate courses.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.1 (31.6)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	33.6 (32.2)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	33.6 (33.3)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 242 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were below average overall, well below average in English, below in mathematics and average in science. The overall trend over five years has been slowly downwards; national results have improved faster than the school's results. However, most of the dip has been due to temporary staffing difficulties in English, now resolved. Mathematics results improved dramatically in 2003 whilst science maintained standards. Boys did relatively better than girls in 2003, but over five years their performances are about the same. If the school's 2003 test results are compared with those of pupils in other schools who began with similar attainment when they started at secondary school, then Camborne pupils achieved very well overall. They achieved well in English, very well in mathematics and very highly in science. Camborne pupils were amongst the top five per cent of pupils nationally who began with the same prior attainment.
2. Assessment is good in Years 7 to 9 and this helps pupils understand what they need to do to improve and helps teachers plan and prepare work better. Teaching is also good in English and mathematics and very good in science, contributing to the overall good achievement of pupils in these years. Achievement is very good in science, good in English, mathematics, art and design, history, religious education and citizenship. Achievement is satisfactory in geography,

modern foreign languages, music and physical education. Standards are below average and achievement just satisfactory in ICT, not as good as it would likely be with staff with a better specialist knowledge and understanding of ICT. Achievement is unsatisfactory in design and technology due to unsatisfactory teaching and learning; standards are below average overall. Standards in most other subjects are average; they are below average in geography, modern foreign languages and music, and above average in citizenship.

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	41 (36)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	84 (85)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (96)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	30.2 (30.1)	34.7(34.7)

There were 238 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- GCSE results in 2003 were below the national average overall, but average, almost above average, when compared to pupils of similar prior attainment in other schools. In this comparison, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more A*-C grades was above average, the proportion attaining five or more A*-G grades average, and one or more A*-C grades well above average. The school's trend in overall GCSE performance has been broadly in line with the national trend of improvement over five years, but this masks the school's slow decline from 2001. Fluctuations occur mainly in the proportion of pupils attaining five or more A*-C grades; this improved significantly in 2003 from a significant fall in 2002, and was up to the level seen in 2001. GCSE performance also fluctuates a little depending on the effect of non-GCSE courses pursued by some pupils through links with the local college. Overall, girls did significantly better at GCSE in 2003 than boys and this has been the case over the last three years; previously boys did better relative to national results for boys and girls. Inspection evidence revealed that just over a third of pupils in Years 10 and 11 miss the equivalent of more than one day every two weeks through absence. This can only have a negative effect on completion of examination coursework, revision and learning overall.
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 currently achieve satisfactorily or better in all subjects, although a significant number of boys in physical education do not; this is now being resolved by the school. They achieve well in English, art and design, geography, religious education and citizenship. Unsatisfactory achievement in physical education is specific to boys and is founded on historical staffing difficulties, which have now been addressed. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are broadly average. They are above average in art and design and in citizenship, below average in mathematics, ICT, modern foreign languages, music and physical education.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactorily thereafter. The literacy programme is effective in raising standards of reading, writing and spelling. Many pupils with special educational needs enter the school with low levels of reading so that they cannot learn as they should in their lessons. By the end of Year 9 reading no longer restricts learning for the considerable majority. The fact that far more pupils achieve at least one GCSE than those in similar schools is evidence of the good achievement made by these pupils between Years 7 and 11. Recognition of pupils who may be gifted and talented is at an early stage, although some provision is more advanced, for example, the express science group. Overall, such pupils achieve satisfactorily.

Sixth form

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	85.6 (81.6)	91.5 (90.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	14.8 (13.5)	36.1 (35.5)
Average point score per pupil	210.2 (192.6)	253.1 (254.5)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. Students' attainment on entry to the sixth form is below average. In 2003, A-level results were below average compared to those in all maintained schools. However, this represents satisfactory achievement. Males and females achieved equally. In 2003, students' achievement in examinations in geography, ICT and English language and literature was good.
7. There is no consistency in standards reached, or achievement made in subjects from one year to another. Overall, standards have remained static over time. Across all subjects and courses, there is a consistent pattern of low levels of prior attainment. There have been year-on-year variations of the attainment of students within individual Advanced level subjects, but the courses offered to students have remained broadly the same. Some students have been enrolled on to courses for which they were ill prepared to meet the demands of advanced study. This has depressed the overall achievement of the student body from what it might have been with more suitable courses; the school is addressing flaws in guidance and curriculum provision. For current students, standards of work are average overall in Years 12 and 13. Achievement is satisfactory overall in relation to students' prior attainment at GCSE. In the subjects that were inspected in detail, standards are average in English, mathematics, geography, design and technology, physical education, and history in Year 13. Standards are below average in biology, health and social care, religious education, and history in Year 12. Students are making good progress in most subjects inspected, satisfactory progress in biology.
8. Only a small proportion of students leave without completing their advanced academic or vocational courses: under the national figure of ten per cent. A small number of students left at the end of Year 12 after completing AS-level courses, some going into employment and some to further education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The attitudes, behaviour, and personal development of pupils are good overall. The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils is good. However, whilst punctuality is good, attendance is unsatisfactory. Sixth form students' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their attendance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attitudes of the majority of pupils towards their learning are good and sometimes very good.
- The behaviour of the majority of pupils is good.
- Working relationships between pupils and with staff are good.
- A significant number of pupils' attendance is below 90 per cent and procedures to promote good attendance are inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall.
- Pupils' abilities to learn independently are not well enough developed.

Commentary

9. The attitudes of the majority of pupils to learning are good and sometimes very good. Most pupils like coming to school and working relationships between them and staff are good. When they are challenged to learn by high quality teaching they respond with enthusiasm and clearly enjoy their lessons. In these lessons pupils willingly accept responsibility for managing their own learning through homework and research activities. In a Year 8 express set science lesson, for example, the application of pupils to their studies was excellent. The homework set included a concept map for them to complete as part of their revision strategy for the end of module test. The development of independent learning skills is not a consistent feature of all lessons and is often underdeveloped by the time pupils reach the sixth form. 'Learning to Learn' workshops for Year 8 pupils encourage them to identify their own learning styles to aid their development as independent learners. A great deal of work is being undertaken to develop this aspect of pupils' education. There is a minority of pupils who show an indifference to education and teachers have to work hard to motivate them to learn.
10. The behaviour of pupils is good and often very good. Pupils are well behaved and generally courteous towards each other. Relationships between pupils are good and lunchtimes are socially harmonious occasions. Lesson disruption by the poor behaviour of pupils was rare during the inspection; older boys' behaviour in physical education was unsatisfactory. On this evidence the inspection team considered the concerns expressed by some parents about the standard of behaviour within the school to be unfounded. There are, however, a minority of pupils who have difficulty in managing their behaviour in lessons. The strategies for supporting these pupils include a 'time out' room and a 'close supervision room'. Sometimes pupils are not appropriately occupied whilst in these rooms and a few are repeat offenders. A behaviour audit has just been undertaken and a review of current systems for behaviour management is taking place. Reasons for the exclusion of pupils are appropriate and are for incidents of serious misconduct. Exclusion is almost always temporary; incidences requiring permanent exclusion fell considerably some years ago and are now rare.
11. Attendance is below the national average for all schools and is unsatisfactory. There has been an improvement since the previous inspection. However, about 35 per cent of pupils in Years 10 and 11, and about 25 per cent of pupils in Years 7 to 9, attend school less than 90 per cent of the time. Form tutors are responsible for identifying pupils whose attendance is beginning to become a problem, but there is an inconsistent approach, with a consequent lack of rigour, to this. Heads of school, and the attendance officer, work hard to raise levels of attendance and good links have been established with community police to support them with truanting pupils. They hold clinics for parents with the education welfare officer. Currently they are only targeting pupils whose attendance is below 80 per cent. Systems for reintegrating and tracking pupils who have been absent are not fully in place. Not all parents work in partnership with the school to ensure the regular attendance of their child. There is a local high level demand for cheap and seasonal labour and this accentuates problems. Punctuality to school and lessons is good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.6	School data	0.6
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1,360	45	3
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	18	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Chinese	5	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	19	0	0

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

12. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although variable across the curriculum. It is not a strong feature in physical education, for instance, but is more obvious in religious education and English. A good example in the latter was a Year 11 lesson on 'The Crucible' that included very interesting background work on values and beliefs, linking issues with, for instance, the treatment of women by the Taleban.
13. Overall, there is satisfactory provision for spiritual development. This is a strong feature of religious education, but opportunities are missed in most curriculum areas. War poems are used in an imaginative way in history, and English literature work includes aspects of belief and mortality. The religious education department has held debates on religion and science, and the nature of the soul featured in a recent school production, 'The Skullduggers', which brought together a range of artistic, scientific and philosophical ideas. The school's role as a science college has some impact on spiritual development, for instance, through the 'space centre', with the opportunity this provides for reflection of the place of humanity within a vast universe. In contrast, year group assemblies during the science week that took place during the inspection considered the ant, in keeping with the Biblical book of Proverbs, but there was limited scope for reflection. Acts of worship are not held on a daily basis for all pupils, in breach of statutory requirements, and opportunities for personal development are also missed in the process.
14. Provision for personal and moral development is good, with a sound programme for personal, social and health education, at least up to Year 10. Moral issues are dealt with sensitively in drama and religious education, and in the school as a whole there is a positive ethos where high standards of behaviour are expected and often seen.
15. Social development is encouraged in a range of ways. In many subjects, pupils have the opportunity to work together effectively. They are consulted in various ways, not least through the school council. The citizenship programme makes a valuable contribution. It is a pity that there is not better co-operation in physical education, by boys, but the overall provision for social development is good.
16. Cultural development is satisfactory. Good contributions in English and drama are counterbalanced by missed opportunities elsewhere, although Year 9 work in art and design includes a project on tribal masks and world food products feature in design and technology.

The Cornish heritage is acknowledged in a few areas, including the use of Celtic themes in work on resistant materials in design and technology. Another positive feature is the use of displays around the school – and named corridors – celebrating famous scientists, not all from white European backgrounds. In general, however, there is an underemphasis on other cultures, in spite of wall displays by the English and religious education departments in particular, which encourage wider reflection. Camborne is a fairly monocultural community, and more needs to be done in school to reflect the wider world.

Sixth form

17. Students' attitudes towards their studies are good overall, and they mostly work well in lessons to achieve the qualifications they need to further their career ambitions. Students value the new sixth form centre and treat it with respect, but do not use the study areas as effectively as they might. Relationships between students are good and they value the support given by teaching staff. Although attendance overall is satisfactory there are a significant minority of students who need to be reminded of the importance of good attendance. The head boy and girl represent the school well and provide good role models for younger pupils. Other students participate fully in the school council, taking minutes, setting agendas and so on. Activities available outside lessons, including sport, are not well taken up as many students have a part-time job, which shows a degree of personal independence and enterprise.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory overall, and has some significant strengths. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, the curriculum is satisfactory, care, guidance and support are satisfactory, the partnership with parents and other schools is very good and links with the community are excellent.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Both are satisfactory in Years 7 to 11; in the sixth form teaching is good, but learning is satisfactory. Assessment is good overall; it is good in Years 7 to 9, satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and good in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in design and technology and in ICT in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well taught.
- Teaching and learning in science are very good in Years 7 to 9; teaching and learning in English and mathematics are good.
- In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning in English and science are good whilst they are satisfactory in mathematics.
- Both the National Key Stage 3 Strategy and the school's own established learning strategies are improving standards of teaching and learning when teachers use them.
- Independent learning by pupils and particularly students is variable and its quality inconsistent, although new accommodation and resources, such as the 'Learning Zone', are encouraging more to study.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 184 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8 (4%)	34 (19%)	74 (40%)	54 (29%)	7 (4%)	6 (3%)	0

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

18. Most parents and pupils who replied to questions think that teaching is good overall. The proportion of unsatisfactory lessons in the Years 7 to 11 table below has been skewed upwards by a particular inspection focus on design and technology. This subject contributed six of the unsatisfactory or worse lessons, most in Years 7 to 9. Modern foreign languages and ICT, with two and three such lessons respectively, were other significant contributors.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 143 lessons in Years 7 to 11

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7 (5%)	24 (17%)	57 (40 %)	43 (30%)	6 (4%)	6 (4%)	0

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

19. The quality of teaching and learning in design and technology is split between good or better and unsatisfactory or worse. The best teaching was most frequently seen in graphics products and one food technology lesson was very good too. Most unacceptable teaching and learning occurs within food technology, but some in the workshop areas are also unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. Characteristics of such weak teaching are low expectations, failure to take into account the wide ability range of pupils, limited planning, consequent loss of interest by pupils and, sometimes, unsatisfactory behaviour. The fall off in the number of pupils opting to take food technology in Years 10 and 11 is indicative of the poor experiences they have. Poor hygiene within food rooms and unnecessary equipment in workshops is also indicative of unsatisfactory classroom management. These irregularities have been confirmed by the team to the school, which is dealing with them swiftly. Earlier action taken by the school to improve curriculum planning in food technology, involving local education authority support, has taken effect to the extent that schemes of work are being drafted and followed.
20. Unsatisfactory teaching in ICT is dominated by lack of teachers' expertise. Teachers of ICT may be satisfactory or better teaching their principal subjects, but too many do not know enough about ICT or how it should be taught to be effective ICT teachers. Consequently, in Years 7 to 9, pupils are not challenged enough, prior learning is not always picked up on and learning is unsatisfactory overall.
21. Limited planning and a lack of challenge are also features of other unsatisfactory lessons. In contrast, many lessons seen were very good or better; a higher proportion than seen nationally and indicated in the last annual Ofsted report. There are several reasons for this much better aspect. The school has appointed some very good practitioners, teaching and learning strategies are a feature of the school's development and work on them is co-ordinated and led by a very proficient advanced skills teacher. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy has been well embraced, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Excellent lessons were seen in English and physical education in Years 7 to 11, design and technology and French in Years 10 and 11, and religious education in the sixth form. All such lessons had very high academic expectations backed by exemplary planning and very good use of resources. Lesson objectives were shared with pupils, a variety of tasks met different pupils' needs and, perhaps most importantly, pupils were involved in their work and encouraged to contribute to the lesson, consequently, gaining or consolidating personal confidence. Relationships between teachers and pupils were very good in all such lessons. Characteristics of excellent lessons are also shared by very good lessons, excellent lessons having an edge sometimes due to the level of interaction between teacher and pupils. Very good learning is also often associated with the use of teaching assistants. Teaching assistants working in many departments make a very good contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs. They have good knowledge of the needs of these pupils and know when and how to help as well as when to offer less help so that pupils do not become reliant on such assistance.

