

INSPECTION REPORT

CLEVEDON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Clevedon

LEA area: North Somerset

Unique reference number: 132006

Head teacher: Mr E Dolling

Lead inspector: Terence Parish

Dates of inspection: 13th – 17th October 2003

Inspection number: 259152

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: 11-18
Gender of pupils: mixed
Number on roll: 1298

School address: Valley Road
Clevedon
North Somerset

Postcode: BS21 6AH

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G Blakeman

Date of previous inspection: 12/10/98

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is designated a Language College. It has acquired several awards in recent years including a School Curriculum Award and Investors In People status. The school has developed a number of international links including teacher exchange and extended visits by pupils overseas. Most pupils come from the town of Clevedon and are white; the intake is comprehensive. Pupils are mixed socio-economically and their attainment on entry is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also broadly average; however, the number of pupils with behavioural problems has risen in recent years and is about 60 per cent of those with special educational needs. A 'base' has been provided to help manage them. The proportion of pupils who left or joined the school before July or after September in the last school year was about average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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21806	P. Swinnerton	Team inspector	Design and technology
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30518	M. Johnson	Team inspector	Art and design
31673	J. Gwyer-Roberts	Team inspector	Music
25748	R. Moyle	Team inspector	Physical education
23588	C. Ajitsingh	Team inspector	Religious education English post 16
2642	J. Bond	Team inspector	Special educational needs
13122	S. Matthews	Team inspector	Business studies Work related curriculum

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is not sufficiently effective and consequently does not give satisfactory value for money. Overall, standards of work are average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards of work in the sixth form are above average and students are achieving well. The sixth form is cost effective. However, the school has serious weaknesses in several areas of its work: there are inconsistencies in teaching which make teaching and learning unsatisfactory overall and too many pupils have unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour. Though improvements are being made and both governors and the relatively newly structured senior management team are tackling these and other issues, the current position is unsatisfactory. Whilst leadership has driven the school forwards in broad developments, such as the language college, it has been less decisive in pupil and teacher centred matters; leadership of several key curriculum areas is also unsatisfactory. Consequently leadership is unsatisfactory overall. Management is improving and better consistency in following school procedures emerging but is not yet good enough; management of several curriculum areas is also not satisfactory. Consequently management is unsatisfactory overall.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in end of Year 9 test results improved in 2003 and were above average. GCSE results for 2002 were well above average overall. However, some pupils are currently underachieving in Years 7-11.
- Pupils with special educational needs, when withdrawn for specialist support, make good progress.
- The attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils are unsatisfactory, though relatively recent initiatives, such as the 'consistency framework' are continuing the process of addressing the school's concerns about pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- National Curriculum requirements for information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 10 and 11 are not met for all pupils.
- Some teaching is unsatisfactory. In addition, otherwise satisfactory lessons are too often not planned well enough for the wide range of ability found in many classes and teachers' assessment practice is unsatisfactory in Years 7-9.
- The school has evolved since the last inspection and many aspects of community provision and language college provision are very good.

Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory overall. The school has made significant strides forwards both in local community provision and in international links through its language college status. However, whilst improvements in leadership and management have begun and are beginning to tackle issues, for example about unsatisfactory behaviour and inconsistent assessment, more rigorously, improvements have been slow to come about and are incomplete. ICT is still not effectively co-ordinated and managed; there is still no significant scheme of work for English. In addition, pupils' attitudes and behaviour have deteriorated overall and financial constraints, initially school generated, are beginning to adversely effect provision.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2000	2001	2002	2002
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	B	A	A	B
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	C	D	C	

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
For Year 11, similar schools are those with a similar proportion of free school meals (prior attainment data was not available).*

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Most pupils are achieving satisfactorily most of the time but there is underachievement related to teachers' inadequate planning or lack of knowledge, or pupils' attitudes to learning being unsatisfactory. In addition the most able pupils are too often insufficiently challenged. Standards of work in Years 7-9 are average overall and average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are above average in design and technology, geography and physical education. Standards are below average in music and in drama. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are currently achieving satisfactorily; GCSE results in recent years indicate they most often achieve well in examinations. Pupils with special educational needs, when in ordinary lessons, do not always make enough progress because of inadequate teachers' planning, lack of specialist support, or both. Pupils on school based work related courses do not achieve satisfactorily. Standards of work are average overall and average in mathematics and in science. Standards are above average in English, art and design, design and technology, and physical education. Standards are well above average in geography. Standards are below average in history and in drama.

The development of pupils' cultural appreciation is good but pupils' spiritual, moral and social development overall is unsatisfactory. Overall, pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are unsatisfactory. Pupils' attendance is good and above the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall; unsatisfactory in Years 7-9, satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and good in the sixth form. Most teachers have a good or better command of their subjects. However, too many lessons can be unsatisfactory and otherwise satisfactory lessons are too often not planned well enough for the wide range of ability found in many classes. In addition teachers' assessment practice is unsatisfactory in Years 7-9 and contributes to some underachievement, whereas assessment is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and helps GCSE results be good. Pupils do not apply themselves or work independently enough in mathematics, science, or in history in Years 10 and 11 whereas their learning is better, for example, in English, geography, design and technology and physical education. In Years 7-9, teaching and learning are good in design and technology, geography, and physical education. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning are good in English, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education, and religious education; they are very good in geography. In Years 10 and 11, teaching overall is unsatisfactory in history and in vocational work.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Language college status has enabled a wide range of languages to be offered. In Years 10 and 11, National Curriculum subjects are well represented and enhanced by a broad range of other GCSE subjects. However, the work related curriculum, provided mainly for potentially disaffected pupils is not well managed and this leads to unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Extra curricular provision is very good and has an international dimension which can broaden pupils' learning experiences. Links with parents, other schools, and colleges are satisfactory. Links with the community are good. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. Governance is satisfactory except for some issues that are not meeting statutory requirements; governors are taking an increasing role in challenging and supporting management. The leadership of key staff is variable - good work is being developed and promoted by senior managers and some heads of department and pastoral staff. However, leadership has to be considered unsatisfactory overall as there are serious weaknesses which are a corporate responsibility and leadership of several curriculum areas is unsatisfactory: English, history, ICT, and vocational work. Similarly, management is unsatisfactory overall; self evaluation is not embedded across all faculties and systems such as assessment inconsistently applied. Management is unsatisfactory in English, mathematics, history, ICT and work-related courses.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Over 200 questionnaires were received from parents. Responses to most questions were generally positive and most said their children were making progress and teaching is good. However, a significant number of concerns were raised about pupils' unsatisfactory behaviour, the quality of information given about how well their children were doing, how the school seeks the views of parents, and homework. Due to the desire of the school to be open and canvass all views, almost 1000 pupils' questionnaires were received. Whilst more than half of pupils were more often than not satisfied with the issues explored and most said it is a good school to be at, very large numbers expressed concern over (unsatisfactory) attitudes and behaviour, assessment, homework, the (unsatisfactory) attitudes adults have towards them, and how the school is run. About a quarter of sixth form students replied to their questionnaire and responses were similar to those of the 11-16 pupils. Students' views gleaned during the inspection were generally more positive and older pupils had less concern about behaviour.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to develop and improve strategies to reduce incidences of unsatisfactory behaviour and improve the attitudes of pupils.
- Tackle the reasons for unsatisfactory teaching and improve generally satisfactory teaching so all pupils learn effectively.
- Continue to develop and more rigorously apply and monitor systems, for example for assessment, so all function well and help raise attainment.
- Ensure school leadership focuses on raising standards and improving achievement.
- In the sixth form, raise standards in examinations further.

and, to meet statutory requirements: provide the statutory daily act of collective worship; ensure all students in the sixth form receive religious education; ensure all pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive all their entitlement to ICT.

THE SIXTH FORM AT CLEVEDON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provides a satisfactory quality of education and is cost effective. Standards of work are average or better in all courses that were fully inspected or sampled. While overall examination results in 2002 were a little below average, they broadly reflected the attainment on entry of students and were unduly influenced by poor performance in specific subjects, particularly business studies and psychology. Results were better in 2003 and students' overall achievement appears broadly satisfactory. The majority of students complete their courses and move on to higher education. Achievement in the present Years 12 and 13 is good. There is a good provision for students' personal development and for students with special educational needs. Since the last inspection, the school has increased its range of courses and maintained satisfactory standards. However, many pupils at the end of Years 11 choose to follow post 16 courses elsewhere and the sixth form is a little smaller than average. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Particular strengths have been developed in the 'complementary studies' programme and the involvement of students in the life of the school and the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students in the sixth form are currently achieving well but recent A-level performance indicates some underachievement in post 16 examinations.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Most students have good attitudes to work although some do not make full use of their study time outside lessons and a few do not attend regularly.
- Good support and guidance for accessing higher education is provided by tutors and higher education partners.
- Good extra curricular provision enriches learning and sixth formers have good facilities in the upper school.
- The academic, vocational, social and personal needs of students are well provided for.
- Peer mentoring provided by students for younger pupils is good.
- Links with the Connexions Service could be improved.
- The sixth form is led well.
- The statutory requirements for religious education are not met.

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	Satisfactory in English. Standards in English are average and teaching has considerably improved since the last inspection. Very good in French. Teaching and learning in French are good and students achieve well. A German lesson was sampled and provision appears similar.
Mathematics	Satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Standards of work are average. Students work hard and achieve satisfactorily.
Science	Good in Biology. In the focus subject, biology, standards have improved and are now average. Students achieve satisfactorily. Chemistry and physics were sampled; teaching, standards and achievement appear satisfactory. Psychology was sampled and found to be much better than recent examination results indicate; teaching appears good.

Information and communication technology	Good. Standards are above average. Teaching and learning are good. Students are enthusiastic and achieve well; project work seen is good.
Humanities	Good in geography, the focus subject. Teaching is good and challenging, assessment is thorough and field work is a strength. Standards are above average and students achieve satisfactorily. Law was sampled and provision appears good; it is popular with students. History was sampled and provision is satisfactory.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Good. Design and technology was the focus. Product design is well taught, standards are above average and students achieve well.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory in the focus subject, art. Standards of work are average though recent examination results have been well below. Teaching is satisfactory and students learn and achieve satisfactorily. Media studies was sampled; standards, teaching and resources appear good. Music has recently been reintroduced; provision appears satisfactory despite a shortage of resources.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	This vocational area was sampled only. Standards in leisure and tourism at GNVQ intermediate level appear satisfactory. In physical education teaching and learning seem good and students appear to be achieving well.
Business	Good. A range of academic and vocational courses is taught. Standards are average and achievement is currently satisfactory. Teaching and learning are now very good and results at A2 were well above average in 2003.
Health and social care	This area was sampled. Achievement in Year 12 appears satisfactory. All students on intermediate courses are taught together because numbers are low.
General education	The general studies course is taken by the majority of students. There are timetabled lessons and examination results are good.

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 are good overall. Although advice and guidance with regard to higher education is very good, students have found that other aspects of careers advice, involving the Connexions Service, have not been effective because of some difficulties in making interview appointments.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are good overall. Strong features include new induction procedures and the development of new systems for collecting and analysing data. There is a clear focus on improving provision so that more students join the sixth form. Development planning for the sixth form has clear priorities. Procedures have been implemented that encourage students' independence by allowing them to use some of their private study time out of school. The recent reduction in teaching time has caused some initial concern amongst parents and students but there is no evidence, at this early time in the school year, that it is adversely affecting standards.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

In the questionnaire students expressed some negative views particularly with regard to advice and guidance. However, in discussion with inspectors, students gave much more positive views and the view of the majority is that provision is satisfactory although they are concerned about some aspects of advice and guidance and the requirement to take general studies alongside their chosen academic programme. The complementary studies programme is popular and students in Year 13

believe that there has recently been a noticeable improvement in overall provision. They are especially appreciative of the quality of advice and support for entry to higher education.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AND STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards of work in Years 7-11 are average and pupils achieve broadly satisfactorily. The standard of work seen in the sixth form is above average and represents good achievement by those students. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls across the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in end of Year 9 test results improved in 2003 and are above average.
- GCSE results for 2002 were well above average overall.
- Pupils with special educational needs, when withdrawn for specialist support, make good progress but, when in ordinary lessons, do not always make enough progress because of teachers' inadequate planning, a lack of specialist support, or both.
- Though pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, there is underachievement related to some teachers' inadequate planning or lack of knowledge, or some pupils' attitudes to learning being unsatisfactory.
- Recent A-level performance indicates some underachievement in post 16 examinations, though students are currently achieving well overall.

Commentary

1. End of Year 9 test results in 2002 were average in English, mathematics and science but showed poor achievement in all three from pupils' prior attainment when they left primary school – they did not do even reasonably well compared to what was expected. End of Year 9 test results in 2003 were much better, above average, and show good achievement overall. Pupils' test results were best in science, then, mathematics, and then English. The reasons for the improvements are likely better preparation and teaching for end of Year 9 tests, following on from disappointments the previous year. There has been little difference in boys' and girls' results in recent years. The trend in the school's results broadly follows the national trend of improvement, with dips and rises in the school's progress linked to the overall ability of pupils when they start school (as indicated by other, more general, tests). Statutory targets for test performances in English, mathematics and science in 2003 were met.
2. GCSE results in 2002 were well above average if the points awarded to all subjects is considered and above average in the proportion of pupils attaining 5 or more A*-C grades. The proportion attaining 5 or more A*-G grades was average. However, each pupil enters for more than the average number of GCSEs and a better national comparison puts the school at above average overall (on points). If the results are compared with expectations based on those pupils' prior attainment at the end of Year 9 in 2000, then the proportion attaining 5 or more A*-C grades was satisfactory and the proportion attaining 5 or more A*-G grades was poor – the middle attainers effectively underachieved. GCSE results in 2003 had a lower overall points score. The overall proportion attaining 5 or more A*-C grades was similar to that in 2002, though the proportion of A*-C grades was less in both mathematics and science and particularly so in English. The overall proportion attaining 5 or more A*-G grades improved significantly and is likely to reflect better achievement, than in 2002, by that group of pupils. Prior to 2003, the results of Year 9 tests indicate some underachievement and, consequently, any improvement measured from then to GCSE results is more than likely inflated. It would be fair to say standards in 2003 GCSE examinations are above average and pupils likely achieved well overall from when they started in Year 7, though did less well than they should have done in English and in mathematics. The school's statutory targets for 2003 were exceeded for overall

average points; met for the proportion of pupils attaining at least 1 A*-G and missed for the proportion attaining 5 or more A*-C grades.