Assistants have been well trained for their work, knowing the demands of the subject area to which they are attached, and are particularly effective in English.

22. English and science teaching are of similar good quality in Years 7 to 9, although science is a little better because features of very good teaching are more consistently applied, particularly the range of methods utilised, coupled with a more extensive use of resources, particularly ICT. Teaching and learning in mathematics are good, but expectations are not as high as in either English or science, although teaching styles are very well influenced by the school's work on how pupils' learn. In Years 10 and 11 science teaching is not quite so well dominated by strategies to improve learning. Teaching and learning are good rather than very good, whilst mathematics teaching becomes satisfactory; expectations in mathematics could be higher again, a wider variety of teaching methods used and better use made of homework.
23. Pupils do not always learn independently as well as they should and are not always as well prepared for their next lessons as they might be. This is apparent in their too little contribution to lessons, which are otherwise satisfactory or even good. However, independent work is relatively strong in science in Years 7 to 11, English, mathematics, history, music, religious education and citizenship. This is because teachers in these areas foster it. The school's physical resources for study have recently improved and are encouraging private study. The 'learning zone' is particularly successful. The 'classroom of the future' about to be completed is designed to foster independent work.
24. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught. Good teaching of literacy in small classes matches work well to the needs of pupils. Pupils respond well and gain confidence from the success they are making. Teaching is equally effective whether delivered by a specialist teacher or a teaching assistant. All staff know pupils well and good relationships underpin the gains in confidence and self-esteem made by them. The progress of each pupil is carefully monitored so that pupils are withdrawn from other lessons for no longer than is necessary. Good support helps pupils as they return to their subject classes. The work and needs of pupils with levels of literacy well below average are carefully and thoroughly assessed. Teacher assessment is well combined with the use of standardised tests to measure progress and to ensure that work is at the correct levels.
25. Pupils with behavioural difficulties learn well when there are good communications between their class teacher and teachers in the 'individual learning centre'. When this happens, pupils continue to learn because they gain more individual support. However, in a minority of instances, communications are not as good so pupils in the centre spend time doing tasks from which they are not learning. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of the behavioural problems these pupils have and good relationships ensure that pupils learn more than they would without this support. Instances of behavioural problems are monitored carefully so that the effectiveness of programmes to improve behaviour can be measured. However, the academic achievement of pupils attending the 'individual learning centre' is not monitored as carefully. The school fell behind in writing individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. Good progress has been made to reduce this backlog, but work remains to be done. These plans set measurable targets and so progress can be assessed. They also contain helpful advice to teachers. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly and there is very good parental attendance at these review meetings.
26. The school's assessment policy provides a clear framework for monitoring and supporting the progress of pupils. Currently, departments are at different stages of development with some innovative self-assessment practices notably in English, history and science. The extent to which teachers mark and assess pupils' work across the curriculum is good. Pupils are aware of their National Curriculum attainment levels and examination target grades and most understand how well they are doing and what to do to improve. At present, however, the constructive use of assessment data by departments, so that it responds to individual needs and informs teaching practices, is only satisfactory and the school is currently facilitating

opportunities for improvement to be made, through in-service training and the sharing of good practice.

Sixth form

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons in the sixth form

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	10 (24%)	17 (42%)	11 (27%)	1 (2%)	0	0

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

27. Although sixth form lessons seen were more often than not well taught and students were most often making good progress in the work in hand, students do not always learn independently as well as they should. Consequently, learning and subsequent student achievement in examinations are just satisfactory. Lack of private study is apparent in too little student contribution in satisfactory and often otherwise good lessons and students' admissions that they sometimes find it hard to study and do not always 'read around' their subjects. Many students, even those in receipt of a study support grant, work part-time to earn money and this reduces the time they have available for study. Independent work is relatively strong in AVCE health and social care. The sixth form study areas are not successful and will be modified to better promote study and independent learning. Some students are making good use of the new 'learning zone'.
28. Students are otherwise well motivated and appreciate the help that they receive from teachers and managers. Their positive attitudes contribute to the progress that they make in lessons. A minority have been badly placed on Advanced level courses with weak prior attainment and this has made teaching and learning more difficult than they need be; a curriculum review is addressing this. In addition, assessment systems have recently been made much more rigorous and this is beginning to have a positive effect throughout the sixth form. Students' progress is now monitored more carefully and systematically, and teaching is beginning to be better planned to meet the learning needs of all students. Work is regularly, constructively and thoroughly marked. A twice-termly tutorial programme of academic mentoring through one-to-one reviews is in place to ascertain students' progress and any actions needed for improvement. Consequently, students are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and what to do to achieve their targets.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, and has some good features. Extra-curricular opportunities, like support for learning and sport, are good. Accommodation, resources and staffing are all satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The statutory ICT curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is not followed by all pupils.
- Staffing of ICT in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory and adversely affects pupils' achievement.
- There is a wide range of options available for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- There are very good links with local colleges to provide courses not possible in school.
- The range of courses and enrichment opportunities in science are very good.
- Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There is no provision for religious education in the sixth form.

Commentary

29. The curriculum in Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory. Statutory requirements for religious education and for the sex and relationships, alcohol and drugs misuse aspects of the PHSE course are all met, although there is no PHSE or citizenship in Year 11. Not all pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive their National Curriculum entitlement of ICT provision, although more do now than at the time of the last inspection. The statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship are not met.
30. The curriculum has been evaluated and modified to take account of new developments, and to improve its relevance to pupils in Years 7 to 11. The provision of a wide range of science options in Years 10 and 11 reflects the school's specialist status well. This provision is contributing to improvement in pupils' achievement in science in Year 10. The school is trialling a fast-track science course for high attainers in Year 8 who will then begin their GCSE course a year early. The school also offers applied GCSE courses in a wide range of subjects. Some subjects provide Certificate of Achievement for lower attainers in Years 10 and 11 as an alternative to GCSE qualifications.
31. The school works very well with local colleges to provide GCSE and NVQ courses. The school ensures that the pupils who take these courses continue to receive their entitlements to English, mathematics and science on their days in school. The college-based courses provide a relevant and worthwhile experience for pupils who are involved in them. The organisation of this co-operative provision is efficient and effective.
32. The school offers a good range of clubs and activities at lunchtimes and after school, and these are reasonably well attended. Participation in sport outside lesson time is good. The school enriches the curriculum through events such as art gallery and theatre visits, musical productions, and a wide range of science activities. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take part in visits abroad, these have recently included a Rugby tour of South Africa, annual Humanities trips to Battlesfields of Northern Europe, Easter Ski trips to Italy, regular participation in the County German Exchange, the Mini Languages Assistants scheme for Year 12 to France and Spain and visits to EuroDisney. Good support for study outside the school day is provided through revision clubs, coursework help groups and summer schools.
33. Pupils with special educational needs receive additional teaching from teaching assistants attached to subjects including English, mathematics and science. They miss a few language and humanities lessons in order to develop their reading and writing skills. Their progress in languages is not affected by this and some of their literacy work is designed to cover the work missed in humanities. In Years 10 and 11, pupils with special educational needs have the option of following a foundation course in which they can achieve a recognised qualification. This is a good provision for them as it meets their needs well whilst reducing the amount of examination preparation they have to undertake.
34. The school is at the early stages of making additional provision for pupils with special gifts and talents. A group of teachers is looking at developing a programme of activities and how such pupils should be identified. Good links have been developed with a university to support these developments.
35. There are sufficient suitably qualified teachers with the exception of provision for design and technology and ICT. In design and technology there is one post vacant, currently filled by temporary supply teachers. A significant proportion of ICT in Years 7 to 9 is taught by non-specialists whose lack of expertise is restricting pupils' achievement in the subject. There is insufficient technical support for food technology and art and design, and this contributes to poor hygiene standards in food technology.
36. The extensive school site provides good accommodation for many subjects with several very good features and some that are less than satisfactory. For example, some of the science areas are out of date and the provision for drama is inadequate. Some design and technology

rooms are in such a poor state that they pose a health risk, although the school will have addressed problems by the start of the summer term and work is to begin on building a new department for next year. In contrast, most of the site has been refurbished and refurnished in the recent past and boasts areas such as a modern sports hall and student cafes. The spirit of the science college has been reflected by naming every area of the school after a prominent scientist and plaques on the wall provide information to help pupils and visitors learn something as they move around the school. There is full access to all areas by wheelchair, which helps academic and social inclusion.

37. Resources are satisfactory overall. Teaching is very adequately supported by textbooks and other equipment. An innovative 'classroom of the future' is being built (the 'space centre') and will be in use as a learning resource within a few months. The new 'learning zone', combining a library and ICT centre, is very well used, both in lessons and as a study area by pupils. However, there are shortfalls in the provision of ICT hardware across the curriculum, which restricts pupils' and teachers' use of appropriate software to support learning.

Sixth form

38. Curricular provision is satisfactory overall in the sixth form. Some students are taking courses that are not appropriate for them. This is because the advice they received in Year 11 did not guide them well enough into suitable courses. The systems for giving advice to current Year 11 students are better. The school offers a broad range of traditional courses at AS and A level. In addition there are AVCE, advanced vocational courses, in travel and tourism, business studies, and health and social care. In conjunction with a local training provider, a small number of students take a pre-apprenticeship course for two and a half days a week in the college, together with a key skills course in school. Vocational provision is currently too limited to meet the needs of every student who might benefit from it. The school is aware of this and is currently reviewing provision with a view to making it better. Students who have not enough GCSE qualifications to begin AS courses in Year 12 have the opportunity to take GCSE courses in media studies, sociology and business studies as well as to retake English and mathematics. Many of these students then go on to begin AS courses in Year 13. As at the time of the last report, the curriculum does not meet the statutory requirements for the provision of religious education for all students. Students do not express concern at not having compulsory religious education.
39. The general studies course, which almost all students take, provides good diversity and enrichment of the curriculum. It includes work on ICT within the key skills part of the course. There are, however, relatively few other opportunities for enrichment in the sixth form curricular provision. Many students take advantage of 'free' time to take up part-time jobs and have little time for extra activities.
40. Space for sixth form study is limited and not well planned and this restricts or fails to motivate private study. The 'learning zone' is being used well by students inclined to study. Social space for students is very good and dining facilities excellent; they create a credible student zone, a sense of identity that students appreciate.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is satisfactory. The support, advice and guidance, based on monitoring what pupils receive, is satisfactory. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good. The advice, guidance and support students receive is unsatisfactory. The involvement of students through seeking and acting on their views is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weakness

- The school has a strong commitment to developing a high quality pastoral provision for all pupils

and has invested significantly in this area.

- There is commitment to supporting pupils to become active and effective learners.
- There is additional academic support for underachieving pupils.
- There is growing involvement of pupils in the school's work and development.
- Careers guidance work in Year 11 has not ensured that pupils make informed choices for post-16 options.
- All subjects do not systematically monitor pupils for underachievement and set targets for improvement.

Commentary

41. A considerable investment has been made by the school in developing a high quality pastoral system that meets the needs of its pupils. The deputy head pastoral and heads of school, work extremely hard to ensure that all pupils benefit. They have set in place good foundations on which to build and have a good understanding of what still needs to be done to support pupils in raising their levels of achievement. The responsibility for monitoring the academic progress of pupils, to identify underachievement, lies with subject teachers. The quality of this monitoring, and target setting for improvement, varies between subjects. Very good practice is evident, for example, in science and the high standards that pupils achieve, and is due in part to this. Additional booster sessions are offered to all pupils in Year 11 to help them raise their level of performance in GCSE examinations. Underachieving pupils in Year 11 benefit from academic coaching that not only raises their self-esteem, but also their grades in GCSE examinations. Tutors stay with their year group throughout their time in school. They are able to build strong relationships with the pupils and their families who are supportive. Use of the morning tutorial is variable as is the quality of monitoring by tutors. Pupils interviewed were confident that they would be able to ask members of staff for help, either academic or personal.
42. Super Learning Days are held for pupils, which teach them how to learn. For example, pupils are taught how to identify their learning style, how the brain is organised, how to improve their memory and the importance of learning in teams. Links with the University of the First Age and summer schools have benefited pupils in all year groups.
43. The induction arrangements for pupils entering the school in Year 7 are very good. There are many opportunities for primary pupils to visit the school prior to transfer and they benefit from induction days in the summer term before they transfer. Pupils new to the school are carefully supported. The careers guidance programme, supported by Connexions, prepares pupils well for option choices at the end of Year 9. Guidance at the end of Year 11 for pupils considering entering the sixth form was not consistently satisfactory and has resulted in some following courses that are not necessarily appropriate. This guidance has been taken in hand so that it will be satisfactory in the future.
44. Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are satisfactory. Child protection procedures are good and meet requirements. Welfare and first aid arrangements ensure that pupils are well cared for. Health and safety are unsatisfactory. Concerns were brought to the school's attention about issues in the food technology department. Risk assessments, identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection, are not yet fully in place in all departments. The school has acted swiftly to rectify problems and all issues should be in hand by the time this report is published.
45. The school is working hard to involve pupils more in its daily life and to provide a more effective forum for their views to be expressed. This aspect of the school's work is good. The school is increasingly seeking pupils' views on a range of topics and these have been acted upon. A consultation role is developing for the school council and two representatives have been invited to attend the parent governors' meetings. Representatives to year and school councils are elected by their peers as are the head boy and girl. Involvement of pupils in setting their own targets based on the evaluation of their work, has been identified by the school as an area for development.

Sixth form

46. The advice, guidance and support students receive is unsatisfactory. Systems for placing students on appropriate courses have been inadequate and this has resulted in some students being placed inappropriately. The new head of sixth form has reviewed these procedures and changes for next year are in hand. Induction arrangements are also under review. Students are given good guidance on how to improve in individual subjects, but overall, analysis of their performance has been inadequate and led to some underachievement. Systems are now in place to redress this weakness. Although pastoral support is satisfactory there is a lack of rigour and the quality of monitoring varies between individual tutors. Academic monitoring has just been introduced and students now receive individual tutorials two to three times per term. Currently there is no system for supervised private study to encourage students to develop the good study habits needed to achieve well at the end of Years 12 and 13.
47. The involvement of students through seeking and acting on their views is satisfactory. Students who responded to the questionnaire felt that their views were not taken seriously by the school. Opportunities for them to be consulted are improving under the new regime in the sixth form. Members of the sixth form play a leading role on the school council and are good role models for younger students. The Education Action Zone (EAZ) has also linked the school to urban regeneration and students will participate in decision making; this is particularly important given the recent confirmation of European Union funding. Involvement in assessing their own work and setting targets for improvement is developing under the recently introduced tutorial system.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The effectiveness of the school's links with its parents is very good. The quality of the school's links with the community is excellent. The school's links with other schools and colleges are very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outreach work with other schools and organisations through specialist science college status is excellent.
- The Academic Review Days are valued by parents.
- The Community Forum and the termly community challenge involve parents, business and pupils.
- Partnerships with other schools and colleges are very good.
- Although academic review days and termly reports are good ways of keeping parents informed about their children's progress, annual written reports are too brief.

Commentary

48. The school's partnership with its parents is very good overall, although some parents choose not to be supportive about attendance. An advanced skilled teacher has been appointed to develop links with parents and the community. The parent teacher association has been disbanded and replaced with a Community Forum, which has a learning brief. Parents' workshops are arranged on a variety of topics such as the importance of motivation, autism and dyslexia. Each term a subject area is highlighted; the current topic is science and parents attend science workshops and also share lessons with pupils. A range of ten-week adult learning courses is organised each term for parents, based on the focus subject. Feedback parents give is used to plan the agenda for future events. Termly reports on academic progress are issued together with a more detailed annual report, and the academic review day gives parents the opportunity for discussion with form tutors. In Years 10 and 11 additional subject

parents' evenings are held. Reports to parents are brief and do not contain sufficient information for them to be aware of what their child has studied, how they have succeeded and what they need to do to improve their work. The school has identified communications with parents as an area for improvement. Parents who attended the inspection meeting expressed satisfaction with the school and the education it provided for their child.

49. The quality of the school's links with the community is excellent. The success of the bid to become a specialist science college has further enhanced this aspect of the school's work. The school sees itself as very much at the heart of the community. Community partners in this new venture are consulted fully about future developments. Links with industry have been supported and funded; all staff have participated in one-day placements in industry and a network of 70 business mentors has been created for pupils. The school benefits from effective links with local business and industry. Such links are used both as a source of sponsorship and for placements that support work in the classroom or give pupils experience of the world of work. The Community Challenge held termly involves the local community, business and pupils. The current challenge, 'I'm a Circus Celebrity let me in' involves teams of 15 to 20 people of all ages, willing to work together over 12 hours, to put on a performance. Groups of professional artists are on hand to help develop skills and give encouragement. These are successful, well supported events that are developing a real sense of community within the school.
50. The outreach work the school undertakes under its specialist school brief is excellent. The dedication and energy given to this is outstanding. The director of the Education Action Zone (EAZ) describes the school's science outreach work into its primary schools as "brilliant" and inspectors agree. There is a regular programme of visits to primary schools by science staff. Currently Year 6 pupils are being taught scientific investigation skills, data handling using ICT programs and how to interpret the graphs produced. In-service training for primary staff is implicit both for teachers and teaching assistants. In partnership with the Eden Project, an ecology project is also being developed in these schools. Starlab (a mobile and collapsible planetarium) presentations are also offered. Support for GCSE is given to pupils on an 'Education Out of School' placement. Scientific investigation training is offered to secondary schools together with equipment loans to Year 10 pupils to facilitate their GCSE coursework. The Faulkes-Telescope research project (<http://faulkes1.astro.cf.ac.uk/>) has been set up with another secondary school. The wider community are involved in the Camborne Science Research Project based on raising awareness of the importance of maintaining fitness and health in an area of social deprivation. This project is linked with a school in Pakistan. The school offers training to local business in thinking skills and many have taken up the subsidised CLAIT training courses.
51. There is a very good partnership with other schools and colleges. The induction arrangements for Year 6 pupils are very good. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from curriculum enrichment days in science. Curriculum links to ease transition from primary to secondary are in place for science, but not with other subjects.

Sixth form

52. There is no distinction between parental and community provision in the main school and in the sixth form, although younger pupils are benefiting more from recent initiatives. Partnerships to extend the range of post-16 options available to students are developing with other secondary schools. Links with further education colleges, and other alternative provision providers, are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. Leadership by the headteacher and other key staff is good overall. Management is satisfactory overall. Governance is satisfactory.

There is non-compliance with statutory requirements in the following areas:

- ICT provision in Years 10 and 11.
- Provision of religious education for all students in the sixth form.
- Provision of a daily act of collective worship.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Senior managers are very committed and of high quality.
- Strategic planning is very good and is driven by high aspirations, which led to the school becoming a science college and a recipient of a 'classroom of the future'.
- The school's self evaluation is now good overall, very good in the sixth form.
- Performance management has not developed, improved or removed some unsatisfactory teaching.
- Overall examination standards at the end of Year 11 and in the sixth form have been static for some years, but should now improve due to the range of strategies embraced by the school.
- Financial management is excellent and best value practice exemplary.
- Leadership of the sixth form is very good.
- The school is an excellent provider for initial teacher training.
- New staff are very well inducted and supported when they join the school.
- Recruitment, retention and workload management of staff are all very good.

Commentary

53. Governors have fully supported the improvements to the school's appearance and nature, and look forward to its further development. They have appointed high quality leaders and managers to take the school forwards. They ensure money is efficiently spent and best value attained. Governors have an understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but have not pursued as rigorously as they might weaknesses behind too low standards in particular courses, for example, boys' physical education. There are also elements of the curriculum that do not meet statutory requirements. For example, ICT provision has improved since the last inspection, but rather slowly and it still does not fully meet requirements; lack of finance has delayed matters and governors have done well to fund so much from the school's basic resources. As in many schools, lack of space and other factors means the requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met; inspectors recognise that governors will address this when it is possible to do so. However, unlike at the time of the previous inspection, the present governing body has identified one of its members as having a specific responsibility for the oversight of the education of pupils with special educational needs. Governors also ensure that the school spends more money than it is allocated on the education of pupils with special educational needs and that this money is spent appropriately; they ensure that educational inclusion is good. Although there are some lapses from national requirements, governors' work enhances the quality of experiences enjoyed by pupils in the school and governance is satisfactory overall.

54. The headteacher is committed and effective. He has been highly successful in obtaining resources, improving the ambience of the school, appointing creative and influential people to key posts and securing specialist school status as a science college. He focuses on people and perceptions and has improved the self-esteem of pupils, the morale of staff and the reputation of the school. Standards have remained almost static, although pupils' achievement is improving, but more slowly than might be expected given the range of initiatives that have been embraced. Some issues identified at the time of the last inspection have only recently been addressed, although funding has not been enough to take action much more quickly.

Opportunities to improve matters have been taken when they present themselves, for example, new staff appointments, but unsatisfactory practice has not been dealt with swiftly and firmly. To an extent the school's turbulent history of staff/management relationships was a reason for delay in taking action, but performance management should have been used more decisively both to reward and sanction. However, better evaluation and planning, coupled with school-led developments in teaching and learning and community work, and the extensive, able and committed senior management team, have now placed the school in a position to make rapid improvements across many fronts. Underpinning many of the 'surface' improvements, which have raised perceptions of the school, and extending into all aspects of curriculum provision, is excellent financial management. The school provides very well for itself from less money per pupil than in many schools and best value procedures are excellent. Extra money for the science college is quite recent income.

55. Very well managed by an assistant headteacher, the school has very good systems for the collection of national test and examination data, which is subject to rigorous analysis and perceptive interpretation. The information is used well for target setting and is increasingly used as a tool to raise standards. Overall, the school's analysis of results is thorough and sophisticated.
56. A member of the senior management team maintains an appropriate overview of the special educational needs work in the school. Each component is appropriately managed, but there is no integrated leadership and management. Whilst the school has a post with the title of special educational needs co-ordinator, that post does not involve such oversight. This arrangement can lead to inefficient use of time and additional efforts have to be made to ensure that slippage does not occur. As an example, no single special educational needs teacher maintains a close picture of the achievements of a pupil with both learning and behavioural difficulties. For this reason, leadership and management of special educational needs are both just satisfactory.
57. The school is part of an Education Action Zone (EAZ). Although for several years this focused on primary education and most additional funding went there, more recently it has directed efforts towards the 14-19 curriculum. The EAZ has also facilitated the appointment of the school's advanced skills teachers, work with the University of the First Age, work with the national campaign for learning (Cornwall is one of only three local education authorities in the third stage) and development work with Brainwave, the concept of an ideal school for the future, which led to the 'classroom of the future' being built. Leadership Improvement Grant (LIG) funding, directed by the EAZ, has been used to enhance school leadership and allow time for schools to work together, for example, to address 14-19 provision across the EAZ rather than in single schools, and inspectors noted the rapid changes being effected in the sixth form. The EAZ director considers that the school has created an atmosphere that encourages initiatives to flourish and inspectors agree that there is a buzz of action in the school.
58. The school trains significant numbers of teachers through a locally based training programme and the national graduate teacher training initiative. Provision is excellent because trainees are able to benefit from extensive theoretical work about teaching and learning carried out in the school under an advanced skills teacher. They are also able to rely on mentoring from most often good or better subject leadership and management; no subject is unsatisfactorily led or managed. Resources are also good, for example, interactive whiteboards, and trainees' own expertise in using such devices is valued and capitalised on to help train current teachers. New staff to the school, sometimes those the school has helped train, are well inducted into school systems and newly qualified teachers receive ongoing professional development. Teachers are increasingly benefiting from very good workload management to enable them to focus on teaching and learning, for example, the fair way any 'cover' is distributed under the direction of an administrative assistant supervised by a senior manager. Teaching assistants are also used effectively and creatively in some departments to actively support the work of teachers rather than just being someone extra. However, the teacher responsible for producing and reviewing individual education plans does not have clerical support and so has to spend time on administrative duties, which would be better used on educational matters. Recruitment is very

well managed and opportunities to retain good staff taken when possible, consequently, staffing within departments is most often good or better and this school has choice when appointing, for example, mathematics teachers, rather than struggling to find applicants.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,514,182	Balance from previous year	147,673
Total expenditure	4,361,369	Balance carried forward to the next	300,486
Expenditure per pupil	3,069		

The significant increase in the balance carried forward is to do with fluctuations in the number on roll in the sixth form and will be adjusted in the financial year ending March 2004.

Leadership and management of the sixth form

59. Leadership of the sixth form is very good and management is good. The head of sixth form, in post for two terms, has a clear vision of the sixth form in the future and has identified and begun to put into place robust systems to achieve objectives and to eradicate weaknesses. For example, in the past the guidance students have received prior to joining the sixth form has been inadequate and has resulted in students joining courses that are inappropriate. This has led to students having difficulty in meeting the requirements of some courses and to some underachievement or failure in examinations. In order to redress this, the head of sixth form has instigated a system that is designed to give students a very clear idea of their chances of success on each of the courses offered in light of their prior attainment. This will enable them to make an informed choice. For students already on courses there is a rigorous system to monitor their progress in order to take appropriate action to ensure that they achieve as expected. The head of sixth form has also begun to put into place a system to identify good practice and to allow it to be spread across subject areas. However, action taken is relatively recent and has yet to have a real impact upon standards and achievement. Religious education in the sixth form still does not meet statutory requirements, although governors have managed to ensure good provision in the main school that provides a foundation for improvement; the new head of sixth form is beginning to address this.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all pupils achieve well because teaching is good overall, and often very good or excellent.
- Pupils in a few classes learn less well where teachers struggle to cope with poor behaviour.
- Good leadership and teamwork ensure that all teachers plan lessons that are varied, engaging and appropriate.
- Pupils enjoy English lessons and usually work hard.
- Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have not been high enough.

Commentary

60. Pupils join the school with below average standards in English. Current Year 9 pupils are producing work that is average, which represents good achievement. The 2003 results in national tests at the end of Year 9 produced well below average results that do not reflect current standards of work. The trend in the last three years has been downwards against a national pattern of steady improvement. Staffing difficulties in recent years, now resolved, affected standards adversely. Results in mathematics were better and those in science much better. In English, girls achieved better results than boys, but the gap was a little narrower than nationally. The majority of pupils in Year 11 gain examination grades that are in line with or above those predicted, again indicating good achievement. GCSE examination results for 2003 in English were close to the national average. Those for English literature were below the national average. Almost all those entered for both examinations gained at least a grade G, indicating that lower attaining pupils generally achieved equally well. Girls performed better than boys in English and English literature; their results in English were above the national average. This indicates that the good comparative performance of boys in Years 7 to 9 falls away in Years 10 and 11. About 20 pupils successfully followed a Certificate of Achievement course and were not entered for GCSE.
61. Pupils are usually competent speakers and good listeners. They are very comfortable discussing their work in small groups or pairs. More formal and extended talk is much rarer and many pupils in Years 7 to 9 lack the additional confidence required. By Year 11 these skills are more evident as a result of the additional challenges presented by the speaking and listening assessments in GCSE English. Vocabulary and expression are at expected levels, but pupils have particularly good knowledge of terms from literature and the media. Reading skills in Years 7 to 9 are often quite modest. Reading aloud is generally well handled, but pupils have few opportunities to develop this skill. Many are making good and increasing use of the 'learning zone' (library) to extend their reading experience. Pupils understand what they read and follow narrative closely. By Years 10 and 11 pupils analyse literature sufficiently well to see how writers create their effects. They appreciate underlying themes in poetry and in moving image texts.
62. Written work in Years 7 to 9 is generally well organised and presented. Pupils of all attainment levels use appropriate language and form for a wide range of writing tasks. They show

enthusiasm for writing poems and stories. The spelling of lower attaining pupils is often weak. Pupils across the attainment range are careless about accuracy on occasions. The best written work is lively and well presented. Arguments are well marshalled and language effectively handled in discursive essays such as those on the merits of boxing. Exercise books show that pupils work hard and cover a lot of ground. By Year 11, pupils meet the challenge of demanding work, such as drawing parallels between Mary Shelley's novel, 'Frankenstein' and Darwin's theories of evolution. They write about complex texts with assurance. Good research is evident in pupils' work on the social, historical and linguistic background to Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet'.