3. The school collects and analyses test and examination data well and relates pupils' prior performance to current performance to see if they are achieving appropriately. Theoretically, checks and balances pick up underachievement against academic targets. In practice this is done better in some subjects than in others. The best or most consistent teachers' analysis of pupils' performances, and consequent follow on work, is in Years 10 and 11; GCSE examinations act as a goad to teachers and pupils and sharpen the focus on achievement. Consequently achievement accelerates in those two years and is only unsatisfactory where teaching is persistently unsatisfactory.
4. In Years 7-9 standards of work are average in most subjects, above average in design and technology, in geography, and in physical education. Standards are below average in music and in drama. In Years 10 and 11 standards are again broadly average but standards in English and art and design are also now above average. Standards in geography are well above average whilst in history they are below average. Standards remain below average in drama. Overall, pupils achieve broadly satisfactorily though there is some underachievement: by more able pupils, for example in science in Years 7-9; in Years 10 and 11 by most pupils in history, by some pupils in mathematics, by pupils on vocational courses, and, in ICT, of pupils affected by non specialist teaching. Some pupils' attitudes and behaviour also deteriorate in weaker lessons and this adversely affects how well all pupils in these lessons achieve. Achievement is good in design and technology, geography (very good in Years 10 and 11) and physical education in all years and also in English, art and design, and music in Years 10 and 11. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Neither overall standards nor achievement are as good currently as those indicated by End of Year 9 test results and GCSE results in 2003; the latter are likely improved by good provision for revision and extra work as examinations approach.
5. Pupils' literacy skills, and competence in mathematics and ICT are all about average and do not impede their achievement in other subjects but how subjects reinforce, extend and raise standards in these areas varies a lot; co-ordination is just beginning in literacy, does not happen for numeracy, and is not effective enough for ICT. To further raise standards of all work, these key skills need to be paid better attention to.
6. Pupils who have weak reading and spelling skills make good progress as a result of the extra help they receive from the learning support department. These pupils make good progress in lessons when staff from the learning support department supports them. This applies to pupils withdrawn for individual work and small group work and for pupils supported in ordinary classes. They make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs) and individual behavioural plans (IBPs). They know and understand their targets and work hard to achieve them. Pupils with special educational needs make limited progress in many ordinary lessons because work is not planned and taught to meet the learning requirements of the wide ability range in the class. Pupils' literacy development in ordinary lessons is sometimes hampered by the lack of appropriate reading age text and work sheet material. There is limited use of ICT to support those with hand writing difficulties.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34.70 (33.10)	33.30 (33.30)
mathematics	36.75 (35.20)	35.30 (34.70)
science	35.73 (33.30)	33.70 (33.30)

There were 221 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	59 (56)	50 (48)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96 (94)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (97)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil	47.7 (44.9)	39.8 (39.0)

There were 212 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Sixth form

- School results in 2002 were an improvement on those in 2001, mainly because males did better: both genders had overall average results in 2002. Achievement was unsatisfactory overall. A-level standards were well below average in art and design, business studies, chemistry, English language, and history. They were below average in biology, and geography. Standards were above average in design and technology, mathematics and religious studies, well above average in communication studies and drama. Other subjects were average. About half of A-level entries resulted in standards in examinations that were below average, 40 per cent being well below average. In almost every subject where standards were below average there were too few A grades, compared to the national picture, and, more significantly, too many D grades, sometimes E grades.
- A significant number of students are taught and entered for AS General Studies; most are successful and standards in 2002 were well above average overall. Other AS grade analysis deals with rather small numbers of students; biology results were above average, business studies and English language average, chemistry below average, and other social studies and religious education well below average. Examination results for the VCE business students were also well below average.
- In 2003, results were better overall, continuing a trend of improvement from 2001. No analysis against national data is possible yet, but the school's analysis of the relative performance of subjects tentatively indicates that students in English, mathematics, the sciences, history, and psychology did not appear to achieve well enough, whereas students in business studies, design and technology, media studies, information and communications technology and physical education appear to have achieved well. Note that some subjects had small numbers of students and are not necessarily included in these observations. Overall achievement in 2003 examinations is likely to be better than in 2002.
- Nine subjects were inspected fully and standards in these reveal a better picture than recent examination results. Standards are above average in design and technology, ICT, French, geography, and English, and average in mathematics, biology, art and design and business education. Students are achieving well overall, reflecting most often good teaching, good attitudes and a substantial amount of independent learning, though this could be more consistent and involve greater effort.

Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	n/a	n/a
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	n/a	n/a
Average point score per student	230.7 (184.1)	263.3 (n/a)

There were 84 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. Figures showing the

Pupils' and students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are unsatisfactory. Pupils' attendance is good and above the national average; unauthorised absence is similar to the national average. The number of permanent exclusions is high. Development of pupils' cultural appreciation is good but overall pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is unsatisfactory. Overall, sixth form students' attitudes to school are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is good.
- Pupils' are able to experience a range of European and Eastern cultures.
- Attitudes to learning are good in the sixth form.
- Peer mentoring by students for younger pupils is good.

- The attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils are unsatisfactory.
- In some lessons, pupils' take advantage of weak teaching and their attitudes and behaviour become unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Attitudes and behaviour have deteriorated since the last inspection; the number of fixed period exclusions has almost tripled. The school says this is a positive response to poor behaviour.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year 2002/03

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1298	172	3

11. Behaviour in and out of lessons is unsatisfactory overall. Pupils mostly move around the school in an orderly manner and behave appropriately in lessons. A significant minority of pupils does not behave well; they are more difficult to motivate and need stimulating teaching to capture their interest and concentration. In lessons where learning objectives are not clear, pupils become restless and behaviour deteriorates. In some subjects, such as physical education, pupils' attitudes are very good and help them make good progress. Between lessons, lots of pupils squeeze through narrow corridors and doorways. Some inappropriate behaviour occurs such as pushing and comments of a disrespectful nature. Behaviour in the dining room is usually good and pupils queue for considerable periods good-naturedly. In the playground and field, most pupils behave well and take part in games; however, bullying does take place. The results of the recent OFSTED questionnaires and discussions with pupils reveal that a high proportion of both pupils and parents feel that bullying takes place regularly in the school. Inspection findings broadly agree with these views, though older pupils moderated their claims when spoken to. Pupils reported that incidents of name calling are not addressed satisfactorily in the school, but more serious bullying involving physical intimidation is dealt with well. Some serious incidents of bad behaviour do occur; the number of fixed period exclusions is very high. Around six pupils have been excluded each week since the start of term. The most common reason for exclusion is consistent bad behaviour. The school's 'Consistency Framework' is beginning to impact on pupils' behaviour and pupils and parents feel that its introduction has led to some improvement. However, 683 pupils, in response to the statement "Pupils in this school behave well", disagreed, 162 of those pupils disagreed strongly.

12. The school's fostering of understanding of other cultures is good. Pupils gain a wide experience of European and Eastern cultures. Visits to and from countries such as China, Germany and France have assisted in developing appreciation of the way different cultures conduct their lives. Pupils respond well to challenges such as in organising charity fund raising in Year 10 and in taking responsibility through the year and school councils. Most pupils are aware of the code of conduct that should enable them to live harmoniously with others but a significant minority show a lack of understanding of how their attitudes and behaviour affect others.

Attendance 2002/03

Authorised absence	
School data:	7.3%
National data:	7.8%

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.3%
National data:	1.2%

13. Attendance is good and well above the national median. Unauthorised absence is good and below the national median. The school feels that parents respond well to requests for reasons of absence. Although individual monitoring of pupils' absence that cause concern is satisfactory, the school does not routinely analyse attendance statistics which is unusual; most schools do. The school has plans to introduce a computerised registration in the near future to assist in producing detailed statistics to evaluate trends in attendance.

The sixth form

14. Attitudes to learning in the sixth form are generally good, students are motivated and interested in the subjects they have chosen. In the common room a friendly atmosphere pervades, students are co-operative and willingly share their views with others. Students feel that occasional bullying is still taking place usually in the form of name-calling; students seem to accept that this as normal behaviour. An exclusion of one pupil has taken place in the sixth form recently.
15. Students are willing to take on responsibility and are valuable members of the school, they volunteer to mentor younger pupils in drugs awareness and, although supervision of the fields is a paid activity, they take seriously their duties in supervising younger pupils at lunchtime. They are able to discuss moral and political issues for example in religious, personal, and social education which is part of the General Studies programme. All students work within the community, for example in playgroups or homes for the elderly, enabling them to have a different perspective on the community they live in and develop tolerance of others. The school has plans to reintroduce a sixth form listening service for victims of bullying; training is to be provided and the school hopes to have this in place shortly.
16. Attendance in the sixth form is usually good. Tutors have high expectations of attendance, including attendance during study periods. Some students do not live up to these expectations.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in most curriculum areas but inconsistencies in classroom performance mean they are unsatisfactory overall in Years 7-9, which means they are deemed unsatisfactory for the 11-16 school as a whole. The curriculum is satisfactory, particular strengths being the wide range of courses, including languages, and extra curricular provision, whilst weaknesses include the current unsatisfactory state of work related learning and ICT provision overall. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, though positive aspects such as the usefulness of the PSHE programme are tempered by not enough notice always being taken of pupils' opinions.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are all unsatisfactory overall; unsatisfactory in Years 7-9, satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 and good in the sixth form.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 121 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (2 %)	18 (15%)	47 (39%)	42 (35%)	12 (10%)	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.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 7-9, teaching is good in design and technology, geography, and physical education.
- In Years 10 and 11 teaching is good in English, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education, and religious education.
- Most teachers have a good or better command of their subjects.
- Teaching is very good in business in the sixth form.
- Too many lessons are unsatisfactory, particularly in Years 7-9 but also in Years 10 and 11. In addition, teachers’ assessment practice is unsatisfactory in Years 7-9.
- Otherwise satisfactory lessons are too often not planned well enough for the wide range of ability found in many classes.
- In Years 10 and 11, teaching overall is unsatisfactory in history and in work-related courses.
- Pupils do not apply themselves or work independently enough in mathematics, science, or in history in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

17. Most parents and pupils think that teaching is good though about a quarter of parents and pupils are not happy about homework and a third of pupils do not think their work is assessed well enough or that they are given enough guidance on how to improve it. The last OFSTED report commented on the need to match the pace of work to the differing needs of pupils and referred to weaknesses in the use of homework and the use of assessment. This inspection finds that still, too often, work is not modified to meet the needs of the wide range of ability found in most classes and assessment is not used well enough in Years 7-9 to ensure most pupils are doing as well as they can. There was not much other evidence, favourable or unfavourable, about homework though several inspectors commented on homework not being clearly identified. More commented on the inadequacy of work to challenge and extend pupils’ learning, work sometimes being mundane and relying too heavily on teacher direction and similar tasks for all. Weaknesses in teachers’ planning can be ascribed to leadership not inspiring them to do what they are supposed to do and weaknesses in management which do not ensure they do so anyway. Failure to adopt a learning and teaching strategy, for example the National Key Stage 3 Strategy, as soon as possible, has delayed consistent improvement, though some positive developments have emerged ad hoc, mainly because new teachers have brought ideas into the school, for example in English and in geography.
18. There is certainly good or better teaching too and it is pretty consistently so in geography, design and technology and physical education. The reasons for this are exactly the reasons why it is not the case in other subjects: pupils are clearly told what is expected of them; planning involves all pupils in the lesson; a variety of work is prepared; assessment is ongoing and informs pupils, and extension activities to stretch the most able are sometimes a feature, particularly in physical education. This better teaching supports good relationships between pupils and teacher and pupils and pupils – group work is often used. Better teaching emerges

in several other subjects in Years 10 and 11; a better range of work, higher expectations and better use of assessment, linked to GCSE requirements, give both teachers and pupils a focus.