63. Teaching and learning are good. In a substantial proportion of lessons they are very good or excellent. Teachers work closely together to produce lessons that have challenge and pace for all in classes that mix pupils of different attainment levels. This very good planning leads to lessons that are interesting and enjoyable in which pupils work hard and learn readily. Teachers and pupils are almost always friendly and these strong relationships underpin much very good learning. However, in a small number of lessons teachers fail to manage unacceptable behaviour that undermines the good planning and holds back learning. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make very good progress in classes where teachers have the support of teaching assistants. When they do not, these pupils often struggle to make as good progress as others. Nevertheless, pupils with special educational needs achieve well in reading, writing and spelling, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Teachers in the very best lessons ensure that they have additional materials or alternative tasks to match their particular needs. Higher attaining pupils usually make good progress because teachers encourage independent learning and pitch work at demanding levels. Teachers mark books carefully and set specific targets for pupils to improve the standards of their written work. Assessment is well planned and effective in identifying pupils who underperform. All pupils are clear about their progress against national test levels and GCSE grades. They are clear how they can improve the standards of their work.
64. Good leadership helps all teachers to work very well together. Levels of enthusiasm are high throughout the department. Since the previous inspection overall improvement in English has been good because the effect of significant staffing difficulties has been well managed and standards have now been retrieved to former levels.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

65. Standards of literacy are below average overall in Years 7 to 9 and broadly average by the time pupils leave school. Pupils in all years are competent speakers in most informal situations. Reading levels are close to average so that pupils are able to meet the demands for reading in all subjects. Pupils receive good support for reading in English, history, religious education and art and design. In these lessons pupils are encouraged to read for research. They are presented with a range of reading resources, for example, poetry in art and design lessons, and given guidance on how best to access information. The good facilities of the 'learning zone' are used well by many pupils to extend their reading. Pupils' writing is generally below average. Books and folders show inconsistent levels of accuracy in spelling and punctuation. The range of pupils' expression is often limited. These aspects of pupils' writing are only well addressed in a few subjects. Detailed marking in English, history and citizenship helps pupils to improve their written work. In science, teachers use an effective range of methods to improve pupils' writing and to encourage extended responses. In citizenship, too, good opportunities to write at length are helping pupils to develop fluency. Teachers in religious education are helping to improve pupils' writing through separately focusing on words, sentences and whole texts. Good progress in raising levels of literacy is evident in some subjects. However, the whole-school literacy policy and strategy do not address fully the need to raise standards of language and literacy throughout the school.

Modern foreign languages

The focus subject was French, but lessons in German and Spanish were also seen. Observations about teaching and learning made within the French section of the report, also apply to the sample of lessons seen in the other languages. Results in the GCSE examinations were well below average in German, but this is not the norm; examination results in previous years have been above average and improving. The examination results in 2003 were a consequence of unusual circumstances on the day of the oral examination. The standard of work seen in Spanish is below average, but since pupils have only studied the language since September their progress is satisfactory overall. The time allocated to Spanish is low overall since pupils start the course in Year 10.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' command of the languages they teach is good.
- Although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, there are examples of outstanding practice.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Pupils' speaking and writing skills are below average.
- Assessment is not used effectively to provide an appropriate challenge for higher attaining pupils in lessons.
- Opportunities for pupils to use the language themselves and for real purposes are limited.

Commentary

66. The proportion of candidates achieving grades A*-C was average in 2003. Girls performed better than boys. Pupils performed better in other subjects than they did in modern languages.
67. Standards of work seen are below average overall. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to prior attainment. By Year 9 pupils' reading and listening skills are average, but their writing and speaking skills are below average. They have a good understanding of grammar, but find difficulty in manipulating the languages themselves to express their ideas without help from notes and their teachers. Speaking and writing skills are below average because, although pupils have frequent opportunities to practise new language, they rarely use the languages to exchange or gather information and have few opportunities to write creatively or at length.
68. By Year 11, pupils' range of language is average, but speaking and writing skills are still weak. They respond briefly and writing is largely limited to adapting model texts or responding to questions with short phrases. They construct simple sentences to describe events in the past, present and future, but do not link sentences to compare and contrast their ideas, and the range of structures they employ is limited. Most pupils show little confidence in manipulating the languages independently of notes or guidance from the teacher. This represents satisfactory achievement overall, although higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
69. Whilst teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, there are examples of outstanding teaching. In the most effective lessons teachers use the languages being learned effectively and extensively to develop pupils' listening skills. However, in some lessons opportunities are missed; the English version is given too readily, eliminating pupils' need to listen to the original or activities are conducted mainly in English. Games and practical activities are used very effectively to consolidate learning and increase pupils' confidence with new language. In a Year 8 lesson, lower attaining pupils practised describing themselves in French. They were well supported by the teaching assistant and the French assistante and rapidly increased in confidence during a good variety of practical activities, which gave them frequent opportunities

to use the language themselves. Clear presentations allow pupils to rapidly understand and use new language themselves, identify and apply patterns. This is done very effectively using the interactive whiteboard and allows teachers to provide very good support for lower attaining pupils in lessons, enabling them to succeed in tasks. Opportunities to practise in pairs effectively reinforce learning and help pupils develop speaking skills. However, opportunities for pupils to try out new language are too often restricted to rehearsal and opportunities are missed for pupils to give or gather information in realistic situations. As a result, they struggle when trying to identify this language in listening or reading tasks and have difficulty using it to construct their own sentences independently of notes or guidance from the teacher. Opportunities are sometimes missed to predict what they are going to hear in taped extracts and thus consolidate key words and develop listening techniques.

70. Pupils' attitudes are good. Pupils work well in pairs and small groups and boys, in particular, are enthusiastic in participating in games and problem solving activities. Pupils respond positively and are engaged by practical activities that involve them directly.
71. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory; standards have improved significantly, but the quality of teaching and learning remains inconsistent. Development planning focuses appropriately on raising standards and improving teaching and learning. Assessment information is not used effectively enough to meet the needs of pupils of differing ability in lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The National Key Stage 3 Strategy is in place and helps ensure that teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are good.
- The quality of pupils' work in exercise books is, overall, unsatisfactory and undermines opportunities for review and revision.
- Monitoring and evaluation of department policy and practices are not rigorous enough to judge their effectiveness.
- Accommodation and ICT resources are excellent and used well.

Commentary

72. Standards in Year 9 national tests in 2003 were below average compared to all schools and well above average when compared to similar schools. Pupils' achievement was good overall in relation to their prior attainment on entry to the school, with boys performing better than girls. Standards have improved at a greater rate than the national trend. Standards in GCSE mathematics in 2003 were below average with girls performing significantly better than boys. Pupils' achievement compared to their prior attainment in their national tests in Year 9, was satisfactory. Current standards of work in Years 7 to 9 are broadly in line with national expectations and achievement is good overall, although work seen by higher attaining pupils is above average. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are below average, although standards in Year 10 are better than in Year 11. Achievement is satisfactory and standards, overall, have improved since the time of the last inspection.
73. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are good in Years 7 to 9. Teachers' good command of the subject is evident in their exposition and explanation. Very good use is made of the interactive whiteboard. Very good teaching reflects well pupils' kinaesthetic (hands-on) style of learning with a variety of 'bite size' activities suiting the short concentration spans of some. For example, Year 9 pupils were engrossed in their work on probability and made good progress because of the innovative use of resources, activities employed and the opportunities for personal development. Good use is made of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy, although the

sharing of more detailed learning objectives would aid the end of lesson review. The pace of teaching is good; pupils are engaged for the duration of lessons and respond well to encouragement and to some challenging questions. Opportunities to record key words, statements and formulae during the course of lessons that would aid learning are sometimes overlooked. Ongoing self-marking by pupils is satisfactory, although teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent with few diagnostic comments to support learning. Poor work is not challenged and the standard of presentation of work is overall, unsatisfactory. Pupils are managed well when moving from one task to another and overall, relationships between pupils and teachers are good. The good partnership of teachers and teaching assistants provides valuable support for pupils with special educational needs, enabling their achievement to match that of their peers.

74. Teaching and learning are overall satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is accurate and teachers have a secure understanding of the subject. Teachers seek to make the work varied and interesting using the interactive whiteboard and mini whiteboards to involve the pupils productively. However, progress is sometimes interrupted by gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, which undermine pupils' achievement. For example, Year 11 average attaining pupils experienced difficulty describing mathematically the line of symmetry when investigating reflections. Year 10 work was halted when the term 'similar' for comparing triangles was not known. As a result, the amount of work covered does not match national expectations to the same degree of depth, although teachers have high expectations of their pupils. Work is appropriate and achievable, often intellectually demanding and deepening understanding. Pupils have the capacity to work independently and collaboratively, although the application and productivity of some is limited. Written solutions often lack the correct mathematical structure and necessary use of English to explain pupils' thought processes. As a result, some exercises recorded in books are brief and standards are below average. Work is marked up to date, although the use of diagnostic comment is infrequent.
75. Leadership of the department is good and management is satisfactory. Standards have steadily improved with good strategic deployment of subject specialists. Teachers are an effective team. They work well together and are committed to raising standards further. Opportunities for sharing good practice are frequent and valued. Accommodation and resources are excellent. Improvement since the last report is satisfactory overall, but all issues raised then have not all been addressed fully. Monitoring and evaluation of department policy and practices need to be more rigorously applied to judge their effectiveness. The collection and analysis of performance data needs to be more systematic to inform teaching practices and curriculum development. Strategies that will enhance learning, sustain achievement and reduce the significant gender difference in performance need to be more apparent.

Mathematics across the curriculum

76. Most pupils are competent with basic numeracy, but skills in mental arithmetic remain weak and many rely too much on calculators. Overall, the contribution across the curriculum, of subjects other than mathematics is satisfactory, although unco-ordinated. Staff training has taken place to raise awareness and a school policy exists, although no action has occurred to find out what goes on in subjects and monitor and evaluate provision in departments. However, in geography, physical education, history and ICT, schemes of work identify what number skills pupils are likely to need and how they can demonstrate them; drawing graphs and so on is an area particularly reinforced. Arrangements for addressing the numeracy skills of pupils in Years 7 to 9, particularly those with special educational needs, are underway.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in Years 7 to 9 as a result of very good planning, teaching and assessment.
- Lessons are very well structured and teachers make very good use of resources to provide a variety of activities to engage pupils.
- Very good leadership has established the school as a specialist science college, identified where improvement is needed and is taking action to secure this.
- Some teaching, especially in Year 11, promotes passive compliance from pupils rather than active learning.
- Activities are not always sufficiently adjusted for the different needs of different pupils in a group.

Commentary

- Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were in line with national averages and very high in comparison to similar schools. They represented very good achievement from below average standards on entry. Boys' results were slightly better than girls' results, but this has not been a consistent pattern over time. These results were the best ever for the school. Science results are consistently better than those in English and mathematics. GCSE results in 2003 were more mixed. Overall, results and the proportion achieving a higher grade in science were both lower than those seen nationally. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection. Science results are generally in line with results in other subjects.
- Standards seen during the inspection are in line with national standards. In Year 9, higher attaining pupils can write word equations and explain processes such as photosynthesis. Almost three-quarters of pupils are working at or above the expected level and no pupils are working outside the normal range of levels for pupils of this age. Lower attaining pupils have difficulties with reading and writing that affect their standards in science. In Year 11, higher attaining pupils' work is indicative of the highest grades. They can use formulae for momentum and kinetic energy, write balanced symbol equations and explain concepts such as homeostasis. About two-fifths of pupils are working at GCSE grade C or better and none are working at standards below GCSE. Standards in investigating and applying science are lower than in knowledge and understanding. Standards are comparatively higher in Year 10 and achievement is better. Attendance affects the achievement of some pupils. Achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 10 and 11.
- Teaching and learning are good overall, never less than satisfactory and sometimes very good. They are very good in Years 7 to 9, good in Year 10 and satisfactory in Year 11. Lessons and topics are very well structured and show the impact of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. Literacy skills are well developed through definition and use of technical vocabulary and through games and puzzles. Teachers make very good use of resources, including ICT, to provide a variety of activities that engage pupils. Work is regularly assessed and pupils are very well prepared for national tests. In Years 10 and 11, learning activities are less varied and teachers often talk too much or provide routine tasks that require little understanding. Classroom management is good so pupils are well behaved and compliant. They are not always motivated so learning is less good, particularly in Year 11. The best lessons proceed at a very good pace, activities are interesting and the work is very well matched to the different needs of pupils in the class. However, in too many lessons, the same activities are used for pupils of different abilities, so they are too difficult for some while lacking challenge for others. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, an issue in the previous inspection report, has improved and they make progress comparable with their peers.
- Leadership is very good and management is good. The new head of department is a very good role model through her own teaching and has worked hard to promote teamwork in a very large department. Common schemes of work and rigorous assessment and monitoring systems, particularly in Years 7 to 9, have helped to improve achievement. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy has been implemented very effectively. The strengths and weaknesses of the department are well known and the main areas for development are now being addressed. For

example, the courses offered in Year 10 have been changed to more closely suit pupils' needs and, as a result, achievement is better in the current Year 10 than in Year 11. However, this change was only introduced last September, although the issue was identified in the previous inspection report. The plan for the development of the school as a science college is visionary and imaginative. Choice of courses and enrichments are very good, for example, the use of a touring star dome and stimulus from a local museum curator. There are also excellent links with local schools and the community. These all contribute to pupils' enjoyment of, and interest in science. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school cannot guarantee it provides the entitlement to National Curriculum requirements to all pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Some teaching is very good, although too many teachers do not have enough ICT knowledge to teach the subject effectively, and teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
- The school is very clear about how pupils should use ICT to help them learn.
- Technical support is good so computers are reliable.

Commentary

81. In 2003, teachers assessed standards of work from pupils in Year 9 to be well below average. Standards are now higher, below average, because pupils have more ICT lessons. There is no difference between the standard of boys' work and that of girls. When pupils enter the school their standards in ICT are below average. They achieve just satisfactorily overall between Years 7 and 9, although the progress they make in individual lessons is too often unsatisfactory; their achievement could be better if teaching was consistently effective.
82. GCSE results in 2003 were below average overall. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was well below average. Although only a small number of girls took the subject, they gained better results than did boys. The results in 2003 were an improvement on those from the previous year. The standard of both boys' and girls' current work in Year 11 is also below average.
83. By Year 9 pupils know about different types of input and output devices. They can use sensors to control models, but do not explain the choices they have made. Pupils in Year 11 identify appropriate software to solve problems. They test their work, but not always in a systematic manner. Pupils achieve satisfactorily during Years 10 and 11.
84. In all years, below average standards of literacy hinder learning. Many pupils do not readily describe their work at any length and frequently struggle for an appropriate technical or non-technical word when speaking about their work. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils. Very often they are well supported by teaching assistants.
85. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall; unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9, satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. There were two unsatisfactory lessons and one poor lesson. Half the lessons seen were good or better. In a good Year 7 lesson, pupils learnt effectively how to draw flowcharts. Learning was good because pupils could see the importance of the order of the different activities in the well-chosen example used – making a cup of tea. The teacher was well aware of the differing needs within the group and structured the activities differently for different groups of pupils so by the end of the lesson, all could draw simple charts. Lower attaining pupils in Year 8 did not learn how to link web pages because the teacher did not make the purpose of the lesson sufficiently clear and was not aware that the pupils had not already learned skills needed for this lesson. This led to the work being too difficult for pupils. They lost

interest and learnt little. In a very good lesson, pupils in Year 11 learnt a great deal about the importance of keeping data secure. The work was challenging because the teacher required pupils to think through a series of demanding questions. Pupils enjoyed discussing the rights and wrongs of how data might be used or abused. In contrast, another Year 11 class did not learn enough in a lesson about computers and disabled people because the teacher did not stimulate discussion. When asked to research the topic, pupils simply copied from books without understanding the issues. Pupils have a good approach to the subject when they are well taught, but in unsatisfactory lessons pupils quickly lose interest and so learn less than they should.

86. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. There is a clear understanding of ways in which ICT helps pupils to learn in all subjects. Management is unsatisfactory. A high proportion of teachers of ICT have not been trained to teach the subject and have little experience of teaching it. Hence, despite some good and very good teaching, there is a higher proportion of unsatisfactory teaching than generally found. Lack of experience of teaching the subject leads to work being too easy or too hard as the teacher is uncertain of the best way to present a topic. For the same reason, these teachers are not well placed to be able to advise pupils on how to improve their work. Whilst the head of the department is readily available to provide assistance, the school has not yet provided sufficient structured support for these non-specialists.
87. At the time of the previous inspection, the school did not provide all ICT requirements of the National Curriculum. There has been considerable improvement from that position. All pupils in Years 7 to 9 are now taught the full National Curriculum, having one lesson each week. Only about two-fifths of pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow an ICT course leading to public examination. All pupils use ICT in other lessons, especially English and mathematics, but the school cannot yet guarantee that every pupil covers all the National Curriculum requires. For that reason, although many good improvements have been effected since the previous inspection, overall improvement is unsatisfactory. Good developments include the fact that pupils are now assessed in the subject and this information is well used so that pupils know how well they are doing and the head of department can choose the most appropriate examination courses. This aspect of management is good. Lessons by subject specialists make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but this is not a feature of lessons taught by non-specialists and so, overall, the contribution is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

88. When the school was last inspected, there was a shortage of computers and many subjects did not use ICT to the desired extent to help pupils learn. There has been a significant improvement since that time. The school now has about the same number of computers generally found in a school of its size. These computers are well maintained by technicians and so teachers have confidence that a lesson will not be spoilt by computers not working. Technicians also readily help pupils with their work. There is a clear understanding that computers should not be used for their own sake, but to help pupils learn. In many subjects good use is being made of interactive whiteboards, often increasing pupils' confidence and speaking skills as they enjoy using these boards to present their work to the rest of the class. Pupils use computers to collect and then analyse data in scientific experiments. In music, although teachers have the necessary skills, lack of appropriate equipment results in pupils not using computers to aid their learning. In design and technology, pupils do not use ICT sufficiently, again because of lack of equipment.
89. Many teachers are now using computers to a much greater extent, so there are frequent occasions when computer rooms are fully booked and cannot be used appropriately for other lessons. The school is fully aware of this problem and has definite plans to increase the number of computers available.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11, but just satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9 because their limited literacy and presentation skills hinder learning.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Leadership is good and likely to lead to further improvement, but there is not enough evaluation of the department's work.

Commentary

90. Pupils come into the school in Year 7 with below average geographical skills and knowledge, and by the end of Year 9 these standards are still below average, but broader; pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, but pupils' learning is held back by their weak literacy and presentation skills and this prevents them achieving better. Literacy skills only improve slowly because not enough attention is given in lessons to providing structured written work that provides for the different needs of pupils in every class. Although, on occasions, high attaining pupils were given additional work to challenge them, and low attaining pupils were given appropriate tasks, this was not the practice in every lesson. Numeracy is used for graphs and map work, but again weak presentation suggests incomplete understanding of what is required.
91. In 2003, the proportion of pupils attaining grades A*-C was below average, but the proportion attaining A*-G was average and overall, results were in line with those of other subjects in the school. The results of boys and girls have been similar over several years. Work seen during the inspection is average. High attaining Year 11 students have drafted some good coursework based on their fieldwork visits to St Ives, showing an ability to gather and process data and draw coherent conclusions. The work of some lower attaining students shows an ability to collect data, but analysis and presentation skills are unreliable. Achievement is good in Years 10 and 11, with a clear improvement in standards from the work of Year 9 pupils.
92. Teaching and learning are good overall. Better lessons provide pupils with opportunities to discuss and think for themselves, but in others there is a tendency to tell pupils information and ask them to do simple work, such as writing notes. The majority of pupils listen attentively to each other and to the teacher and work diligently, which enables most of them to learn well so that despite their weak written work, many of them display a developing understanding of the world around them. Homework is well used to support the work in lessons. Assessment is good, both through questioning in lessons and the marking of books, so that pupils are aware of their levels of attainment and their targets for improvement. Moral and cultural themes are tackled through work on such topics as economic development. However, citizenship themes are not yet a part of teachers' planning and, therefore, not made explicit in lessons. ICT is well used where possible, for example, in a Year 8 lesson pupils were using computers in the newly established school 'learning zone' to research and report on weathering and erosion.
93. Good leadership ensures a well-resourced curriculum that meets requirements. Management is satisfactory. Because of time constraints there is no formalised programme of lesson observations in the department in order to ensure consistent good practice. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory, with improved standards of attainment, improved accommodation and resources. The department has the capacity to improve effectively in the future.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and promotes good learning.
- Most pupils show interest in lessons and achieve well, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Pupils do not use ICT sufficiently for research and presentation of work.

Commentary

94. Pupils begin Year 7 with below average standards. Most pupils achieve well and make good progress and, in Year 9, pupils' overall attainment is average; a smaller than usually seen proportion of pupils reach the highest standards, reflecting the nature of the school's intake. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils because teachers support them well and use support assistants effectively in lessons when they are available.
95. Most pupils in Years 7 to 9 have good knowledge and understanding of the past. They usually recall well work done in previous lessons so that teachers can quickly move on to new work. Most see and understand well the reasons for past events. They use successfully a wide range of sources to build up a picture of the past. High attainers interpret well, for instance, political cartoons and poetry from World War One. They write very well at length. Although lower attainers use sources satisfactorily for information, they often fail to use the information to make valid deductions. Their written work often lacks depth and detail.
96. In 2003, the proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade at GCSE was well below average and very few pupils gained an A* or A grade. Almost all, however, gained at least a pass grade and examination standards were below average overall. These standards reflected reasonably well the capabilities of pupils who opted to take the subject. A minority, some of whom did not attend revision or coursework guidance classes, did not achieve as well as they should have done. Four pupils did not arrive to take the examination and so failed. The standard of work seen during the inspection was broadly average, although only a small proportion was of the highest standard. Most pupils achieve well in lessons because they are taught effectively and show interest in their work.
97. The majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 have sound knowledge and understanding of the topics they are studying. They see and explain motives for actions taken in the past. Higher attainers demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding. Their essays are of good quality. The knowledge of lower attainers is frequently patchy. Their written work lacks depth of analysis, and is usually descriptive or narrative, so does not reach the highest grades.
98. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is characterised by teachers' confidence with the subject, effective classroom management, high expectations of behaviour, hard work and a brisk pace. Appropriately demanding work is set for the most able who, consequently, achieve well. Teachers usually use a range of short, motivating activities that interest pupils and keep them busy and actively involved in their learning. A digital projector is used well to provide a variety of picture, textual and graphical images. Most pupils respond positively to good teaching. Their good behaviour and positive attitudes to work are major reasons for their good achievement. A few, who show less inclination to learn, do not achieve as well as they should.
99. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection, but the department is now led and managed very well; teachers have been willing to embrace change, viewing it as a challenge and an opportunity to improve the work of the department. This approach can be seen in their work to implement the National Key Stage 3 Strategy to improve teaching and learning, which is clearly evident in lessons. Pupils do not use ICT often enough in class time for research or for presentation of their work because the department lacks sufficient computers and cannot always book the central school facilities at suitable times.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average overall, and pupils achieve well, but low levels of literacy reduce the quality of pupils' work.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The department is well led and managed.
- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

Commentary

100. GCSE results, for the minority of pupils who took the full course in 2003, were well below average, but were broadly average for those who took the short course, which was open to the whole year group. Several pupils achieved the higher grades. By Year 9, pupils are reaching average standards in religious education and are achieving well despite low levels of literacy, which affect the quality of pupils' work adversely. They continue to achieve well in Years 10 and 11, although many pupils still struggle to express themselves clearly and this results in a lower standard of work. Standards are also hindered by the fact that the majority of pupils have little first-hand experience of religion outside school.
101. Teaching and learning are good. In Years 10 and 11, where lessons are taught by specialists, they are very good. Better lessons are characterised by very good subject knowledge of teachers and the quality of their planning. Appropriate and varied methods and a very good range of resources are used in all lessons. Mini whiteboards are used effectively, as are course books, artefacts, handouts and video excerpts. The interactive whiteboard in one of the rooms opens up further possibilities for interesting approaches. Teachers manage classes well and have high expectations of pupils, which usually results in a positive response from them. Good relationships are typical of most lessons. Teachers recognise that pupils need to overcome their literacy problems, and many lessons incorporate features of recent national initiatives that reinforce the learning of key words and concepts. The best lessons also help pupils to use these words in context and to produce pieces of writing of the required standard. Homework is set regularly and teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly. Assessment is appropriate, but more use could be made of the information obtained, for instance, in setting different tasks or questions in lessons for pupils of varying ability. Classes include pupils from across the whole ability range; those with special educational needs are often well supported by teaching assistants.
102. The subject is well led and managed, within the humanities faculty, with very good support for the non-specialist teachers who are standing in because of a temporary vacancy in the department. There is a strong team identity and a shared commitment to high standards. The department planning, based on the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus and the GCSE syllabuses, provides a good structure for lessons. The two full-time specialists are very good role models for the subject, and their work and support is appreciated by colleagues. There is scope for more lesson observation, as a means of raising further the quality of teaching and learning, although this is monitored effectively in other ways. Teachers have good access to the resources available, even those who teach away from the religious education area. ICT could be used more, building on the good practice already in place, such as opportunities for pupils to do computer-based presentations.
103. The provision for religious education has improved significantly since the last inspection, when achievement was unsatisfactory and attitudes to the subject less than positive. Pupils benefit now from good teaching, better accommodation and resources, more curriculum time and, as a result, they are achieving higher standards in the subject.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently appointed head of department is having a positive effect on the work of the department and examination results have improved.
- There is a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching.
- Examples of good work are prominently displayed to show what can be achieved.
- Standards are low in food technology.
- The accommodation is very poor.
- The provision for ICT, particularly computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

104. Pupils enter the school with below average standards in the subject. Teacher assessment at the end of Year 9 in 2003 indicates average standards. This is not supported by inspection evidence, which judged standards to be below average as the result of a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. This occurred mostly, but not exclusively, in food technology. Pupils achieve unsatisfactorily overall.
105. Pupils acquire a patchy knowledge of the design process in Years 7 to 9 dependent on the quality of teaching they receive. They are able to design and make products and work safely with a range of tools and materials. Pupils enjoy practical work and acquire useful practical skills. Design work is inconsistent across the material areas, but weak literacy skills adversely affect standards in all areas.
106. GCSE results in 2003 were well below average compared to all schools, but show a marked improvement on previous years largely due to good results in graphic products. The proportion of pupils attaining grades in the A*-C range is low, but about average for those in the A*-G range. Results show girls underachieve in this subject, but boys' results are about the same as their average in other subjects.
107. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are average overall, but show variation between the material areas. They are highest in graphic products and there is some very good coursework. Standards are lowest in food, which is not a popular subject. Variation exists in both the quality of design work and in making skills. It applies to pupils of all abilities and is closely matched to the quality of teaching. In work generally, insufficient use is made of ICT. Owing to a lack of provision, pupils are not able to design and manufacture products using a computer and this reduces the level at which pupils can attain. Many pupils have weak literacy skills that inhibit their ability to explain how their design ideas have developed as coursework progressed. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall.
108. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall; in Years 7 to 9 a high number of unsatisfactory or worse lessons were seen. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 where fewer unsatisfactory lessons occurred because of better teaching. In weaker lessons there was limited evidence of planning and work lacked challenge. Expectation of pupils was low and little account was taken of the differing needs of pupils. In these lessons, pupils rapidly lost interest, drifted off task, very little if any learning took place and noise levels and behaviour became unacceptable. In the best lessons, good use was made of national teaching and learning strategies to raise standards. These lessons began with lively 'starter'

activities, which pupils found challenging, and increased pupils' knowledge and understanding whilst they had fun. Teachers employed a variety of methods and these lessons moved at a brisk pace; well-focused sessions at the end ensured that pupils had learnt what was necessary. Inconsistency exists in other aspects of teachers' work; not all teachers mark and assess work to the same standard and the amount of support given to pupils out of lessons varies.

109. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The current practice of a combined art and design and design and technology faculty does not work well. The recently appointed head of design and technology has correctly identified what needs to be done to improve matters and has prepared a realistic development plan. He has been less successful in his attempts to move things forward because some teachers do not share his vision for the department. Departmental resources are satisfactory, but accommodation is very poor. A new building is planned, and work is due to commence shortly. A number of very significant health and safety issues have been identified to the department and to the school. The school is taking swift action to redress them. Improvement since the last report is unsatisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Lessons of drama were sampled in Years 8 and 11. Standards in Year 8 are below average, but standards in the GCSE class are above average and pupils are achieving well. Pupils benefit from good teaching; two part-time specialists teach most of the lessons, but resources are limited and accommodation poor. The main drama area is in a relatively inaccessible part of the building and a long way from the other teaching space, which is also a dining area. Both are at a distance from the stage area in the school hall. Moving resources is a problem; the fact that younger pupils only get one lesson a fortnight is also a barrier to achievement. Much of the work done also contributes significantly to pupils' personal development, such as the unit of work on bullying, so the time limitation is unfortunate.

Teachers put in many hours of work with pupils out of school hours, and are involved in school productions that draw in other departments. These also contribute well to pupils' personal development.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and leads to good achievement.
- Pupils are interested and mostly behave well.
- Art and design makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Standards in Year 11 are above average, but recent GCSE results were well below average.
- Pupils do not have sufficiently developed independent working skills.

Commentary

110. Standards in Year 9 are average. Pupils achieve well as they start in Year 7 with below average standards. In Years 7 to 9, pupils experience a wide range of skills, materials, techniques and processes. Their work is often colourful, creative and well executed. In textiles, for example, pupils use a range of techniques to produce imaginative work exploring the natural environment. Some higher attaining pupils are able to apply these skills with a degree of independence, but many pupils need close direction from teachers. Pupils' developmental work is better than reported at the last inspection, but remains a weak area for many pupils. Sketchbooks are used well as a record of progress and as a means of developing ideas. Higher attaining pupils use line, tone and colour well and observational drawings are

meticulously executed. However, many lower attaining pupils do not work with sufficient care and attention to detail. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported during lessons and they achieve well.

111. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades in 2003 was well below average, but fewer failed and the proportion of A*-G grades was above average. These results were lower than expected and not as good as in 2002. Boys perform less well than girls and the school has adopted various strategies to improve boys' results. The curriculum now contains topics with greater appeal to boys, for example, linking graphic design to surf, skate or snow board sports in one Year 10 lesson had a beneficial effect on boys' levels of interest. Standards of work in Year 11 are above average overall, and pupils achieve well. Standards do vary; lower attaining pupils produce some simplistic ceramic work, whilst carefully crafted clay work, with intricate application of pattern and texture, is produced by higher attaining pupils. More able pupils produce detailed preparatory work and the quality of this in sketchbooks often reflects the variation in performance between boys and girls. In addition to GCSE art and design, an applied GCSE course provides a more vocational experience for pupils with different aptitudes and enables them to achieve well.
112. Teaching and learning are good overall. Good teaching is underpinned by teachers' good knowledge of pupils, particularly those having special educational needs; good working relationships and a positive learning atmosphere are developed. In one well-taught Year 10 lesson, where all pupils were identified with special educational needs, the lesson was well managed and pupils encouraged; everyone developed printmaking skills and enjoyed success. Teachers have good techniques for encouraging pupils' speaking and writing skills, developing critical evaluation studies and promoting artistic skills and understanding. For example, poetry is used to stimulate ideas and pupils develop a vocabulary of descriptive words to help them explain their work. Low literacy levels, however, hinder the ability of many pupils to respond to the critical evaluation of artists' work, although some higher attaining pupils are able to talk and write about how art affects their emotions. The positive gains in lessons are not always maintained and reflected in examination results because many pupils have difficulty in consolidating their knowledge over time; they forget or do not practise. Also, pupils' learning is less effective where teaching is only satisfactory and teachers do not manage the challenging attitudes of some pupils in a sufficiently positive way. Art and design makes a positive impact on the school environment and makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development through a range of community involvement projects and gallery visits.
113. Satisfactory leadership and management have established good teamwork. Schemes of work are matched to National Curriculum requirements, but strategies for promoting numeracy and for developing gifted and talented pupils are not overtly stated in lesson planning. The curriculum provides a worthwhile range of artistic experiences and there are good opportunities for pupils of differing abilities to gain accreditation. Limited access to ICT facilities prevents pupils from using it more widely in their work despite the interest and expertise of some staff. Teachers do not receive sufficient technician support, which makes preparation and clearing more difficult.
114. Since the last inspection, there has been satisfactory improvement overall. The development of pupils' research and preparatory work is better. Assessment procedures are also better, but the use of assessment information as a means of raising standards is still an area for development.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned with a good variety of learning strategies.
- There is good use of resources that engage pupils' interest.
- Tasks set are insufficiently matched to differing pupils' needs.
- There is insufficient use of ICT due to lack of resources.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

115. The number of pupils entered for GCSE in 2003 was too small for valid statistical comparisons with national data. However, the results do indicate a dip in standards attained.
116. In work seen, overall, standards of attainment are below average. Pupils in Year 9 are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their standards on entry to the school. Pupils taking music in Years 10 and 11 are also achieving satisfactorily in relation to their musical experience prior to starting the course. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls or of pupils from different ethnic groups. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, profiting from the essentially practical nature of the curriculum that is offered. In Years 10 and 11 pupils can identify features of instrumentation and texture, when listening to Indian music, for example, but show a lack of technical vocabulary. Performance standards are varied. They play and sing well in class ensembles and in the extra-curricular groups and there are some good individual performances, but many are lacking in confidence and fluency. Compositions show some understanding of structure, such as variation and form, and are generally well related to pupils' chosen area of study, but are generally short and insufficiently developed. In Years 7 to 9 notation skills are weak with pupils over dependent on the use of letter names to identify notes. When playing keyboards they do not use fingering systems and lack fluency as a result. However, they do show a good understanding of how chords are constructed and used in sequences.
117. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory across all years. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons well with good use of resources to give variety to the teaching and engage pupils. Explanations are generally clear, but sometimes the introductions to practical work are not sufficiently detailed, resulting in loss of time as the teacher has to explain the task again to individual pupils. Class management is generally good, but sometimes there is insufficient awareness of the whole class during group work resulting in unproductive working by some pupils. Pupils collaborate well on keyboards and also work well independently. Teachers give a good level of individual help, which is well matched to pupils' needs; this particularly helps those pupils with special educational needs to make progress, but sometimes the tasks set could be better matched to the differing ability levels within the class.
118. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. There is a good level of self-evaluation and performance data is monitored so that pupils' progress can be monitored. As yet this information is not being used to influence planning and there is no target setting for pupils. The department's documentation is generally well detailed, but whole-school policies need to be more closely linked to the music curriculum. Music contributes well to the personal development of pupils, for example, through a good focus on the music of other cultures and through the good range of extra-curricular opportunities that are offered. The extra-curricular groups, such as the choir and the band, perform well, but apart from the music/drama productions the take-up is limited. Resources for ICT and music technology are insufficient and the lack of computers and recording equipment affects the quality of composition work, particularly for those pupils who lack instrumental skills.
119. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The time allocation to music has been improved. Learning strategies are now more varied. Assessment processes have been improved, although they are not being used effectively to raise standards of attainment.

Teaching is now monitored systematically and the staffing provision has been increased. There has been some improvement in resources, although they are still inadequate.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Girls learn well overall, with very good teaching and learning common in many girls' lessons.
- There is a well-balanced curriculum for all pupils.
- The leadership team is now moving the department forward.
- Many older boys have an unsatisfactory attitude to learning.
- There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Commentary

120. Standards at GCSE in 2003 were below average. Overall, standards at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were incompletely assessed, but indicate standards then to be below average.
121. When pupils enter the school in Year 7, their level of attainment is broadly average. By Year 9, standards are more securely average. Pupils are able to perform safely in a range of activities, and they know the rules of several sports. They are beginning to understand the principles of team play. They have a satisfactory understanding of health-related fitness, and they know how and why to warm up before exercise. The aesthetic and creative dimensions of learning are addressed well through gymnastics, and very well through dance. In all activities, girls are working at a more advanced level than boys. The behaviour of a small minority of boys creates difficulties in lessons and impedes their own and others' achievement. Overall, achievement to this age is satisfactory.
122. In Year 11, the department assesses standards as below average. Limited inspection evidence supports this view. Achievement across a range of activities is satisfactory overall, but the progress made by a significant minority of boys is unsatisfactory; their poor behaviour impairs the development of their skills and of some of their peers. Most pupils, especially girls, can apply to good effect their performance skills and understanding of rules and tactics, in both conditioned and full game situations. These pupils are active participants in a range of popular and minority sports. However, too many boys have been confined over several years to merely playing games, and their range of knowledge, skills, and understanding of the subject is narrow as a result. The achievement of this particular group of pupils is unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs progress at a similar rate to their peers.
123. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good overall in Years 7 to 9, and just satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. They arrive promptly at lessons and the majority pay close attention to teacher guidance and instruction. The large majority of younger pupils work well in small groups, co-operating together with energy and enthusiasm. Most pupils are able and willing to offer responses to questions. Relationships and behaviour in lessons are particularly good for girls, and this contributes strongly to their good overall progress.
124. Teaching and learning are just satisfactory, but the overall quality of both is too inconsistent; lessons seen included two that were excellent and one that was poor. When teaching is very good or better, there are exemplary demonstrations, and very clear explanations. When learning is very good or better, teachers challenge pupils relentlessly to improve the quality of their work, and they actively coach and guide them. This is common in many girls' lessons. Where learning is less than good, class management does not immediately address unacceptable misbehaviour, the work set lacks pace and challenge, and many pupils, boys in particular, are happy to stir up trouble. Some teachers' expectations about pupils' attitudes to

learning are too low, and they do not demand a high enough quality of work, or standard of behaviour, from their charges.

125. The curriculum taught to pupils is good, with an interesting range and good balance between activities. The range of extra-curricular activities offered to all pupils to refine and develop their physical performances is very good. Many pupils compete successfully in teams and as individuals, some up to national level. Accommodation for teaching and resources for learning are good. Changing rooms are poor. The school is aware of this shortcoming and is addressing it as resources become available to them.
126. Leadership and management are good. The new team co-operate well and share joint responsibility, but they have a steep hill to climb from a very low starting point. They will need time to change a low skill, low effort, culture that has become endemic amongst too many older boys. The department has a clear vision of the standards to which it aspires, but is not using the best methods to achieve these aspirations. Pupils are assessed accurately at the end of each module of work, but these assessments have yet to be used fully to inform the planning of teaching. Not all staff are secure in using assessment information to ascertain where pupils are succeeding or failing, or what they themselves need to modify in order to secure improvement. Monitoring the quality of teaching is carried out with rigour, but is not yet sufficiently focused on learning outcomes.
127. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. The new leadership has not had sufficient time to overcome any of the major issues identified at, and remaining from, the last inspection. The quality of teaching remains inconsistent, achievement of too many older boys is still not good enough, and poor behaviour of older boys in particular still presents a clear barrier to learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education was sampled; citizenship was examined fully.