19. There were unsatisfactory lessons in design and technology, French, history, ICT, mathematics, music, PSHCE, science, Spanish, and in work-related courses. All had elements of inadequate planning and most did not allow for the wide range of ability in classes. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour generally deteriorated during these lessons; occasionally they began with unsatisfactory attitudes and the teacher lacked pupil management skills and/or the work failed to capture pupils' interest sufficiently. The design and technology lesson was unusual in that the teacher clearly recognised what had gone wrong and this was linked to inadequate preparation before the lesson. The science lesson was unusual because the teacher indicated they had no interest in teaching the lesson, consequently teacher /pupil relationships were poor. The teaching of vocational related work is unsatisfactory because the content does not gel with the pupils receiving it and teachers of it are not adequately trained. Neither teachers nor pupils are content with the situation.
20. Both mathematics and science are subjects which all pupils follow. In neither do pupils learn well enough to think for themselves, or to seek out information and challenge assumptions; tasks set are too closed. In mathematics, neither are pupils productive enough and this is linked to too much mundane teaching. Those pupils who choose to study history in Years 10 and 11 have the learning weaknesses found in mathematics and in science, and also do not acquire sufficient skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject. This situation is linked to unsatisfactory teaching which fails to challenge or stimulate pupils' enthusiasm, and also to unsatisfactory leadership and management.
21. There were two excellent lessons; one in German and one in PSHCE. Features of these were the enthusiasm and high expectations of the teachers, all pupils being involved in the work, and very good use of resources.
22. Learning support staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of learning needs. Their lessons are well planned and teachers use a good range of strategies and resources, including ICT, to ensure pupils learn. Effective assessments means teachers set targets for each pupil appropriate to their stage of learning. Pupils understand their targets, know what they are trying to achieve and are involved in assessing how well they are doing. Pupils learn well because lessons go at a good pace and activities are interesting and are frequently changed. Pupils are fully involved in activities and know what they are trying to achieve. Learning is made enjoyable which means pupils concentrate well and try hard. Because relationships are very good pupils are confident to try new challenges. Clear target setting means pupils can see the progress they are making which increases their confidence and self-esteem. Lunchtime homework clubs and catch up sessions further effectively support pupils' progress. Learning support assistants contribute effectively to pupils learning in ordinary classes. Unobtrusively they prompt, remind, explain and encourage which helps keep pupils attention on what is being taught. This enables pupils to fully participate and increases their learning in the lesson.
23. The skilful management techniques of learning support staff and the high quality relationships they have with pupils very effectively support the improving behaviour of disaffected pupils. Staff expectations are high and pupils respond appropriately. Pupils' improving behaviour and personal development is supported well by being able to use the classroom at lunchtime with the opportunity to informally talk to staff.
24. In some ordinary classes, for example physical education lessons, where no additional support is available, pupils' learning needs are met well. Teachers take account of different learning needs in their lesson planning, teaching is lively and pupils are involved in a range of appropriate activities. However, in many classes lessons are planned for the class as a whole. There is little group work or variety of activity. Teaching does not motivate or capture

the interest of pupils with special educational needs well, which results in them working with limited understanding. Progress in learning is not as good as it should be.

Sixth form

Summary of teaching observed during the sixth form inspection in 48 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	13 (27%)	26 (54%)	9 (19%)	0	0	0

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

25. Most students are very positive about the teaching they get, including the quality of assessment and the encouragement to do independent work. About a third of those who used the questionnaire are less happy about the quality, or at least the regular setting, of homework. Inspectors broadly agree with their views but found little evidence, either way, about homework.
26. Nine subjects were inspected fully. Teaching is good overall, satisfactory in mathematics and in art, very good in business education. Several other subjects were sampled and notes about these are found in the summary and within the subject section of the report. One sampled subject, psychology, caused parents concern due to low results and the number of fails last year. Inspectors' comments are brought to this section of the report because of those concerns: psychology in the sixth form appears much better than examination results indicate. In a Year 12 lesson teachers' questions were carefully phrased. The teacher knows her students and how to get the best from them. Students responded well giving a range of answers, some of which were outstanding in their use of terminology and understanding of the subject material. A Year 13 "private study" lesson (no teacher present) was visited. Students were getting on well with reading case studies. They were concerned that they received little teaching much of last year and did not do well enough in several AS modules. Despite having to retake these they were unanimous in their enthusiasm for the subject and for the teaching they get. Inspectors judge that the concern should be about whether students get taught consistently rather than the quality of teaching when they do.
27. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are characterised by secure teachers' knowledge, good relationships between teachers and students, most often good assessment, and plenty of opportunities for independent work. Some features add to the quality of learning: the French assistante enables one-to-one coaching; work experience opportunities abroad broaden language skills; case studies are often used well, for example in geography; teachers' own experiences outside of teaching add another dimension, as in business; and, again in business, students' part time employment experiences are made use of.
28. Some experiences are not as good as they should be: too little use is made of ICT in both mathematics and in science; marking in mathematics is not well enough annotated and previous learning is not always used effectively in ICT.

The curriculum

The 11-16 curriculum is broadly satisfactory. National Curriculum requirements are generally met and there are a wide range of courses available in Years 10 and 11. Opportunities available for enrichment and extra curricula work are very good. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Language college status has enabled a wide range of languages to be offered.
- National Curriculum subjects are well represented and enhanced by a broad range of other GCSE subjects though some courses require additional work, out side of lesson time, to be completed well.

- Extra curricular provision has an international dimension though extra provision, such as trips and instrumental music tuition, are regarded as too expensive by some pupils.
- The work related course, provided mainly for potentially disaffected pupils, is not yet meeting their needs.
- National Curriculum requirements for ICT in Years 10 and 11 are not met by all pupils.
- The requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met.

Commentary

29. Achieving language college status has enabled the school to build on its strengths and to become more closely involved with the community, local primary schools and other schools and colleges. Languages and international cultures are very well represented in the school. Opportunities to promote language learning are continually sought after in order develop initiatives to best advantage. One positive feature benefiting pupils has been the introduction of a wider range of languages to all pupils. Year 8 pupils have taster lessons in Spanish and Italian, alongside French or German studied in Year 7. Two languages are studied up to GCSE level by more able pupils though after school teaching sessions are essential to take two full GCSE courses.
30. A link with Japan enabled some Year 8 pupils to study Japanese. This proved to be a great success; some Japanese crafts added spice to learning. A Japanese day now features as an annual event. Throughout the year there are other special events and activities. Language expertise extends to local primary schools and pupils visit the school for international days. As part of a summer school there is a two day trip to France. Graduate teachers from other countries are welcomed as part of the graduate teacher programme. This is ideal in that pupils can gain first hand knowledge about other cultures and countries and other areas of the curriculum can benefit. Adult classes are available for those wishing to learn a language or brush up language skills. Countries beyond Europe play an important part in the life of the school. Staff and students have the opportunity to learn Mandarin and there have been five visits to China. Staff are involved in link initiatives with South Africa, Kenya, Australia and Poland.
31. On average, each child follows 10.5 GCSE courses through to completion. This is higher than average for a comprehensive school; the number is typically nine. Relatively unusual subjects are offered such as sociology, psychology, and geology. Some corners are cut. For example, all pupils follow a short GCSE course in religious education. This starts in Year 9 to allow time in later years for other things; consequently the religious education curriculum in Years 7-9 is thin. A dual award health and social care course is being taught in half the recommended time; the school feels this is reasonable but it has not been running long enough for inspectors to form a judgement. All pupils follow GCSE in Business Communication Systems; this has limitations as National Curriculum requirements for ICT are not met by it. Work in ICT in other subjects is supposed to cover the gaps but this is uncertain; pupils' experiences are not recorded or mapped – recent difficulties with leadership of ICT have not helped matters and provision of ICT in Years 10 and 11 has not markedly improved since it was criticised in the last inspection. There is no special in school provision for the most able pupils or pupils who are particularly gifted or talented; no 'express' classes or early provision of advanced courses, for example. Whilst such provision is not a requirement, some signs of it are typical in large specialist colleges.
32. Pupils receiving learning support do not find the current work related course of much interest and many have poor attitudes to that aspect of their work. The course has not been well prepared for, staff have not been sufficiently trained and college courses to support the course are limited. Although the learning support department has worked hard to extend the range of work experience placements, community placements and college links, the overall co-ordination of provision for this group of Year 10 and 11 pupils is not adequate to maintain their interest in learning. This means they are not as motivated or challenged to achieve as well as they could. These pupils follow a single GCSE science option, rather than the dual

award followed by their peers. They are not as successful in it as pupils taking this course nationally and the school has recently sought to find examination accreditation that is more appropriate.

33. The school provides a very good range and quality of activities to support pupils' learning outside the school day. The overall participation rate of pupils is good. Daily and weekend, individual and team sporting activities are very good and a high proportion of pupils participate. Many pupils compete at inter-school, area and county levels and some, nationally. Drama productions are well supported; activities in art and music are satisfactory. The curriculum is enhanced by field trips, visits to museums and theatres and the contribution from visitors, including outside agencies. Year 7 and Year 9 pupils' residential camps are popular and provide good opportunities for team building. GCSE examination revision classes in the spring term and regular homework clubs, offer pupils opportunities to reinforce their learning. Pupils in all years are very supportive of national and local charities.
34. Staffing is satisfactory overall. All teachers are subject specialists but there are occasions when teachers teach outside their specialism and this can sometimes lead to weak, sometimes unsatisfactory, teaching. Non-specialist teaching occurs in media studies, ICT, religious education, and in vocational education. Personal social and health education, including citizenship, is taught by a core team with varying levels of skill ranging from unsatisfactory to excellent. There is no head of history which contributes to unsatisfactory provision in that department. There are large mixed ability classes in many subjects containing a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs; the number of learning support assistants available to work with teachers is low and this reduces the quality of learning that might take place otherwise. This situation is linked to the school's financial debt.
35. Accommodation is satisfactory overall but has significant shortcomings. The building is old and constantly in need of repair; some furniture is also in a poor state of repair, for example in mathematics. Some teaching areas are too cramped for some current class sizes, particularly the large groups recently created in Year 9. Subjects which involve practical activities like art and design, science, ICT, music and design and technology are most affected. The school hall is too small for the numbers of pupils in the school and has to have multiple uses; for dance, as a dining hall and for restricted assemblies. The larger sports hall has to be used for many purposes apart from sport and its use is restricted during examinations. The accommodation for vocational subjects is not well suited to pupils' needs or for the range of activities.
36. The current level of resources is satisfactory for the present but departments are feeling the pinch of financial constraints. Capitation is low and restricts the ability to replace old, worn out and ageing equipment, for example in ICT and in design and technology. In music there is a shortage of funding for consumables. If resources remain at the current level they will likely be inadequate in around a year's time.

Sixth form

Curriculum provision is **satisfactory** with some good features. Accommodation and resources for the sixth form are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- General studies is taken by most students and the complementary studies programme is extensive and very well planned.
- Good extra curricular provision enriches learning and sixth formers have good facilities in the upper school.
- The range of AS and A2 subjects is extensive and there are some vocational courses though these are often taught as combined year or option groups.
- The statutory requirements for religious education are not met.

Commentary

37. The curriculum is satisfactory with a number of good features. It is designed to meet the needs of sixth form students and reflects the schools open policy for admission, although only a limited number of vocational options are offered. The range of academic courses is extensive although some teaching groups are small, for example in languages. Three GNVQ intermediate courses are available but students are taught as one group because of the relatively small numbers taking leisure and tourism and health social care. AVCE business studies is offered but Years 12 and 13 are taught together. This improves the cost effectiveness but has an adverse effect on the achievement of some students.
38. Links with local business and industry are good and some students benefit from extended work placements. Most students take general studies and this extends their knowledge and skills well. It has a religious and spiritual element within it but is not taken by all students. Religious education in the sixth form does not meet statutory requirements.
39. Overall, the range of enrichment opportunities provided in the sixth form is good. Community work provides many opportunities for students' personal and social development. Many students support in primary, infant and special schools; become trained peer counsellors; and are involved in environmental group work. The International Conference (whole day) provides all Year 12 students with opportunities to develop their political understanding.
40. Accommodation for the sixth form is satisfactory. Students have a comfortable common room and a study room with computers for their use. Their lessons take place throughout the school and rooms used are appropriate for sixth form use. Resources are satisfactory with students having adequate resources and access to the library, careers and computer rooms.

Care, guidance and support

Overall, the schools provision for the care it gives to its pupils and students is satisfactory.

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is satisfactory; some subject areas need improvements. Guidance for pupils in helping them to understand how well they are developing is satisfactory overall. The school satisfactorily seeks pupils' views, for example the school sought the views of all pupils and students prior to the inspection taking place. Many pupils' views were negative and the school disputes the validity of some questions and wonders how much account should be taken of them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The School Council, Year Council, and Students' Union provide vehicles for pupils' and students' views.
- The personal, social and health education programme helps pupils protect themselves.
- Good support and guidance for accessing higher education is provided by tutors and partners.
- A counsellor is available to provide pupils and students with guidance.
- Good relationships exist between students and tutors.

- Appropriate guidance is not consistently given to pupils, particularly in Years 7-9, on how to improve their performance.
- A whole school policy on the use of the Internet is not in place though staff are informed about safe access.
- Arrangements for pupils to have a member of staff to whom they can talk about problems are in place but are not always successful.
- Links with the Connexions Service could be improved.