128. Personal, social and health education is taught in tandem with citizenship. The arrangements have been improved since the last inspection and are now well co-ordinated with some time allocated specifically for this aspect of the curriculum. However, the time allocation is still very limited, particularly in Year 11. Teaching is done by a large team drawn mainly from the humanities departments, and is good. Sensitive topics such as sex education are taught effectively and good use is made of visiting speakers from outside agencies such as the Cornwall Rape and Abuse Centre. Departments such as science and religious education also contribute well to the programme. The form tutor periods also contribute, but they lack consistency in content and quality and need to be much more integrated into the personal, social and health education programme.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are good.
- Lessons are well planned and employ a good variety of learning strategies.
- There is very good use of resources.
- The time allocation to citizenship is insufficient, particularly in Year 11.
- Very good use is made of visiting speakers and outside agencies.
- Sometimes work is insufficiently matched to the needs of higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

129. Citizenship is taught as part of the personal, social and health education programme and is a comparatively new subject. Pupils in both Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11 achieve well in attaining above average standards. Pupils show a good understanding of issues studied and their implications for society. They also show good knowledge of factual information relevant to the topics studied. In their written work they can explain well both sides of an argument and present people's views that are not necessarily their own. Standards of discussion are good. Pupils articulate views clearly and speak with self-assurance. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into all activities and achieve well. All other groups of pupils achieve well, but higher attaining pupils could achieve even more if tasks set were better matched to their needs and challenged them more.
130. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Year 10. Lessons are well planned with a good variety of approaches, which engage pupils and maintain interest. There is also good use made of visiting speakers from outside agencies such as the police and school dental service. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, managing them well, and this ensures concentration and good behaviour. Very good use is made of resources, not only published and school produced materials, but also artefacts, but insufficient use is made of ICT. In Year 10, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy development by providing opportunities for longer pieces of writing, for example, through presenting arguments and writing letters to newspapers. Through the wide range of topics and issues covered, the subject makes a very strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
131. Leadership and management are good. The subject is well co-ordinated and the large teaching team well managed to ensure consistency of work and expectations. Resources are well organised and easily available to teachers and pupils. Departmental documentation is very full and comprehensive, and covers all the areas of the National Curriculum. The leadership has good vision and clear ideas as to what the department should be doing and achieving; these are well reflected in priorities identified in the departmental development plan.
132. The curriculum is well planned to give coverage of all relevant areas. The school council helps pupils to understand the workings of the democratic process. In addition, other subjects such as religious education, history and geography contribute well to citizenship. However, this aspect of provision needs more structuring to ensure that all subjects play a role in teaching citizenship. This is particularly important in view of the limited amount of time allocated to citizenship. There is no timetabled time for pupils in Year 11, and in Years 7 to 9 the one hour a fortnight is shared with personal and social education. This limits the time for in depth discussion and exploration of issues.
133. Since the last inspection, citizenship has been introduced into the curriculum. Resources have been purchased and there is a good range of textbooks, videos and artefacts.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003.

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

GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	23	43.5	61.9	8.7	17.1	15.2	22.1
Biology	8	75	65.2	12.5	11.1	21.3	20.6
Chemistry	4	50	72.7	0.0	13.9	15.0	24.1
Other Sciences	9	44.4	71.4	0.0	15.8	8.9	24.3
Physics	6	50	68.6	0.0	14.4	13.3	22.7
Information Communication Technology	11	72.7	67.0	9.1	10.9	22.7	21.4
Sports/Physical Education Studies	5	80.0	73.2	0.0	11.4	22	23.1
Religious Studies	3	100	80.2	0.0	22.6	30	29.8
Sociology	18	66.7	71.8	0.0	18.4	17.2	25.4
Art and Design	3	33.3	80.1	0.0	23.7	6.7	29.9
Music	3	66.7	86.5	0.0	21.4	13.3	30.7
Drama	3	100	86.5	33.3	19.6	36.7	30.6
Design and Technology	4	25	74.9	0.0	15.1	5.0	25.3
Geography	7	42.9	74.3	0.0	19.8	14.3	26.5
History	4	50	80.7	0.0	19.5	17.5	28.6
French	1	0.0	78.2	0.0	18.9	0.0	27.6
English/ English language	4	100	82.9	0.0	17.5	32.5	28.7
General Studies	58	62.1	73.9	3.4	17.8	18.8	25.7

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	4	100	96.7	0.0	55.6	60.0	88.8
Biology	15	100	96.4	20	39.2	65.3	78.6
Chemistry	5	100	97.6	0.0	49	72	84.9
Other Sciences	5	100	97.3	0.0	41.5	76	80.3
Physics	5	100	96.7	20	44.6	76	81.7
Information Communication Technology	6	100	95.6	0.0	24.6	70	69.5
Sports/Physical Education Studies	4	100	98	25	30.9	60	75.2
Religious Studies	7	100	98.8	14.3	46.7	65.7	85.6
Sociology	3	100	98.2	66.7	44.3	86.7	83.6
Art and Design	3	100	98.6	33.3	50.2	80	87.5
Music	1	100	98.8	0.0	38.9	40	81.1
Drama	2	100	99.5	0.0	40.1	70	83.6
Design and Technology	3	100	97.8	33.3	35	66.7	77.9
Geography	9	100	98.7	55.6	44.5	91.1	84
History	11	100	99	18.2	44.6	67.3	84.6
French	4	100	98.8	25	51.5	70	87.6
German	3	33.3	98.4	0.0	47.9	13.3	84.8
English/ English language	21	100	99.4	28.6	36.3	76.2	80.9
General Studies	10	100	94.7	20	31	68	73.1
Business VCE	4	42.9	88.6	0.0	20.6	17.1	60.1
Health and Social care VCE	7	100	93.2	28.6	22.3	80	63.5

Intermediate vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		Average point distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Health & social care			-		-		-

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on the English language and literature course. A Year 12 Spanish lesson was seen, but only one of three students was present. The foreign language assistant provided very effective questioning that enabled the student to expand their use of Spanish. Standards were above average.

English language and literature

Provision in English language and literature is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and positive attitudes from students help them achieve well.
- Advanced level results are close to the national average and improving.
- Good leadership makes the course stimulating and challenging for students.
- Lower attaining, Year 12 students do not always feel well supported.

Commentary

134. Advanced level English language and literature is currently taken by around 50 students. It is a popular course because results are good compared with those in other subjects and because English teaching is well regarded. Students have below average levels of attainment on entering the sixth form, but most reach or exceed their projected final grades based on GCSE results in Year 11. Results in GCE Advanced level examinations for 2003 were only just short of the national average and were notably higher than those for the previous year. Students achieved well. Work seen during the inspection was also of average standard.
135. Students are very positive in class and work hard outside lessons. They find the course challenging and a few take time to adjust from Year 11 work. They show average speaking and listening skills in class discussions and presentations. Debates can be lively and productive, as seen in a very good lesson on William Golding's 'Lord of the Flies' when students identified rhetorical devices and compared different texts. Folders usually contain substantial quantities of notes, but these are not always organised to provide an effective aid to good revision. The early written work of lower attaining students shows limited grasp of subject matter, for example, grammatical terms, and analysis can consist of little more than a list of features with no explanation. However, they make good progress and all students show in their work on Shakespeare's dialogue in 'Othello' that they have sound understanding of linguistic terminology and theories of speech. Writing is mainly accurate and responses to texts such as Huxley's 'Brave New World' are well organised, showing how much students benefit from a challenging programme of essay writing.
136. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons carefully to ensure that activities are varied and that students are fully engaged. Teachers are enthusiastic and conduct lessons at a brisk pace. As a result, students respond well and enjoy lessons. They respect teachers for their very good knowledge of the subject. Lower attaining students would appreciate more direct help in class from teachers, although all students feel that additional help is always available if requested. Few students fail to complete either Years 12 or 13. Marking is detailed and gives all students clear indications of their progress and sets them targets for improvement.
137. Good leadership and management ensure that the course is well planned to give balance and progression to students' learning. However, students would have appreciated more advance detail about the course before they started Year 12. Teachers work well with one another to provide a coherent programme for learning. Students enjoy the additional variety in lessons that arise from having two teachers. Improvement since the previous inspection is good as standards have been well maintained.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

138. Standards of literacy in the sixth form are average. Students speak competently and work well together in groups. Good focus on language in history, religious education and physical education helps students to develop their understanding of language and to write appropriately. The English language and literature course provides students with valuable support for developing their reading and writing skills. Lessons in 'key skills' help students to develop their competence in communication and study. Regular use of the school 'learning zone' by sixth form students is helping them to extend their skills in language and literacy. However, in most subjects teachers offer students only modest levels of support for developing their reading and writing competency. For example, students have difficulty interpreting technical language in biology, make spelling and grammatical errors in product design, and have unsatisfactory standards of written work in health and social care.

MATHEMATICS

Mathematics

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good; teachers demonstrate good knowledge and their practice is often effective and innovative so students work hard and achieve well.
- Relationships between teachers and students are good; teachers are prepared to give up their non-contact time to support students.
- Marking is not sufficiently rigorous in identifying underachievement with respect to students' targets, examination criteria and the scheme of work.
- ICT is not used well enough to aid teaching and learning.

Commentary

139. In 2003, standards in the GCSE AS-level mathematics examination were broadly average and students' achievement based on their overall prior attainment at GCSE was satisfactory. In 2003, insufficient numbers of students were entered for the GCSE Advanced level mathematics examination for comparisons with national standards to be made. However, all students who were entered for the examination achieved a pass grade or better. Current standards of work seen in AS and Advanced level mathematics in Years 12 and 13 respectively are broadly average and students are achieving well. Students' records are generally well organised with much work completed and elements provide a good record for revision. Year 12 students make good use of their past GCSE work to move into new areas and are well into the course. For example, they use the rules of integration and coordinate geometry well to calculate the area between two curves. In lessons, very good use is made of the interactive whiteboard to confirm students' calculations. In Year 13, students recall knowledge well and apply it confidently in class and in their written work. For example, in one lesson, students worked collaboratively on vectors in three dimensions and contributed as much to the lesson as the teacher.
140. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of the subject in their planning, presentation and discussion, although currently too little use is made of ICT to demonstrate ideas and concepts. Students work hard and relationships with teachers are good. However, student responses to direct questioning and their own questioning skills are extremely reserved, particularly in Year 12. As a result, lessons are driven by the teacher with little independent developmental work. Teaching caters for the wide range of ability in classes and meets the needs of higher attaining students.

141. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Student numbers in Year 12 have largely been maintained, although the proportion continuing into Year 13 is relatively small. Issues raised in the previous report have been addressed and improvement is satisfactory. Work is set regularly and marking is up to date, although teachers' comments particularly with respect to students' targets are infrequent. Teachers are approachable and prepared to use their time outside normal lessons to provide additional support, which is appreciated by students.

Mathematics across the curriculum

142. Discrete 'key skills' lessons are included on all students' timetables leading to accreditation at Levels 1 and 2 in 'the application of number' and students achieve well. Higher-attaining students have the opportunity to achieve Level 3 through the sixth form general studies course. Overall, numerical skills are developed sufficiently to enable all students to have access to the sixth form curriculum and make progress. The contribution of lessons to mathematics across academic and vocational courses is good, although unco-ordinated. In science, students sketch and interpret graphs of oxygen dissociation. In geography, students make good use of handling data when conducting river flow and flooding calculations. In physical education, students make good use of measuring skills when investigating the glycolysis part of energy transfer systems.

SCIENCE

The department offers AS and A-level courses in biology, chemistry and physics. There are plans to offer further courses from next September as part of the school's development as a science college. Biology was the focus of this inspection and work was sampled in chemistry and physics. In chemistry, results in 2003 were below the national average and school analysis showed they were as expected from students' standards on entry. One Year 12 lesson was observed. Teaching was satisfactory. Theory and practical work were well integrated and students worked with interest and enthusiasm. In physics, results were in line with national averages at Advanced level and below them at AS level. Again, school analysis showed results were as expected. At AS level, a comparatively high proportion did not achieve a grade, as had been predicted from their low standards on entry. These students have not progressed to Advanced level. Results were very different between the modules. One Year 13 revision lesson was observed, teaching was satisfactory and standards were below average overall. Of note is the link made between physics students and industry. Through the Royal Academy of Engineering students annually enter the Engineering Education Scheme. This year they worked with a local company to solve a practical problem of complex packaging involving computer control and pneumatics. Their solution is now in use by the company. Only two schools in Cornwall participated in this initiative.

Biology

Provision in biology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, which enables them to provide interesting and relevant explanations.
- Students highly value the help and guidance provided for them, which helps them to understand concepts.
- Teaching is predominantly by exposition and practise questions. Activities lack variety so learning is not as effective as it could be and students remain reliant on their teachers.
- Assignment and assessment arrangements are inconsistent, so students have better feedback on some topics than on others.
- Relationships between teacher and students and between students are very good so that students enjoy biology and there is good co-operation to secure learning.

Commentary

143. Results in Advanced level examinations were below the national average in 2003 as they were in 2002. Standards on entry to the course are below average, with many students starting the course with grade C at GCSE, sometimes having studied single science or a foundation course. Analysis carried out by the school shows that, overall, results were as expected for males and females.
144. Standards of work seen are well below average in Year 13 and below average in Year 12. In Year 13, students have poor recall of facts such as which substances in the body contain carbon or nitrogen. They have weak skills in graph work, for example, plotting graphs of energy needs against age using non-linear scales, marking the axes with the groups given in the table. They also have difficulty with reading texts for understanding, as they struggle to interpret technical vocabulary such as 'oxygen dissociation'. With help, their achievement is satisfactory. In Year 12, achievement is good as a result of better teaching.
145. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are good in Year 12. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which they use effectively to make explanations relevant and interesting. For example, a wide knowledge of mating behaviour was used to introduce the role and effectiveness of pheromones. Students greatly value the help and support they get when they find the work difficult, both within lessons and beyond. This particularly helps those with lowest standards on entry. Very good relationships in the classroom mean students enjoy biology and want to learn. However, the predominant teaching style is exposition followed by examination questions. Teachers talk for much of the lesson and questions to students require short answers. Students, therefore, do not develop the ability to provide more extended answers. They remain reliant on their teachers to provide information, and sometimes answers, and show little independence. In the best lessons, good questioning enables students to develop the confidence to 'have a go', both orally and in writing. For example, in a Year 12 lesson, students were asked to sketch graphs of oxygen dissociation in different circumstances and then to explain these to the rest of the group. In some topics, homework consists of writing up notes, without activities to develop understanding. Students are not clear about how well they are doing and are not aware that they need to seek the help that is readily available. In other topics, students have assignments that require them to use their knowledge, which are then annotated by the teacher with constructive feedback. Students learn better in these topics.
146. Leadership and management are good. The new head of department is an example through her teaching. She has started to monitor students' work and to address the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment. Schemes of work are not yet as well developed as in the main school, and less attention has been given to raising achievement in the sixth form.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

A single Year 13 lesson was seen. Students were working on business related projects, looking at types of data in particular. Standards were average and teaching and learning both good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

147. Students are well supported through work in general studies to develop their computing skills. Students use data logging equipment and modelling software to further their studies in science. However, such skills are not always utilised well enough by students, for example, in product design and in history. Neither do teachers always use ICT sufficiently to support teaching, for example, in mathematics. Students use computers well to support their geography coursework. Students in health and social care do not have the necessary ICT skills required for their studies.