Commentary

41. Child protection procedures are adequate and the school follows local area guidelines. The designated person for child protection, who has received annual training, works closely with the heads of year; the school plans to provide whole school training as this hasn't taken place recently. Through the programme for personal, social and health education, the school teaches pupils how to protect themselves; the local community police officers play an active part in instructing pupils on personal safety. When necessary, the school works with many agencies to ensure the welfare of pupils who are a concern.
42. Procedures to ensure pupils' welfare and safety are satisfactory overall. First aid and fire prevention procedures are appropriate. A co-ordinator with responsibility for ensuring pupils' welfare provides counselling and guidance for pupils and is available most days in school. Risk assessments on school visits and in most subjects are in place. Some areas of accommodation require renovation and extensive areas of the buildings are in urgent need of new window casements. In some subjects, such as design technology, equipment needs updating or replacing to protect pupils from dust. Information on safe access to the Internet is available to staff but a whole school policy on Internet access is not yet in place.
43. A very high number of pupils and a fair proportion of students completed the recent OFSTED questionnaires. The responses highlighted that a significant number of pupils did not agree that there is an adult in the school that they can talk to; nearly half of the pupils did not agree that the staff treated them fairly and with respect. Discussions with pupils revealed that they felt that in academic subjects, they are able to request help and support is always given. However, inspectors found that teachers' use of assessment systems, particularly in Years 7-9, are a weakness and do not provide the support pupils need in identifying areas for development or in producing measurable targets for improvement. Pupils did not feel the school's procedures for monitoring bullying were helpful and that staff did not always take them seriously when they report incidents of name-calling. Younger pupils confirmed to inspectors that bullying was a problem and that questionnaire responses were accurate. The school arranges personal mentoring for pupils twice a week in form period at the end of the day. Individual pupils are able to speak to tutors and discuss any problems they are experiencing. In practice, the use of this time is often ineffective, the discussion is often cursory and the remainder of the form are given an early finish to the day. Some forms complete registration and occasionally finish early if the tutor has other duties. Tutor time was at the beginning of the day at the time of the last inspection: inspectors criticised the poor use of it then too.
44. A planned programme of careers education takes place systematically within citizenship lessons in Years 9 and 11. The school has a careers co-ordinator who works closely with the Connexions Service which has an advisor in the school on two days per week. Advice is available on the options for pupils in Year 9 with more specific guidance in Year 10 on careers. In Year 11, guidance is available for post 16 choices. Links exist with local businesses to enable pupils to experience a working environment.
45. Pupils are able to express their views through the year councils, from here, pupils are able to elect two representatives to the school council, and pupils feel that the school council is valuable and that it is a vehicle for their voice in school.

Sixth form

46. Tutors deal with child protection issues sensitively and the close relationships and knowledge of each other enables students to be aware of problems other students have.
47. Good links with the college of further education and the involvement of the institutions of higher education provides valuable career mentoring for students. Careers advice and guidance continues to take place throughout the sixth form in the general studies programme. Information on the Internet, visits to Birmingham University and from staff at Bristol University and realistic

practical information on funding and student loans, enable students to make informed choices on their futures.

48. A good proportion of students who replied to the inspection questionnaires had negative views on some areas of the school's provision. Discussion with the students revealed that they did not realise that the questionnaires would be analysed and that some would answer some of the questions differently. Nearly half of the students who replied felt that they did not have helpful advice on what they should study in the sixth form. Students consulted during the inspection felt that the school provided guidance but were unhappy with the provision of the Connexions Service.
49. The student union provides an avenue for students to voice their views; debates on topical issues ensure that students are able to express their views on wider issues. Good relationships between tutors and students enable the students to mature with confidence; they are able to communicate their concerns and opinions in a more relaxed atmosphere, knowing that their views are valued.

Partnership parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, other schools, and colleges are satisfactory. Links with the community are good. Some parents' views of the school such as behaviour have deteriorated since the last inspection. Information to parents about the school and the progress and standards of pupils is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Arrangements for parents to speak to staff and to voice complaints are good.
- The school has sought the views of its parents in its own bi-annual questionnaires.
- The school is a good resource for the community.

- Some parents feel that communication with them could be improved.
- Some parents are not happy with information provided and they feel they are not well informed about pupils' progress.

Commentary

50. The response by parents to the inspection questionnaire, compared to parents' responses at the last inspection, show that parents' views of the school are broadly similar in most areas. Parents' views on how well pupils behave and how well parents receive information on progress are not as positive. Inspection findings agree with parents that behaviour is not satisfactory.
51. Parents receive interim progress reports and annual progress reports; the information given satisfactorily meets national expectations. Information about the curriculum taught is interesting to parents, but would better assist them in helping their children in their work if it was available earlier in the year. Most reports include the standards achieved by pupils and a brief statement on areas for improvement, but a more specific target for pupils to achieve would enable pupils and parents to have a clear indication of the focus to aim for.
52. The governors' annual report to parents is a good quality document giving some well-written overviews of governors' work; information on the arrangements for pupils with disabilities has not been included. The prospectus is available to new parents; some of the requirements that should be in the prospectus are within a useful informative booklet for parents who have decided their child will attend the school. In response to parents' requests for more information on the school a monthly newsletter is now in place; the first one is available to parents. Pupils have well constructed diaries to record relevant information for themselves and for parents to record their views, but use of the diaries is variable throughout the years and depends on how effectively they are monitored by teachers.

53. The school has clear avenues for parents to speak to staff. A survey showed that 80 per cent of parents have access to a computer; e-mail addresses are available for parents to contact the school, although at present there have been problems with the system. An open door policy to allow parents to meet with staff is in place. For parents who cannot manage to telephone during the day or request a meeting with a member of staff an answering service with a link to heads of year is available. The school endeavours to reply within twenty-four hours although some parents feel this isn't achieved in practice; a quarter of the parents who replied to the inspection questionnaires feel that the school does not take their views or concerns into account.
54. The exchange of information on pupils with its local primary feeder schools is satisfactory. Year 6 pupils visit to enable them to become familiar with the staff and surroundings. Year 5 pupils work with the modern languages department and these pupils also appreciate the international food tasting days. The mathematics department is also active in the local primaries. Activities take place in the summer holidays for pupils in Year 6 who are transferring to the school; a Japanese activity day ensures future pupils enjoy diverse activities such as kite making and origami. Older pupils are given information on sixth form providers and courses available to them in the local area, including courses the school's own sixth form delivers. However, a high proportion of student replies in the recent questionnaires show that students feel that they did not receive helpful advice on what they should study in the sixth form. In the sixth form students visit universities and speakers and staff visit the school to talk to them of higher education. The head of year delivers useful information on the practicalities and realities of university life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. Governance is satisfactory except for some statutory requirements that need addressing. Governors are taking an increasing role in challenging and supporting management. It is because governors are supporting actions to improve and move the school forwards, for example through the 'consistency framework' that the school does not require special measures. Due to unsatisfactory aspects of the main school, the leadership of the head teacher is unsatisfactory, though his roles in supporting and maintaining community provision and in promoting the international dimension of the language college are very effective. The leadership of other key staff is variable and some good work is being done by the senior management team, some heads of department and pastoral managers. However, leadership has to be considered unsatisfactory overall as there are serious weaknesses which are a corporate responsibility and leadership of several curriculum areas is unsatisfactory: English, ICT, vocational, and history. Similarly, management is unsatisfactory overall; self evaluation is not embedded across all faculties and systems such as assessment, self evaluation and monitoring are inconsistently applied.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.
- The school has evolved since the last inspection and many aspects of community provision and language college provision are very good.
- Relatively recent initiatives, such as the 'consistency framework' are continuing the process of addressing the school's concerns about pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- Though rather late in the day, the National Key Stage 3 strategy is now being taken on to help improve teaching and learning.
- The deficit budget is being managed well – the school appears on track to remove the deficit in the agreed time – but inadequate funds are beginning to erode the quality of educational provision.

Commentary

55. Governors are committed to the school and work hard on its behalf. They are aware of weaknesses in provision, for example within English, ICT and history, and have worked with the

head teacher and other managers to reduce problems. Financial restrictions caused by many factors, including high staff costs and the relatively small but significant deficit the school got into several years ago, hinder some solutions. For example, staff numbers cannot easily be increased, actions instead have had to be taken to reduce curriculum time, increase class sizes, or not advertise, for example, for a head of history. Leadership of English has been of concern since at least the time of the last inspection. Though governors have enabled the school to work around this problem through some judicious appointments they have not yet resolved it completely. Weaknesses in overall school leadership and management were also identified at the last inspection. Governors are now working with the support of the local education authority to address these or similar weaknesses. Governors foster openness in the school and encourage anyone with a genuine interest and connection to attend meetings where they can have an opportunity to present any problem or grievance. Such openness led to the school adopting both the pupils' and students' optional OFSTED questionnaires. Almost all pupils participated. The governors enable almost all statutory requirements to be well met and their annual report to parents is a good quality document.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,064,697	Balance from previous year	-170,618
Total expenditure	4,063,171	Balance carried forward to the next	-173,292
Expenditure per pupil	3,157		

56. Language college provision is reported on in the curriculum section whilst judgements on community provision follow on from this section. Both areas are successful, with the caveat that more needs to be done to increase the number of students following A-level courses in modern languages. The head teacher led the submissions for community and language college status and his enthusiasm maintains the unique international links the school enjoys. He is adept at getting financial support from the British Council to help finance such things as teacher exchanges and pupils' visits abroad. He is also successful in picking up other funding streams, for example to pay for the new bike sheds and rebuild sports changing facilities. However, financial errors several years ago resulted in a relatively small but significant financial deficit which has been hard to address. Changes have had to be made to reduce staffing levels, which were generous, and to increase some class sizes, contributing to some unsatisfactory teaching. The financial manager in place when the deficit was identified did a very good job unpicking the ramifications of it and the current manager continues with sound financial control.
57. The head teacher has in some ways looked outwards too much. Some issues which have concerned the school, for example the attitudes and behaviour of a significant minority of pupils, have been tackled too slowly. The 'base' for potentially disaffected pupils began improvements to provision, a different approach has been tried during the last year; the 'consistency' framework is beginning to address the contributory causes of poor attitudes rather than dealing with the outcomes. Such a framework is also a tool to ensure staff are reminded of and comply with laid down rules and procedures. An indication that such a reminder is necessary is the continuing inconsistency, by teachers, in the use of assessment procedures; assessment is unsatisfactory in Years 7-9, as is the insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning which contributes to some unsatisfactory practice. Neither has the curriculum moved sufficiently with the times. It is acknowledged that a significant minority of pupils need a different curriculum and a modified one is provided but not managed satisfactorily. And, though the school acknowledges too much teaching is 'flat', methodology such as the National Key Stage 3 Strategy is only just being considered; where teachers are using it, it is because they have brought the ideas from elsewhere. Long term planning is not sufficiently focused on teaching, learning and standards of work. The weaknesses outlined in this paragraph have been identified, quite well by the school prior to the inspection. For example, a Key Stage 3 strategy manager has recently been appointed and is part of the extended leadership group which

brings together a broader raft of expertise and ideas; assessment and marking is amongst a raft of systems under review.

58. The head teacher and senior managers provide good role models around the school and take on board almost the sole staff responsibility of monitoring the site at lunch times. This task is apparently becoming a burden for managers in many schools as teachers do not have to do it, though some continue to do so. In this school it means large areas of the very large site have infrequent monitoring at lunchtime. It is likely that any incidents of poor behaviour go unnoticed except by those immediately concerned. The school has recently begun employing sixth formers as supervisors; innovative if unusual. Inspectors noticed that they take their work seriously.
59. Though assessment is inconsistently used by teachers, they are provided with a full set of assessment data and significant analysis of it to help them do their work. The school is increasingly using this data to help it review its work. New staff are well inducted into the school though some express concerns at the likelihood of continuing professional development; the school's finances do not allow for much, though it is doing some training in-house.
60. The learning support department is well organised and managed. The department uses a range of data, for example from regular assessments of pupils reading and spelling ages, to evaluate its work and determine any changes required. The work of all staff, including learning support assistants, is monitored and appraised by the head of department, which results in appropriate continuous professional development. Pupils who have a statement of special educational need have their specified needs met; annual reviews are well organised and managed. Pupils are clear about staff expectations of their work and behaviour and staff provide good role models for them. Guidance on strategies and materials for teachers to use in ordinary lessons, for both learning and behavioural needs, is regularly provided. However, the school is not rigorous in monitoring how well teaching and learning in ordinary classes meet the full range of ability needs or how effective learning support is. While a wealth of data is gathered on accredited course work results, this data is not well used to identify whole school development priorities for pupils with special educational needs. There are insufficient criteria for budget allocation to the learning support department and too little monitoring of subjects and faculties to check spending on learning support.
61. The deployment of available learning support assistant time is appropriate and effective. However, the number of hours available is small for a school of this size. Many large mixed ability range classes do not receive any support. This limits the quality of learning for some pupils. Since the last inspection the quality of IEPs has improved and good quality IBPs are now in place. The range of community placements and work experience placements has increased. The department has a wider focus and the range of support has been extended. The learning support department now uses ICT effectively to provide up to date information to staff.

Sixth form

Leadership and management are **good**. The recently appointed head of sixth form has a clear agenda for change and development. His deputy is very experienced and well established in the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Roles and responsibilities are clear and ensure efficient management.
- The academic vocational, social and personal needs of students are well managed.
- Documentation is easily accessible and provides good information for staff and students.
- Assessment data is well managed and used.

- Raising aspiration and attainment are clearly high priorities.

Commentary

62. The head of sixth form provides an effective service to students and has a clear strategic overview of the sixth form, providing firm leadership and ensuring good quality links with neighbouring schools. Assessment data is managed and used well.
63. Due to school financial pressures changes have been made to subject timetables that have involved a reduction in teaching time. This initially caused parents and students concern but any issues seem to be now resolved well and students are generally content with the quality of provision. The complementary studies programme extends the experience of students by providing a wide range of option choices; the deputy head of sixth form manages this very effectively.
64. Admissions requirements are very clear. Students have the opportunity to change courses if they find that they have chosen the wrong subject and this is managed well. Though students were generally critical of advice in their questionnaire answers, students believe that there has been recent noticeable improvement in advice about subject choice and in the general management of the sixth form. Students believe that advice about higher education is particularly good. Booklets on the academic and vocational courses, procedures in the school, study skills and careers advice are clear and comprehensive. There is an induction programme that prepares pupils in Year 11 for transfer into higher-level work and early in Year 12 students are invited to take up the induction challenge that involves teamwork and problem solving during a well planned outdoor activity.
65. The school has introduced a new system for private study that allows students to take some private study periods at home. This is carefully monitored and is popular with students who feel that they should have more opportunity to study independently. A few students did indicate their peers might take advantage of such time for other purposes.
66. The Sixth Form Union gives the students who participate in it a voice and a real influence within the school. They participate in planning social events for the student body and in improving the day to day running of the common room. Students are also very involved in the life of the school through the complementary studies programme and recently have begun to take paid responsibilities for pupil supervision at lunchtime. This is managed well, though it is an unusual feature; inspectors have not come across any other school that pays students to supervise younger pupils. Paying students to be cleaners is very common and students in Clevedon are keen to get the work.
67. Governors understand the potential for development of the sixth form and the need to keep a proper balance to ensure that provision is cost effective given that some teaching groups are very small. The link governor visits frequently and monitors developments well. Governors do need to consider the provision for religious education in the sixth form as not all students take the general studies course and, consequently, the legal requirement to ensure all students participate in a course of religious education is not met.

Example of outstanding practice

How a specialist language college can expand cultural understanding

Countries beyond Europe play an important part in the life of the school. Staff are involved in link initiatives with South Africa, Kenya, Australia and Poland. Staff and students have the opportunity to learn Mandarin and there have been five visits to China. Another link with Japan enabled some Year 8 pupils to study Japanese. This proved to be a great success; some Japanese crafts added spice to learning. A Japan day now features as an annual event. As part of a summer school there is a two day trip to France. Graduate teachers from other countries are welcomed as part of the graduate teacher programme. This is ideal in that pupils can gain first hand knowledge about other cultures and countries and other areas of the curriculum can benefit. Adult classes are available for those wishing to learn a language or brush up language skills

COMMUNITY PROVISION

Community provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good co-ordination of provision.
- Resources and accommodation are used well.
- A wide range of people and organisations take advantage of the provision.
- Language college status helps other local schools.
- Students interact well with the community.

Commentary

68. The school has produced a community development plan in response to its successful specialist language status bid. The school's provision for the community is well organised by the school's co-ordinator. The school is the main provision for adult courses in the area and is used extensively during the day and evening. Good use is made of the community ICT room. Aromatherapy and jewellery are some of the wide selection of courses available in the evenings. Parenting skills have proved popular in the past and a plan to introduce a similar course is in progress now. The community makes good use of the recently refurbished sports centre and its outside facilities in the evenings and weekends. A wide range of other services uses the school at weekends from North Somerset Music Service to a local church who conducts its services there. Frequent use is made of the conferencing facilities by organisations such as the local authority, the police and businesses such as Comet. A shared ICT technician between the school and its primary partners ensures the primaries benefit from a service the school provides. The students in the sixth form all take part in community education, working in special schools, homes for the elderly and local playgroups.

WORK RELATED LEARNING

Provision of work related learning is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Arrangement for work experience and links with local businesses and colleges are good but there are not enough places.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the vocational area taught but teaching of 'the skills for working life' course is unsatisfactory.
- There are not enough learning support assistants.
- Pupils' computer skills are being developed but the base room used by college link students has no useable ICT resources.
- Individual pupils with special educational needs are achieving very well but the attitudes, attendance and behaviour of a significant number are too often unsatisfactory because the

curriculum is unsuitable for them.

Commentary

69. The vocational programme is relatively new and until this year had only involved lower attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs or potentially disaffected pupils who were at risk from exclusion.
70. Provision is unsatisfactory because of the limited range of vocational options, lack of resources and the deficiencies in teaching of the 'skills for working life' course. Pupils have benefited from work experience and links with local colleges but there are only a limited number of places available and the range of vocational areas is limited. Individual pupils with special educational needs or challenging behaviour have achieved well, especially in their work placements. The attitudes and behaviour of many means that they fail to do as well as they should but this is in part because teaching, learning and the curriculum are not matched to their needs.
71. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. Teachers do not have the skills to teach the course. Staffing problems have resulted in support teachers for special educational needs, rather than vocational education teachers, having to teach the skills course without adequate training or resources. Pupils have to move to computer rooms because their base room is inadequate and in some lessons there is no learning assistant to provide essential support. Pupils on the college link course follow the 'skills for working life' course and also a GCSE programme which includes single award science; this course is inappropriate and pupils do badly in it. The school is seeking another course. Individual pupils who follow a curriculum involving more work experience, and less time in school, are progressing well, but for many the academic programme is unsuitable. This is affecting their attitudes to college and to work placements.
72. The new health and social care vocational GCSE is being taught well and pupils enjoyed a lesson involving monitoring physical activity. This course leads to two GCSE's and is open to all pupils. However, it is being taught in the time generally provided for a single GCSE although many of the pupils have identified special educational needs; the school considers this satisfactory provision, inspectors do not, though these are early days.
73. The on-going management of the vocational and work related curriculum is good. Careers, special educational needs and vocational staff work well together. The two -week work experience for all pupils in Year 10 is very beneficial as are placements for individuals in Year 11. However, overall leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The school does not have a coherent vocational or work related curriculum and it is failing to meet the needs of these pupils satisfactorily. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory only in that there is more provision now than then.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and results are in line with national averages by Year 9, and above average by Year 11.
- Achievement is good, particularly in Years 10 and 11, because of good teaching.
- Assessment is not used sufficiently to devise suitable tasks for pupils of varying abilities in Years 7-9.
- Subject leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

74. Standards of work in Years 7-9 are average. Test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were average in comparison with schools nationwide but were well below those found in similar schools. Results for 2003 show a better picture, standards were above average. Overall, pupils achieved satisfactorily in their tests and the proportion attaining Level 6 was higher than might be expected. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average; GCSE examination results in 2002 confirmed this picture, although English results were relatively low compared with those of other subjects in the school. Nevertheless, a higher percentage of pupils, both boys and girls, achieved grades A*-C in English than was the case nationally, and a considerably higher percentage achieved these grades in English literature. Provisional results for 2003 show a similar pattern for English results but the proportion of A*-C grades fell and is likely to reflect poor achievement by more able pupils. Over 90 percent achieved the higher grades in English literature, although only a third of pupils in the year, and only 8 boys, were entered for this subject – others took media studies instead. The standards currently being attained by pupils in Year 11 represent good progress over the time they are at the school. Achievement is satisfactory at the end of Year 9, but good by Year 11.
75. The good achievement is due to good teaching overall: no unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection, and many were good or better. There is a good range and variety of experience amongst the teaching staff; all have good subject knowledge and good teaching skills. Learning support staff are used in some lessons, but the provision is thin given that all teaching groups contain pupils of differing abilities. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7-9. Teachers plan good lessons and manage their classes well, although insufficient attention is given to the differing needs of the wide range of abilities that are found in each class. Pupils tend to be set the same tasks, with little extra support, although careful seating planning allows pupils to support each other to some extent. Better learning takes place in Years 10 and 11, partly because the examination syllabuses give a structure to the curriculum that is less well defined in the first three years. Pupils produce more writing of length and quality, and respond to the high expectations of their teachers. They are made sufficiently aware of the standards they are reaching and what they must do to improve.
76. The subject, however, is not led and managed satisfactorily. Tasks are delegated, but the faculty does not always function as a team. Relations with senior staff are less than amicable, and decisions made by the head of English have been overruled by senior management, for example the policy of only allowing a minority to take English literature GCSE. Problems over the recruitment and retention of staff last year stemmed from the inability of the faculty head

and line manager to co-operate. There is low morale amongst some teachers, who do not always get the support they need. Schemes of work have only featured fairly recently in the thinking of the subject leadership, and are still not particularly detailed. Allowing staff to develop their own approaches, in theory, allows scope for individuality, but in practice it is leading to rather traditional approaches and little innovation, particularly in Years 7-9 by some teachers. Teachers need more guidance, for instance, on the preparation of differentiated tasks for their mixed ability classes, based on a rigorous assessment of needs. Recent strategies for pupils in Years 7-9 have not been embraced with any enthusiasm. A recent change of examination board, however, has been made, based on a careful assessment of the capabilities of pupils.

77. Not all the weaknesses in subject leadership mentioned in the previous inspection report have been addressed sufficiently. But the main improvement in the subject is that the unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. The present good teaching is leading to higher standards and improved results. Consequently improvement is good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

78. The previous inspection report indicated that there was no whole school approach to the teaching of literacy. This remained the case until early in 2003, when a literacy co-ordinator was appointed and an audit undertaken. It emerged that literacy strategies were being undertaken by most departments, although approaches were inconsistent. All departments use key words, in one way or another, and most use writing frames (worksheets with prompts to encourage good writing). Few had incorporated literacy needs into their schemes of work. It was agreed that in general more work was needed on improving writing and spelling. Inspectors would concur with this judgement.
79. The co-ordinator has drawn up an action plan, which anticipates work being done in these areas. Examples of good practice will be shared, and a "Word Week" is planned for this term. A "Literacy Week" is planned for next term. It is hoped to introduce a literacy page in homework diaries and a literacy focus in some of the tutor times, along with literacy support leaflets. It has not yet been decided whether a separate literacy working group will be set up, or whether this will happen under the umbrella of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, although the former would clearly be more desirable.
80. Inspectors reported that literacy standards in their subjects were about average. A more focused approach to language and literacy, however, is needed in order for standards to improve. The co-ordination that is now in place, however belatedly, is a step in the right direction and deserves the support of all staff.

Modern languages

French, German, Italian and Spanish are the languages currently taught in school. No Italian or Spanish lessons were seen in Years 7 to 9 in the week of the inspection. In Years 10 and 11, French, German and Spanish were observed. Pupils will be entered for Spanish for the first time this year.

French, German and Spanish

Provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is strong leadership and management providing support and guidance for a committed team.
- The range of languages offered is wide.
- There are established links abroad, which enhance cultural experiences.

- There are pockets of underachievement, mainly as a result of some unsatisfactory teaching.
- Pupils are not involved in target setting, particularly in Years 7-9.

Commentary

81. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate average attainment. Standards of current work in Years 7-9 are average. Results over a number of years in French and German at GCSE level show a rising trend. In 2002, the proportion of pupils attaining an A* - C grade in French was well above average; whilst in German results were broadly in line. In both languages the proportion of the two highest grades was well above average for both boys and girls. In 2003 there was a dip in results in both languages, with fewer A*- A grades. One contributory factor is the fact that some pupils were entered for their second language, where teaching time is limited and involves taught sessions after school. Pupils achieve satisfactorily across all years.
82. In Years 7-9, pupils are able to understand the spoken language and most answer confidently. Good progress was made in an all boys high attaining German class in Year 9; pupils' responses were brisk and there was a degree of competitiveness throughout. The strategy to improve boys' performance by having some all boy sets appears to be working on the whole. Listening skills are well developed and pupils know how to pick out key words and phrases for answers. Grammar is consolidated mainly through written work and some pieces of imaginative writing were seen, including poetry and descriptive passages. Pupils have the opportunity to reinforce their learning using a computer programme, which also helped to improve their pronunciation. A lower ability French class had the advantage of additional support by a linguist, which resulted in good progress for those pupils.
83. In Years 10 and 11 standards are variable but broadly average. In some classes, Spanish in particular, pupils' achievement was limited by lack of motivation and inattentiveness. An all girls Spanish group, by contrast, made good progress and quickly learned difficult vocabulary via a variety of tasks. These included whole class repetition and memorising, which were made fun. In a Year 11 all boys' French class, work for the oral examination was well under way and pupils spoke confidently and fluently as a result of very good questioning techniques. Coursework is an important component of the GCSE examination and ICT was used effectively in a German lesson as part of preparation, alongside writing frames.
84. Teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some unsatisfactory teaching and also some good and very good teaching. In the best lessons the foreign language is used by the teacher throughout and there are high expectations, resulting in at least good progress. Resources are interesting and well chosen and a variety of methodology, plus brisk pace results in well motivated pupils. In weaker lessons, achievement is hampered by unsatisfactory behaviour and poor rapport between teacher and pupils.
85. Homework is regularly set and marked. Teachers adapt and prepare a variety of worksheets. However, there is scope to develop worksheets of a more differentiated nature, so that all pupils are helped to do their best. Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' work, but pupils are not always fully aware of the standard they are working at, and would benefit from being involved in target setting, especially in Years 7-9.
86. Leadership is good. There is constant focus on raising achievement and on how best to offer the second language. The faculty is very well managed, with clear priorities for development. Lessons are monitored. Data and results are carefully analysed and action taken to improve standards. Staff development is encouraged and teachers are keen to learn other languages. Language trips and exchanges are arranged. Improvement is good since the last inspection, in that standards are rising and there is now widespread use of ICT.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Key Stage 3 National Numeracy Strategy has been well introduced in lessons.
- End of Year 9 test results improved in 2003.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- Assessment procedures are well established and analysis of national data is thorough, though on-going assessment and marking is not influencing teaching nor informing pupils of how they are performing and what to do to improve.
- Management is unsatisfactory; monitoring and evaluation of the department is not sufficiently effective and as a result there is a lack of consistency, which is undermining standards.
- Teaching is overall mundane with few opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- Pupils in Year 10 and 11 are not sufficiently challenged in lessons.