HUMANITIES

Sociology was sampled. Advanced level results in sociology were above the national average in 2003. AS-level results have been well below the national average for the past two years, although a recent change of syllabus has been made in order to raise this level of attainment. However, in all these groups the numbers of entrants were too low for statistical analysis to be meaningful. Students' work seen during the inspection indicates that standards of attainment are average and achievement is good. Two lessons were sampled, one in Year 12 and one in Year 13. Teaching was satisfactory in one and good in the other, with some thorough planning. Teacher-led discussions emphasised the theoretical sociological framework related to the topics being studied, which enabled students to learn about the work of key researchers. However, on occasion there was too much reliance on talking to pupils rather than developing independent learning by allowing them to make their own initial deductions about case study situations.

One lesson of archaeology was sampled. Standards overall were below average, but reflected students' standards on entry to the sixth form. The teaching was excellent, indicating very clearly the teacher's love of the subject. As a result, students' learning was excellent. They showed considerable enthusiasm for the subject and made very good progress.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well.
- Excellent teacher knowledge and good use of resources lead to good learning.
- Students are not being encouraged enough to be independent learners.
- Students' attitudes to their work are very good.

Commentary

148. Advanced level results in 2003 were above the national average, which shows a considerable improvement on previous years, but AS results have been below average. There is no significant difference between the results of male and female students. Standards of work seen during the inspection are in line with expectations, and this represents good achievement for these students who did not necessarily achieve the highest grades at GCSE. Hardly any students drop out of the course once they have started, and most continue from AS to Advanced level.
149. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Students have the benefit of the excellent subject knowledge of their teachers to guide them towards understanding complex processes, as in a very interesting Year 13 lesson using the case study of Hawaii to learn about the effects of volcanic hot spots. Time is well used and the quality of resources is high. Students can analyse and present new information through diagrams, notes and essays, and homework is always an integral part of the lesson development. However, students are still very dependent on their teachers; opportunities for them to take some responsibility for their own learning are limited and they would benefit from being able to carry out more independent enquiries.
150. The department is well led and managed by the head of department. Regular assessment and personal interest in the progress of each individual student make a strong contribution to students' success and serve to keep them focused on their work. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, with constant efforts to improve the course content, which is resulting in students' better achievement.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and promotes good learning.
- Most students work hard and achieve well by the end of Year 13.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Some students in Year 12 are too passive in their approach to their learning.
- Students do not make sufficient use of ICT to support their learning in lessons.

Commentary

151. Results in advanced level examinations were below the national average in 2003, as they were in 2002. The standard of work seen during the inspection in Year 12 was a little below average. In Year 13 it was average. A small proportion of students in both years reaches the highest standards. Most students currently in Years 12 and 13 have achieved at least satisfactorily from their GCSE standards and achievement is good overall. Fluctuations in standards reflect the differing capabilities of the students opting to take the course in any year.
152. Students in Year 12 generally have sound knowledge and understanding of the topics they are studying. They understand and explain successfully the motives for actions taken in the past. Higher attainers identify possible implications of the actions and explain and interpret satisfactorily historical sources such as political cartoons. They progress satisfactorily in lessons, but they tend to be happy to let the teacher lead them and do not often initiate questions themselves. Most students in Year 13 have good knowledge and understanding. Essays written by the highest attainers are above average standard, accurate, and usually analytical. Those from the average and lower attainers are more narrative or descriptive and do not have the depth of analysis or judgements needed for the highest grades. Students in Year 13 give quite lengthy and perceptive oral answers or comments and are encouraged to do so by their teachers. Their more questioning approach to learning compared with that of Year 12 leads to good achievement overall.
153. Teaching and learning are good overall and lessons are sometimes very good. Strengths of the teaching are teachers' very good subject knowledge and good relationships with students, which create a very effective learning atmosphere. Teachers use a range of activities that both challenge and motivate students. Work is carefully marked and teachers' comments provide helpful guidance to students on how to improve their work still further. Teachers try to ensure that all students contribute to class discussions, and use questioning effectively to check what students have learned. Although teachers make good use of a range of other resources, insufficient use is made of ICT within lessons, mainly because the department does not have good ICT facilities available at all times.
154. Leadership and management are now very good. The low standards of the past two years have been investigated carefully to try to identify any underachievement. The department has implemented strategies to try to improve attainment and achievement through changing teaching and learning methods and encouraging revision techniques. Improvement has been satisfactory so far as developments need time to work through.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Current Advanced level students are achieving well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The department is well led and managed.
- There is no provision yet for religious education for those students not taking Advanced level courses in the subject.

Commentary

155. Advanced level results in 2003 were well below the national average, although all students passed the examination. There are no Advanced level students in the current Year 13, but the seven AS students, although not yet reaching average standards, are achieving well on the basis of their prior attainment. Their attitude to the subject is positive.
156. Teaching is shared by two specialist teachers, one taking the ethics paper and the other the philosophy paper. Both have very good subject knowledge and relate well to students. Lessons are very well planned and draw on a wide range of resources, whether the interactive whiteboard, textbooks, handouts or even the mini whiteboards that are adapted well to work at this level. Students are expected to work in groups, and are being trained to become better independent learners. At the moment they are willing to answer questions, but are less willing to ask questions. They are encouraged to keep detailed notes; handouts are well annotated, and used as a basis for written assignments. There is a healthy focus on key words and concepts, so crucial to this particular syllabus, and teachers place a strong emphasis on the use of the correct terminology. Thinking skills are brought out particularly well. Teachers are aware of the attainment levels of the students, but could do still more to track the achievement of individuals and raise standards further. A greater sense of urgency amongst students would also help in this respect.
157. The subject benefits by being shared between the specialist teachers and through the enthusiasm they show for the subject, which is well led and managed at this level. Resources are good and the accommodation very good. At the time of the previous inspection, religious education was not taught in the sixth form. It is still not provided for the vast majority, but there are already plans to extend the provision within the new consortium arrangements, perhaps through day conferences, which might well meet statutory requirements.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Product design, graphics with materials technology

Provision in product design, graphics with materials technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the subject is good and has identified the challenges ahead.
- Teachers are committed to establishing the course.
- Planning for the development of the course has been carefully carried out.
- Inexperienced teaching at this level has not been supported by appropriate in-service training.
- Admission of students to the course has not been sufficiently well controlled.
- Teaching time allocated to the course is below average.

Commentary

158. Previous numbers of students on the course have been so low that any statistical comparisons with national results are unreliable. Under the leadership of the present head of department, interest in the course has been revived and student numbers are rising. However, the

composition of the current AS group of 12 students is complex and entry to the course has not been sufficiently well controlled. Half are Year 12 students with appropriate GCSE results to support a course of study at this level, the remainder Year 13 students taking the subject as an additional AS level. Some of these have inappropriate background qualifications and experience and, because their reasons for being on the course are unclear, some lack a sense of direction in their work.

159. Current students are producing work of average standard. Predicted grades based on prior attainment are low, but assessment data is providing an accurate picture of students' attainment and this indicates that they are performing slightly better than expected. Based on students' below average attainment on entry to the course, this represents good achievement. Students' knowledge and practice of design methods is better than their understanding of more abstract academic topics. For example, in one lesson students had sufficient understanding of how form, function and aesthetics interrelate in product design to give satisfactory answers to model examination questions. They were also able to discuss the criteria for evaluating a product. Their understanding of the influence of the Bauhaus on 20th-century design, however, was insufficient to compile a coherent and meaningful answer. The ability of some students to write extended essays is limited. Spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors are common and their understanding of structuring an essay is limited. Coursework folders show progression since the beginning of the course. Graphic skills and presentation techniques are developing well, but there is little evidence that students use ICT to enhance their work.
160. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and, in some lessons, good. Good teachers utilise their good subject knowledge, involve students in discussion and sufficiently challenge them to extend their knowledge and understanding. For example, in one well-taught lesson the teacher's skilful computer presentation enabled students to develop a good understanding of the potential of computer-aided graphics. Learning, however, was less effective because students did not have sufficient access to computers to consolidate the knowledge. Where teaching is satisfactory, it lacks the experience, pace and the direct teaching input necessary to increase students' knowledge. No teacher in-service training has been undertaken to improve this.
161. Leadership is good and there is a clear sense of direction and commitment to succeed. As a result of this, improvement since the last inspection has been good and the subject now enjoys a higher profile throughout the school. Management of the course is satisfactory. The course is now better organised and supported by good documentation. Enrichment activities, such as off-site visits to see computer-aided design in operation, help to mitigate the lack of such facilities in school. There is no separate funding arrangement for Advanced level work and, given its high cost, this means resourcing is difficult.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

162. A Year 13 lesson of drama was seen, in which standards were average and achievement good. Good teaching and positive student attitudes marked the lesson. Teachers and students put in extra time outside school hours on the Advanced level courses. Accommodation for drama is, however, poor, and is a barrier to the further raising of standards.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

163. Physical education was the focus. A lesson of travel and tourism was seen. The work was related to market research and was very well facilitated by the teacher. Students learnt very well from a practical exercise and standards were above average.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' very good attitudes to learning help to ensure their good achievement.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Good leadership and management promote consistency in working practices.
- Academic performance data is not used well enough to meet the needs of individual students.

Commentary

164. In 2003, a very small entry at Advanced level means comparisons with national results mean little. All students passed. AS-level results are similar. Retention rates in the subject are very good.
165. Standards of work are average. Students are achieving well when their starting points are taken into consideration. All students in the sixth form have very good attitudes to learning. They find Advanced level work demanding, but interesting. They are very active in practical sessions, and listen with care and consideration to each other's views in theory work. They work well co-operatively in groups of various sizes. Students show good skills as independent learners when developing their ideas. They make good notes and build up good portfolios of work because of high expectations from their teachers. They are happy with their choice of course and feel able to gain valuable support from teachers when needed.
166. Year 12 students meet the challenges set by well planned and demanding teaching. All students have a good grasp of the factors affecting participation in sport, and can easily identify extrinsic and intrinsic factors. They have a good understanding of the technical vocabulary of the subject. Year 13 students have a good knowledge of how sport and recreation grew and developed in this country. They draw on their general knowledge and understanding of wider issues stemming from the Industrial Revolution to debate and exchange alternative views of this historical development.
167. Teaching is consistently good, and this encourages students of all abilities to learn well. The best teaching is characterised by the clarity of its objectives, which consolidate and extend previous work, and by the challenges it presents to students to take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge in their questioning and exposition. They have high expectations of their students in terms of work rate and performance, both physical and intellectual. Students respond with confidence and trust to the demands of teachers.
168. Leadership and management are good. Staff strengths are well deployed to meet the demands of the sixth form syllabus. The teaching team are energetic and are committed to raising standards. Assessments are regular and give students a clear picture of their own progress. However, assessment information could be used more effectively to inform curriculum development and the planning of teaching. This would ensure that work was better matched to the specific needs of individual students. Good accommodation and good resources for learning support the effectiveness of well planned and organised lessons.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The focus of the inspection was AVCE health and social care. The school offers both single and double award vocational Advanced level health and social care. These examination courses are taught together to students in both Years 12 and 13; lessons seen were good.

Health and social care AVCE

Provision in health and social care is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well taught by a team of teachers who teach to their particular specialisms.
- Students have achieved well in the past and continue to do so.
- Well-planned visits into the community have helped to widen students' knowledge and understanding.
- Students have a good attitude to work fostered by very good classroom relationships.
- The quality of discussions is limited to some extent by small class sizes.
- Students' ICT skills are underutilised or underdeveloped.

Commentary

169. Advanced level double award examination results in 2003 represent good achievement for three students who entered. A small group achieved well on the AVCE course in the same year. National comparisons are inappropriate when entries are low. GNVQ was also offered as a one-year course for five students who achieved well. In 2002, results were average on the AVCE course, representing good achievement for a larger group of students.
170. The AVCE group is small and a combination of Years 12 and 13 students. Current standards are below average, but when their low prior attainment is taken into account students achieve well. Students are well motivated, but some have other commitments, for example, part-time jobs, which take them away from their studies and this affects standards. Students make very good use of placements and visits into the community to deepen their subject knowledge and understanding. They are sufficiently articulate to participate in lessons, but have weak literacy skills that affect their standards in written work. Students' use of ICT to research and present their work is underdeveloped, although they do have a good understanding of an 'early years' care setting, which they have researched for themselves. Students do not have some expected skills, for example, presenting findings on graphs. Very few students drop out from the course as the majority view it as a stepping stone to future educational or career plans.
171. Teaching and learning are good and students benefit from teachers who have high expectations and a wide ranging experience between them. Work is well planned to provide a good balance of activities. The use of case studies and role play promote effective learning. Very good relationships exist and, because groups tend to be small in number, students receive a lot of individual attention, although discussion work can be limited. Students are good independent learners, but can also work co-operatively. Classroom relationships are good. Students' work is marked to examination board criteria and students receive good verbal and written feedback so that they know how to improve.
172. Good leadership and management are helping to move the subject forward. Health and social care was not reported in the last inspection report so improvement cannot be commented on.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

173. A year 12 general studies lesson was seen. It was within the scientific domain and included integrated work on key skills. Students displayed a very good understanding of how to interpret and manipulate data through the use of sampling techniques and various types of graph. They could also skim, collate and present information provided on the internet. Attitudes were excellent; teaching and learning very good.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school	4	4
How inclusive the school is		3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4	4
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	3
Overall standards achieved		4
Pupils' and students' achievement	4	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		3
Attendance	4	5
Attitudes	3	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		3
The quality of education provided by the school		4
The quality of teaching	3	4
How well pupils and students learn	4	4
The quality of assessment	3	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' and students' needs	4	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	3	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils and students	5	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' and students' views	4	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2
The leadership and management of the school		3
The governance of the school	4	4
The leadership of the headteacher		3
The leadership of other key staff	2	3
The effectiveness of management	3	4

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