Commentary

87. Results in Year 9 national tests in 2002 were average and pupils' achievement overall was poor in relation to their prior attainment on entry to the school. In 2003, test results improved and pupils achieved well in them. Results were above average overall; the proportion of pupils meeting national expectations overall was above average, the proportion achieving higher standards was average. GCSE results in 2002 were just above average and pupils' achievement was overall satisfactory. Results in 2003 are likely to be broadly average, but pupils' achievement, compared to their prior attainment in Year 9, was unsatisfactory. Current standards of work in Years 7-9 and at GCSE are overall average. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory with higher-attaining pupils in Years 9 and 10 achieving well.
88. Teaching is satisfactory though mundane overall. In Years 7-9 teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Teachers' good subject knowledge is evident in their planning. Teaching is good where there is a balance between theory and practice and pupils are appropriately challenged. Good use is made of ICT in Years 7 and 8 to support learning. For example, Year 7 pupils working on number sequences using spreadsheets had the opportunity to reflect and evaluate the outcomes. When teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour, pupils respond well. For example, higher-attaining Year 8 pupils' good revision of fractions enabled work to be extended to a variety of contexts reinforcing newly taught skills, knowledge and understanding.
89. Pupils' learning benefits from initial 'quick-fire' questions linked to the main learning objective. This aspect of the National Numeracy Strategy is done well; use of the recommended end of lesson review, to give some understanding of how well pupils are progressing, is underdeveloped. Homework is issued regularly and marking is up-to-date though the quality of supportive annotation and grading is inconsistent. On-going assessment to support pupils' learning is not standardised; pupils are unaware of how well they are doing and what to do to improve. A number of lessons lack variety and opportunity for pupils' personal development, particularly for lower attaining pupils who would benefit from the use of 'bite size' activities to support their learning. Good use is made of teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs in achieving as well as their peers.
90. Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 is also overall satisfactory. Teachers have high expectations of the higher-attaining pupils in Year 10 who are appropriately challenged. For example, learning to factorise quadratic expressions was well planned; pupils were enabled to make significant progress. Opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, hypothesise outcomes and demonstrate what they know, understand and can do are generally uncommon. Limited teaching methods and resources in a number of lessons, coupled with a lack of

challenge, undermine progress. The focus of much work is on textbook exercises and lessons are slow and uninspiring. The recording of key-words, statements and formulae by average and lower-attaining pupils to support revision are infrequent. Marking is up-to-date though on-going assessment is inconsistent. Pupils are unaware of their target grades at GCSE. The unsatisfactory behaviour of a small number of pupils adversely affects the progress of others, though generally relationships between pupils and teachers are good.

91. Leadership is satisfactory. The Key Stage 3 National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced. Standards are improving at the end of Year 9 and there is a shared commitment by staff to raise them further. Procedures for assessment and data analysis are good. Management of the faculty is unsatisfactory. Issues raised in the last report remain outstanding and consequently improvement is unsatisfactory. Planned opportunities for sharing good practice are not formalised. Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department is inconsistent. As a result, there is variation in classroom practice, particularly regarding on-going assessment, which is limiting overall achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

92. The National Numeracy Strategy is used well in mathematics and other faculties have systematically planned for the development of numeracy. In design and technology, music, science and art and design, schemes of work identify what pupils are likely to know understand and can do in mathematics. There are particular strengths in handling data and shape, space and measures. The school currently has no numeracy policy and no co-ordinator has been appointed to manage and evaluate the further development of numeracy across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Science was inspected fully.

Psychology was sampled due to the concerns expressed by parents. Inspectors found that teaching is now good and stimulating lessons are given. There is regular marking of work which explains to pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Examination results in psychology were poor in 2003 and this was likely due to staff absence in the previous twelve months.

Science

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are good.
- End of Year 9 test results test results improved significantly in 2003.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good.

- More able pupils are not doing as well as they should in the work in hand.
- Lower ability pupils do not have access to an appropriate GCSE course.
- Some pupils underachieve in Years 7-9.

Commentary

93. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were in line with the national average, but were well below those of similar schools. Achievement, by this indicator, was poor. However, in 2003 results improved markedly, and are above the national average, well above results for similar schools. School data indicates that the current Year 9 pupils are likely to achieve similar results.
94. In the 2002 GCSE examinations, results for the dual award course were above the national average, whilst those for the other science courses were below. In 2003, results for dual award

improved overall but there were fewer A*-C grades, Less able pupils entered for the single award course did not do well. Overall, girls continued to do better than boys. Coursework marks and test results indicate that the current Year 11 pupils may achieve better GCSE results than last year.

95. Standards of work are broadly average and most pupils achieve satisfactorily. In answering questions in class, the majority of pupils can explain scientific words and concepts with confidence. Generally pupils have satisfactory levels of recall and understanding of their work. The quality of pupils' work indicates that their attitudes to academic achievement are satisfactory. Pupils generally have respect for others, but sometimes pupils spoil otherwise worthwhile answers by calling out. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. More able pupils have been identified but in lessons, particularly in Years 7-9, these pupils are insufficiently challenged. This means more able pupils are not doing as well as they should in the work in hand; their peers did very well in national tests at the end of Year 9 last summer. Some pupils in Years 7-9 also underachieve in lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory.
96. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good, and because most teachers organise the pupils well in the classroom, behaviour is satisfactory. Teachers' planning includes objectives, but some teachers do not make these objectives clear to pupils, and in these lessons pupils' behaviour deteriorates. Most teachers use the technical language of the subject well and improve the pupils' literacy skills by the use of key words. However, all teachers do not correct these words when they are spelt incorrectly. Homework is not readily identified in exercise books and needs improving. Teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to develop their independent learning skills by setting open-ended research projects. The quality of marking is variable with few scientifically supportive comments. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching is unusual in nature; the teacher does not want to teach science and, consequently, does not do a satisfactory job of it.
97. Overall, pupils' learning is satisfactory because most teachers plan lessons using a range of methods and resources to maintain pupils' interest. The department makes limited use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning. However, most pupils understand their academic targets and some pupils understand what they need to do to improve.
98. The head of faculty provides good leadership and management. She motivates staff and pupils. She has been in post for about a year but has already identified areas for development. The focus on monitoring the quality of teaching, setting targets and addressing underachievement has contributed to improved results. The technician team is supportive, efficient, and makes an important contribution to the work of the department. However, the department would be in a better position to deliver planned improvements if additional technician hours were allocated. Brief written risk assessments (the likelihood of an accident happening) exist in schemes of work but not in teachers' planning; risk assessments should vary with the particular group of pupils carrying out the work.
99. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The monitoring of teaching, planning of lessons, and access to ICT are now much better. However, assessment and record keeping need to be developed further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes and enthusiasm towards computer use.
- Good displays in the classrooms help to create effective ICT environments.
- Staffing issues both in the classroom and in leadership and management hinder development.
- Teachers do not always present enough challenge and pace in lessons.
- Time in the curriculum for ICT in Years 7-9 is less than recommended; provision for ICT in Years 10 and 11 does not meet national requirements.
- Plans to sustain ICT provision as it is or provide for expansion in the future are not linked to the funding available.

Commentary

100. Standards of work in Years 7-9 are average. All pupils in Years 7-9 have ICT lessons, an improvement since the last inspection, which contributes to rising standards. Teacher assessments of work at the end of Year 9 in 2003 show an improvement on 2002 standards and suggest slightly higher standards than average. Both boys and girls in Years 7-9 achieve satisfactorily in the work provided. However, the scope of pupils' work is still restricted; only two per cent of curriculum time is allocated to ICT as against the four per cent which is common and the national guideline. Consequently some areas of the National Curriculum are only briefly dealt with compared to others, although other subjects contribute well to pupils' learning in ICT.
101. GCSE results are broadly in line with whole school results and slightly better than average. In 2003, results, whilst still in line with school and likely national averages, were recognised by the school to show some underachievement when compared to expected grades. Pupils carry out skills based tasks such as redrafting on a word processor. New skills acquired are reinforced through practice and written tasks. Pupils are given little experience of the theoretical aspects of ICT. Though pupils' achievement against examination board criteria is satisfactory it is not possible to determine how well they achieve against national expectations; it depends on subjects followed and the use of ICT by teachers they get.
102. Teaching is satisfactory. In a Year 9 lesson, excellent planning, very good pace, high expectations of pupils and very good relationships led to pupils making significant progress in developing costing in a spreadsheet in a business context. Pupils are interested in the subject and are enthusiastic about their use of ICT. They work together well and respect the equipment and their access to ICT resources including printing and the (filtered) Internet. In some lessons insufficient planning means that tasks are not sufficiently different for pupils of a wide range of ability and not all pupils are challenged or involved; these pupils underachieve.
103. The leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory overall. Monitoring of pupils' work and teaching takes place but does not as yet tackle weaknesses seen in this inspection. The use of assessment data about pupils to inform and improve teaching on a day to day basis is not in place. Good day to day management has dealt with a number of staffing issues over some considerable time. The use of non-specialist ICT teachers adversely affects pupils' progress. There has been no subject leader in ICT to, for example, lead the implementation of the Key Stage 3 National ICT Strategy. The ICT manager has identified priorities for improvement but these have, as yet, not influenced teaching and learning. Technical support staff contribute well to both pupils' progress and teachers' management of lessons; they keep systems working effectively.
104. The new curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 is beginning to raise standards but needs further development and probably a larger allocation of curriculum time. Large class sizes in these years, particularly in Year 9, hinder pupils' access to computers. The number of computers has been increased significantly and is broadly typical for a school of this size. There is a lack of school planning to sustain ICT provision and expand in the future. The examination in Year 10 and 11 does not fulfil National Curriculum requirements, a comment made at the last

inspection, and inspectors did not find ICT opportunities in other subjects are necessarily filling the gaps. The proposed introduction of a double award GCSE ICT course, partially offered after school, might be a step towards an appropriate course that challenges pupils and fulfils requirements; it depends on how many pupils commit themselves after school and if it is sustainable. On balance, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory but staffing problems in particular have hindered further progress. Both continuing staffing and current financial difficulties indicate further improvement is likely to be limited.

Information and Communications Technology across the curriculum

105. The use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum is satisfactory overall but varies from good to unsatisfactory. There are limited or no opportunities in some subjects. ICT is clearly written into schemes of work in many other subjects such as mathematics, art and design and geography where teachers' enthusiasm drives the use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool. There are computer facilities around the school which are not fully timetabled and the school's on-line booking system allows subjects access to facilities. However, there is a need for more resources, such as in music technology. Good use of ICT can be found in German; for example, a Year 11 group used presentations to reinforce vocabulary, and in French, where video conferencing is used. In design and technology there is a good module in Year 7 using control technology and electronics and further opportunities in Years 8 and 9 to use graphics, computer assisted design (CAD) and computer assisted manufacturing (CAM) technologies. A Year 7 lesson in mathematics extended pupils' knowledge of spreadsheets whilst building number patterns. A commercial software programme is used well to support literacy work for pupils with special educational needs. The use of the Internet for research purposes is a feature of pupils' work in several subjects and is a useful way to develop their independent learning skills.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership and management is very good.
- Standards are well above average in Years 10 and 11.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic in their teaching.
- Assessment is consistent, allowing pupils to know the standard of their work and how they can improve.

- There is insufficient use of field work in Years 7-9.
- The needs of the most able pupils are not always fully met.

Commentary

106. By Year 9 standards overall are above average. When pupils join the school in Year 7 there are gaps in their geographical knowledge and skills that are addressed in units of work on map skills and geographical processes. By Year 9 pupils have achieved well; they have progressed to a good understanding of changing employment patterns in more and less well economically developed countries.

107. GCSE results are consistently well above average. Girls perform better than boys. Across the ability range there is very good progress and achievement. In Year 11, pupils show a very good understanding of the relationships between physical and human processes that affect the environment. This understanding is applied very well to case studies such as the Holderness coastline and floods in Bangladesh.

108. Teaching and learning are very good overall. In Years 7-9 teaching and learning are good with a variety of methods used that give pupils a number of tasks within a given time. This leads to good pace in lessons. Good lesson planning uses a number of resources and pupils are encouraged to take an active part in lessons. There is good use of directed questions to involve all pupils in lessons. Learning is enhanced by good standards of behaviour and relationships. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning is a real strength. Lessons are focused and pupils made clear of the expectations upon them. There is a variety of tasks and pupils work both individually and at times in groups. Group presentations on causes, consequences and possible solutions to flooding in Bangladesh were very good and much learning took place. Throughout all years teaching is delivered in a knowledgeable and enthusiastic style where the content has been carefully planned to fully meet national and examination board requirements. However, a few most able pupils need further challenges to ensure they achieve as well as they can.
109. Assessment of pupils' work is good. In Years 7-9 there are common assessment tasks for all pupils marked to National Curriculum levels of attainment. Pupils know how to improve their work through helpful teachers' comments in their books. In Years 10 and 11 assessments are designed to aid pupils' learning and prepare them for GCSE examinations. Coursework is very well planned and assessed with pupils having very good advice helping them to gain high marks.
110. The subject is very well led and managed. All courses are well planned with good resources that are regularly reviewed and improved. Tasks are clearly delegated and there is strong supportive teamwork enabling consistency in teaching. Regular meetings contribute strongly to this consistency and distinctiveness. Teaching and the quality of pupils' work are monitored through a number of means including common, moderated assessments and a scrutiny of books. Classrooms provide very attractive learning environments and the department has a strong sense of identity.
111. Fieldwork is good in Years 10 and 11 but the opportunities for field work in Years 7-9 should be further developed. Since the last inspection improvement has been good; planning in Years 10 and 11 has significantly improved and ICT use has improved.

History

Provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning in Year 7 helps pupils achieve well.
- A good programme of visits which enhances pupils' learning.
- There are generally positive pupils' attitudes in Years 10 and 11 but a minority of pupils has poor attitudes to learning, resulting in poor work.
- Unsatisfactory leadership and management, which has not been sufficiently effective in improving teaching and learning or raising achievement.
- Unsatisfactory teaching, learning and achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- A downward trend in GCSE results over recent years.
- Assessment systems which are not rigorous enough to monitor pupils' progress and achievement effectively.
- Teaching methods which do not consistently match pupils' needs.

Commentary

112. Standards of attainment by Year 9 are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In Year 7, pupils' achievement is good. In work seen, standards of attainment by Year 11 are below average and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' have covered the examination syllabus content thoroughly but their knowledge and understanding are often insecure. Pupils can use historical sources effectively to extract and use information but their ability to evaluate them, particularly for reliability, is underdeveloped. Overall GCSE results in 2002 were in line with national results. Girls' results were above average but those of boys were below. These results represent unsatisfactory achievement because most pupils did less well in history than in their other subjects. Results in 2003 were lower than those in 2002.
113. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall; satisfactory in Years 7-9, unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have a good command of their material and they present it in language that pupils can understand. They teach historical terminology systematically and cover examination requirements well. Where teaching is imaginative and pupils contribute actively to their own learning, progress is good. For example, in two good Year 7 lessons, pupils worked well to generate ideas for a guide to the Roman fort at Vindolanda. Occasionally, teachers deploy good resources to help lower ability pupils, but in class support for pupils with special educational needs is lacking. Overall there is not a consistent enough match of work and expectations to pupils of different abilities within a class. In an unsatisfactory Year 11 lesson on the effects of the Public Health Acts, expectations were too low and the work failed to challenge more able pupils. Sometimes teaching is not sufficiently stimulating to engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning. In an unsatisfactory Year 10 lesson on the Black Death, the teacher relied too much on use of a textbook and set tasks which were mundane. As a result, pupils did not make enough progress.
114. Assessment overall is unsatisfactory. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, assessment in Years 7-9 is not sufficiently rigorous and does not use National Curriculum criteria. Pupils therefore are not clear enough about their academic targets and the progress they are making towards them. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 often receive good feedback to help them improve their work, but this feedback is not given regularly enough in the lower years.
115. Leadership and management are both unsatisfactory. Leadership has had too little effect over recent years in improving teaching, learning and pupils' achievement. Responsibility for the subject has recently devolved to the head of faculty after what appears to have been a prolonged period of difficulty. The faculty head has a clear understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and has begun the process of planning to address the main issues. Examination results have been analysed to identify under-performance and plans for improvement have been initiated. There are not yet rigorous systems in place for monitoring pupils' performance and progress. The head of faculty has his major teaching commitment in another subject: this will inevitably limit his ability to act as professional leader and role model to other history staff.
116. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are mixed, but they are positive in Years 10 and 11 and the numbers taking the subject at GCSE have increased this year. There is a good programme of educational visits directly related to the topics taught. The GCSE curriculum is varied and interesting. A minority of pupils, mostly but not entirely boys, has poor attitudes to learning and they make unsatisfactory effort in class and with their written work.
117. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. In Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils' achievement over time has improved and is now satisfactory. Accommodation for the subject is now good and provides a positive environment for learning. However, GCSE results have declined since the last inspection from above average to average in 2002; results in 2003 represent a further decline. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are no longer good. There has not been sufficient improvement in weaknesses identified at the last inspection, particularly

those in assessment, match of work to different abilities and the range of teaching and learning styles in use.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11 and most complete a (half) GCSE.
- Most teaching is done by specialist and experienced staff which has enabled the school to improve results.
- Religious education contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Time allocated to the teaching of religious education is well below average in Years 10 and 11 and there is limited compliance with the locally Agreed Syllabus in Years 7-9.
- There is a lack of regular assessment for non-examination work and few opportunities for the use of ICT.
- Links with local religious community groups, particularly non-Christian groups, are underdeveloped.

Commentary

118. Standards in Year 9 are broadly average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall.
119. Many activities are planned and provided to promote reflection and to learn about Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Christianity. For example, pupils in Year 7 explored why they should study religion. Some of their contributions were quite mature. All Year 9, 10 and 11 pupils study religious education as part of a GCSE short course. It is proving beneficial and is helping to maintain and raise standards. Year 9 pupils can accurately distinguish between creation and evolution statements and express own opinions by choosing their place on an opinion line, one end being creation and the other evolution and justifying it. Pupils demonstrate an increasing understanding of the issues of importance to them, such as relationships, marriage, family and divorce from Christian and Jewish perspectives and questions of life and death.
120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a good command of the subject and plan their lessons well. They use appropriate methods to ensure an effective engagement of pupils and to make work comprehensible in a lively and informative manner. They have high expectations both for learning and good behaviour. In most lessons seen, objectives were made clear and planning was good, providing a good structure that took into account the needs, interests and motivation of pupils. Marking and assessment are inconsistent and do not link well enough to attainment levels in the Agreed Syllabus.
121. Pupils generally work well together and respect the feelings and beliefs of others, but in Years 7-9 particularly, their capacity to work independently and collaboratively is not sufficiently developed. Lack of additional support for pupils with special educational needs, or with behavioural problems, slows down the pace of lessons as precious time is wasted in controlling a few inattentive and disruptive pupils.
122. There is limited compliance to the requirements of the West Somerset Agreed Syllabus for Key Stage 3 and there is less than half the recommended time for teaching religious education in Years 10 and 11. Pupils have limited opportunity to visit places of religious interest, or establish links with the community especially those who have other than Christian backgrounds. As there are hardly any pupils in the school from Sikh, Hindu or Buddhist backgrounds, it is a

shortcoming that opportunities are not made or taken to involve visitors or parents from these communities in religious education or afternoon assemblies.

123. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They learn about the existence of God, explore religious experiences and reflect on good and evil. They learn to respect each others' beliefs and values, and have opportunities to share experiences and help each other.
124. Religious education also makes a sound contribution to literacy as opportunities are made available for pupils to practise listening and speaking, reading and writing for a variety of purposes. They learn key words and their meaning and they have opportunities for occasional longer writing or short research exercises as home work. There was some use of numeracy in relation to divorce or marriage rates. There was little use of ICT seen in lessons or in pupils' work.
125. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The two specialist rooms include sensitive displays of pupils' work, key words and pictures about Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity. This creates a pleasant learning environment for pupils. Resources for the subject such as text books, worksheets, posters, artefacts and pictures are adequate, and are supplemented by the school library. Since the last inspection, there has been a satisfactory improvement in standards and all pupils have the opportunity to do a GCSE short course in religious studies.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of faculty is a good leader supported by teachers who work well as a team.
- GCSE results have been above average for a number of years.
- Pupils have a good attitude to their work and behave well.
- Assessment procedures to track pupils' progress and to aid planning need further development.
- Current resources are insufficient to meet the needs of all pupils.

Commentary

126. Pupils start in Year 7 with standards that are about average. By Year 9 and in Year 11 they achieve standards that are above average. This represents good achievement.
127. Examination results in 2002 were well above average. They were lower in 2003 but still above average. The principal reason for the lower standards was the temporary and unavoidable absence of two teachers. Pupils tend to perform better in this subject than in others.
128. Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Pupils have above average graphic skills because these are well taught. They acquire a good knowledge of the design process through a variety of tasks in Years 7-9. They have a good knowledge of tools and can work with a range of materials. Pupils know how to work safely. They are able to apply and build on this knowledge in Years 10 and 11 to solve more complex design problems. Most pupils produce quality products that display individuality and are well finished. Coursework folios are of a good standard. They are well presented and the majority of pupils are able to use ICT as a tool when designing and making. Pupils have literacy and numeracy skills that are adequate for the demands of the subject. A minority of pupils is not good at communicating the development of

their design ideas in written folios although they can explain them when asked. A few weaker pupils rely too heavily on cutting and pasting from product catalogues for initial research.

129. Teaching and learning are consistently good across all material areas. Subject specialist teachers have high expectations of pupils and use a similar style of teaching. They give good practical demonstrations that promote high standards. Lessons are well planned and move at a brisk pace. Pupils are given good quality support materials to help them. Good classroom relationships exist and these lead to good learning because pupils are well motivated and behave well. Pupils are productive and respond well to advice from teachers on what they need to improve. The introduction of integrated projects at the end of Year 9 offers pupils the opportunity to have ownership of their work. It also allows teachers to formally assess pupils' work when they are performing at their best. There is scope to develop further the provision made for pupils who are talented in the subject. There is a shortage of some resources like tools and this affects standards when pupils have to share. Pupils in food and textile technology do not have easy access to computers and this affects standards particularly in Years 10 and 11. Provision for teaching computer aided design and computer aided manufacture (CAD/CAM) is limited.
130. The head of faculty provides good leadership and teachers work as a team. Management of the faculty is satisfactory but there remain some issues yet to be resolved. The faculty has developed a system for assessing pupils' work. Whilst satisfactory, this is not fully developed and is not making the best use of data to monitor pupils' progress and inform planning. It does not include pupils' self-assessment. Time-tabling difficulties have resulted in classes that are shared between teachers. Responsibilities within the faculty need to be reviewed in the light of the appointment of an advanced skills teacher. Some class sizes, particularly in Year 9, are too big for the accommodation; this can only be addressed at school level. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection. The curriculum has been developed well and accommodation has been upgraded.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

131. Art and design and music were inspected fully; drama was sampled as the scope of the inspection was limited due to staff absence.
132. Drama is taught throughout Years 7-9 and is an optional examination course in Years 10 and 11. Standards in drama are below those normally seen but what pupils achieve is satisfactory given the mixed attitudes they bring to the subject. They are not naturally independent learners, but develop in this area as a result of taking drama. A relatively small number take the subject as a GCSE course, and their results have been below the national average. Although results have declined over the past few years, they represent satisfactory achievement.
133. In the few lessons seen pupils' learning was satisfactory because the teaching was sound. There are two subject specialists, although one of them has unfortunately experienced several periods of extended absence; this has had some adverse effects on provision. Only the subject leader was seen teaching during the inspection, and it is clear that her subject knowledge, teaching skills and ability to assess work accurately are quite secure. Pupils are trusted – sometimes too much – to work independently, but this bears fruit, especially by Year 11. They are able to prepare and present devised work, for example, with some competence and are learning to evaluate their own and other pupils' work with increasing sensitivity. Not all those who have opted for drama have natural abilities in this area, and their progress should also be seen in terms of their personal development.
134. The head of drama leads and manages the subject well. Detailed schemes of work have been put in place, which serve the department well when cover staff are needed: systems are secure. There are two well-equipped studios and adjacent "green" rooms, as well as a department office; the head of drama had a hand in planning these and they fit their purpose very well. There is also a large stage and lighting rigs in the school hall, where productions are

held regularly in conjunction with the rest of the faculty of expressive arts. The subject leader works hard both on curricular and extra-curricular drama.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE examinations are above national average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 10 and 11.
- The use of sketch books for research and development in Years 10 and 11 is good.
- There is a need to develop pupils' three-dimensional skills further.
- Group sizes are too large in many lessons in Years 7- 9 to enable an experience of many different materials.

Commentary

135. The proportion of pupils at the end of Year 11 gaining higher grades A* - C in GCSE examinations in 2002 was above the national average. Although boys perform less well than girls, their results are significantly above national average. The trends of good attainment in recent years have been maintained.
136. Pupils' achievements in Year 9 are satisfactory in relation to their knowledge, understanding and skills when they entered the school, which were just below average. Standards in the current Year 9 are broadly average. There is no significant difference between boys and girls. These standards are achieved because pupils are supported well in classrooms and apply themselves purposefully. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils are able to use line, tone and texture effectively in their drawings.
137. Standards in the current Year 11 are above average. This represents good achievement over the two years of the course for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils develop and sustain a chosen theme in their work and are able to show some influence of important movements in art and design or of particular artists. Pupils enjoy their art lessons and are well motivated because of the teachers' enthusiasm and good preparation of different levels of work, designed to cater for the levels of attainment found in the class. Higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged to achieve their full potential.
138. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall; satisfactory in Years 7-9 and good in Years 10 and 11. This difference is mostly explained by teachers using a greater range of teaching strategies and making better use of homework. When the pace of work was good and learning aims reinforced by the teacher, the best teaching was seen. Teachers are committed, caring and supportive of pupils. They make good use of praise to encourage the participation of all pupils and make good use of question and answer to ensure all pupils are actively involved. In Years 7-9, pupils would learn better if teachers shared clear learning objectives, based on national expectations, with them. Such objectives would also help end of year assessment be more realistic. Large group size in Years 7-9 restricts the range of materials used and this has an adverse effect on teaching and learning. For example, there is insufficient use made of working with clay for three-dimensional study.
139. The leadership and management of art and design are good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, most notably in the improved examination results. The strong departmental teamwork is helping to raise standards and is also ensuring that the best practice is shared. The use of ICT has improved research and appreciation of art history.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are now two committed full time members of department.
- An increasing number of pupils are opting for music at GCSE.
- Extra curricular provision is improving.

- Boys underachieve.
- Work does not meet the needs of the wide ability range in classes.
- Large class sizes in Year 9 adversely affect pupils' learning,
- Accommodation and resources are in a poor state and both hinder learning.
- There is little provision for instrumental tuition which works against raising standards.

Commentary

140. The music department has suffered from staffing difficulties for the past few years and this situation has had an adverse effect on standards that pupils achieve. The school has recently appointed two new full time members of staff.
141. Standards on entry are broadly average but teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were below average. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 for 2003 are incomplete. Standards of work seen in Years 7-9 are below average and pupils achieve unsatisfactorily, particularly boys. This is due to lack of specialist teaching in previous years, large class sizes (particularly in Year 9), and the unsatisfactory behaviour of some classes in Year 9. Pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good, especially in view of their relatively low prior attainment. In 2002 the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C at GCSE was above average. The picture is similar in 2003. In a Year 11 class, pupils were composing 'Music for Special Occasions' using keyboards and computers. Standards varied a lot and were broadly average. Standards in a Year 10 lesson were above average; the larger class size shows more pupils are currently choosing music as an option.
142. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory overall; satisfactory in Years 7-9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Good teaching is characterised by teachers' high expectations of behaviour and work is varied and challenging. In a Year 10 lesson on the music of the baroque period, pupils began with a brainstorming session led by the teacher on composers, forms, instruments and characteristics of baroque music. This was reinforced by recorded examples where pupils demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of the key concepts. Pupils were then quickly taught a round 'By the waters of Babylon' which they managed to sing in four parts before returning to exemplar material from an examination questions on baroque music.
143. Leadership and management are good and both new teachers are beginning to make a positive impact on standards. There is a broad and balanced scheme of work which needs further development to provide modified pupil tasks to cater for all abilities in Years 7-9 and clearly defined assessment opportunities linked to National Curriculum requirements. Further development of clearly defined assessments, linked to the National Curriculum, is needed. Work in Years 7-9 does not have the variety needed to cater for all abilities. Extra curricular provision is improving but peripatetic instrumental tuition is limited because it is too expensive for pupils. This constrains the effect this important provision could have on helping to raise standards in music throughout the school, especially at GCSE and advanced levels.
144. Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory. There are insufficient computers fitted with dedicated music software for use with pupils in Years 7-9. Classrooms need painting and displays are uninspiring. The department has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection due to staffing difficulties. Assessment and modified tasks for pupils in Years 7-9,

together with the achievement of boys, remain issues. However, with the reintroduction of music and music technology into the sixth form and the increasing numbers opting for music in Year 10, in addition to the two new members of staff, the department is now well placed to move forward.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- Teaching and learning are good in all years.
- There is good leadership by a dedicated team of specialist staff.

- ICT is not used enough to support teaching and learning.
- The accommodation for dance is poor.

Commentary

145. Standards in Year 9 and Year 11 are above average and show good achievement from pupils' work in previous years. The performances of boys and girls are similar. Year 11 pupils' results in the 2002 GCSE examination were above the national average. Provisional results in the 2003 examination are likely to be below average. This is because the attainment of pupils who opt for PE varies from year to year. Pupils with special educational needs and the talented achieve well. High-attaining pupils are successful in a range of sports at area, county and sometimes national levels.
146. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. Pupils achieve well because teachers have very good subject knowledge, high expectations and they plan lessons to engage pupils of all attainment levels. For example, in a Year 7 hockey lesson, lower attaining pupils achieved beyond expectations because the teacher simplified rules, modified tasks and used demonstrations. The learning of higher-attaining pupils, including the talented, is accelerated by extension tasks, grouping and the very good extra-curricular provision. Teachers provide opportunities for independent learning in most lessons. In Year 9 dance, pupils planned sequences and evaluated peer performance. They achieved well despite the poor quality of dance facilities. Learning is less effective in the few lessons when teaching becomes more prescriptive and pupils are given fewer opportunities to explore their own ideas.
147. Pupils' learning is enhanced by their positive attitudes and good relationships. Small numbers, however, do underachieve because of poor concentration. Most pupils, across all years, show good numerical skills because teachers provide opportunities to score, measure and record performance. Teachers emphasise key words and are adept in their use of questioning. These approaches improve the technical vocabulary, speaking skills and listening ability of pupils across the attainment levels. The subject makes limited provision for pupils to develop their ICT skills.
148. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a strong commitment to improvement and success and is ably supported by a team of dedicated specialists. Good procedures are in place to monitor, evaluate and improve pupils' standards and the quality of teaching. Assessment procedures are good in Years 7-9, but only satisfactory in Years 10 and 11, due to the lack of diagnostic comment in the marking of GCSE written assignments. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The good quality of teaching and learning has further improved; standards in Years 7-9 have risen to above-average; the monitoring and evaluation of teaching have improved to good; all teaching is undertaken by specialists and pupils with special educational needs now make good progress. A new changing room block is currently being built to replace the old and inadequate facilities.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Judgements on work related education will be found immediately preceding this subject section.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning ensures teaching of citizenship to every pupil.
- There is effective leadership of the subject.
- A good use of the School Council helps develop pupils' skills and experience.

- Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress need further development.
- Pupils need further opportunities for active citizenship, linked to what they learn in class.
- Pupils do not consistently reflect in their conduct around the school what they learn in citizenship lessons.

Commentary

149. Standards of work are average and pupils' achievement by Year 9 and by Year 11 satisfactory. Most pupils can take part constructively in discussions and show an appropriate ability to express and justify their opinions on a range of issues. In general pupils' knowledge and understanding are less well developed than their skills.
150. The quality of teaching and learning in lessons is satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons well and give pupils good opportunities to discuss issues. Most pupils respond well to these opportunities. In an excellent Year 10 lesson on the causes of homelessness, the teacher managed pupils very well: very good discussion and role play helped the pupils to make excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding. In contrast, in an unsatisfactory Year 9 lesson on current affairs, pupils' attitudes were negative and the teacher's management of the class was not strong enough to ensure that satisfactory progress was made. Sometimes, pupils lose concentration and focus towards the end of lessons, for example at the end of the school's long morning session. Assessment, recording and reporting are at an early stage of development. At present, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and concentration are reported to parents. Eventually teachers will also need to assess systematically pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in order to report these at the end of Year 9 and of Year 11.
151. Leadership of the subject is good and management is satisfactory. Planning is good: citizenship is taught primarily through a well planned course which also covers personal, social and health education. However, the citizenship content of this course is not always made explicit and is therefore not always clear to pupils. Provision is supplemented through days devoted to citizenship themes. The police are used effectively to help teach units of work on issues relating to the law. Citizenship lessons are taught by a core team of staff; this allows informal monitoring and evaluation to take place. The subject co-ordinator has insufficient time allocation to allow formal monitoring of teaching and learning and of pupils' progress.
152. The School and Year Council system gives good opportunities for all pupils to take responsibility and to play a part in decision making on a range of issues which affect their school community. This year, pupils are to take part in the UK Youth Parliament elections. There is scope, however, to make greater use of School Council elections in giving pupils experience of a full election process. Pupils in Year 10 take a leading role in the school's fundraising for charities, which pupils themselves identify. The school uses its unusually strong

links with other countries to help pupils develop their understanding of global citizenship. Further opportunities need to be developed to ensure that all pupils engage in active citizenship in this country. To produce a more coherent experience, these opportunities should, as far as possible, link with pupils' learning in class. The poor behaviour of some pupils around the school shows that a minority does not apply the values promoted in citizenship lessons to the wider school community.

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 2002.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	5	100.0	81.6	0.0	33.2	28.0	33.2
Business studies	6	100.0	89.1	0.0	31.7	28.3	35.4
Chemistry	9	55.6	84.8	11.1	36.9	15.6	35.2
English language	6	66.7	92.0	33.3	29.9	26.7	35.7
General studies	78	84.6	78.6	28.2	25.7	34.1	30.0
Other social studies	5	40.0	83.2	0.0	32.5	10.0	33.6
Religious studies	5	20.0	90.9	0.0	38.9	6.0	37.9

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and design	24	95.8	96.1	20.8	48.7	70.0	85.1
Biology	11	100.0	91.6	18.2	36.3	69.1	74.1
Business studies	11	90.9	96.4	0.0	32.8	47.3	76.5
Chemistry	15	93.3	94.0	26.7	45.9	68.0	81.1
Communication studies	11	100.0	98.3	63.6	36.8	94.5	81.1
Drama	5	100.0	98.1	80.0	41.5	96.0	82.9
English language	7	100.0	98.3	14.3	36.5	60.0	80.1
English literature	7	100.0	98.5	42.9	43.7	85.7	84.3
Design and technology	18	100.0	95.3	22.2	35.5	80.0	76.5
Geography	20	100.0	97.1	25.0	40.5	75.0	80.9
History	9	100.0	97.1	22.2	41.0	60.0	81.2
Mathematics	12	100.0	93.3	58.3	52.2	88.3	84.7
Other social studies	11	90.9	94.3	18.2	38.9	58.2	77.7
Physics	14	100.0	92.8	42.9	42.8	80.0	78.6
Religious studies	12	100.0	96.3	41.7	44.0	86.7	82.2
Sports/PE studies	5	100.0	95.4	20.0	29.5	76.0	73.2
VCE Business	14	42.9	87.5	0.0	14.5	20.0	58.6

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English language and literature were both inspected together. French and German are taught to A level. French was the focus of the inspection and German was sampled. In the German lesson standards seen were above average. Students were able to read difficult texts with understanding and converse confidently and fluently in German. Teaching was very good.

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good in both English language and literature.
- Students learn well; they are good at working together.
- There is good assessment and monitoring of students' work.
- Students' independent learning and mastery of a wide general vocabulary and basic skills need improvement.
- Few students achieve higher grades, particularly in the English language examination.
- Use of ICT is limited.

Commentary

153. In 2002 only seven students took English language and English literature. Standards in English language A level were well below average; results in AS were average. English literature results in 2002 were broadly average. In 2003, standards in A2 and AS level examinations are likely to be broadly average. Results show a steady improvement over the last three years. The composition of the groups varies and many more females than males take up English literature. Students achieve broadly satisfactorily.
154. The standard of work is average. In a Year 13 English language lesson all students developed a good understanding of how to analyse examples of language. They also know how a writer uses language to develop the structure of a poem and convey images and symbolism. A lesson reading Walt Whitman's poem, 'On the beach at night', exemplified this. Students can comment on how different religious, social and cultural attitudes are reflected in language. Year 12 literature students can articulate well their opinions about female characters in Shakespeare's play 'Othello.' The requirements of AS and A2 level examinations are closely met, but students' independent learning skills are not as well developed. Students are keen and participate fully in their learning.
155. Teachers use their good command of the subject well to support good learning, balancing class and group discussions with appropriate intervention. They make clear the complexity and stages of work in hand and consolidate and build on students' previous learning. They have good and friendly relationships with their students whom they know well. Consequently individual needs are well met. Teachers engage students well in discussions, helping them along by building on their interests and experiences, particularly in relation to their choice of assignments and projects. They monitor and evaluate students' work well and guide them on how to improve. Teachers also make good links with opportunities for students' spiritual and cultural development.
156. The leadership of the department has weaknesses identified in the main school report. Courses in the sixth form are managed satisfactorily and improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

French

Provision in French is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management provide support and guidance for a committed team.
- Good teaching, using French throughout, stimulates learning and provides a good role model for students.
- Established links abroad make language learning meaningful.
- Work experience in France helps build the confidence of students.

Commentary

157. At A-level in 2002, on the basis of relatively small numbers of students, attainment was broadly average. Results in 2003 have a higher proportion of A and B grades.
158. Standards of work are above average and students are achieving well as a result of good teaching. In Year 12 students have bridged the gap from GCSE smoothly. This in part can be attributed to an 'induction pack', which students completed over the summer and to their own enthusiasm for the subject. The materials act as a refresher and enable students to do independent research, which is an important ingredient at this high level. Students spoke with confidence about "La Famille". They were able to discuss ideas and aired their opinions, using difficult vocabulary and expressions. Year 13 students were equally as confident in discussing ideas, more so when it was a topic they were more familiar with, as opposed to European politics, which is not the easiest to digest.
159. Teaching is good overall and some very good teaching was seen. Teachers' marking of written work is thorough and diagnostic, enabling each student to be aware of how to improve and how to achieve a high grade. Very good use is made of questions to tease out extended answers and questions are pitched at the right level for each student. Work is very challenging, but the enthusiastic teaching rubs off on the students, so that each has the desire to learn and succeed and learning is fun. Independent learning skills are encouraged and Internet references enable students to access authentic materials. There is very good teamwork, which is essential when classes have more than one teacher. A bonus is the French assistante, who works on a one to one basis with sixth form students. Work experience in France is a bonus for those who undertake it and helps them learn and achieve well.
160. Leadership is very good and is dedicated to improving teaching and learning. Management also is very good; academic targets are set and monitored, staff are supported and resources well chosen. There are comprehensive packages for extra revision and authentic materials, which students can borrow.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some that is good.
- Teachers use their knowledge of the subject effectively and relationships between teachers and students are good.
- Students work hard and are often encouraged to think for themselves.
- Below average teaching time in Year 12 and 13 limits progress.
- ICT is under-used as a resource.

Commentary

161. In 2002, AS mathematics results were well below average and students' achievement in relation to their GCSE performance was poor. In 2003, AS mathematics results are likely to be below average and students' achievement was unsatisfactory. A2 level results in 2002 were above average with all students entered for the examination achieving a grade. The proportion of students achieving the highest grades A and B was above the national average. Compared to prior attainment at GCSE, students' achievement was good. In 2003, A2 level results were weaker, with a lower proportion of students achieving grades A to E and of A and B grades. However, students' achievement is likely to be satisfactory.
162. Current standards are average; students are achieving satisfactorily and work hard. Student files are very well organised and 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 used of the rules of algebra when solving inequalities of quadratic functions. In Year 13, students recall knowledge well and apply it confidently in class and in their written work. In one lesson, for example, students working independently demonstrated the theoretical application of force in mechanics and derived from first principles the trapezium rule in pure mathematics.
163. Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes it is good. Teachers use their secure knowledge of the subject effectively. Lessons are well planned with a clear purpose. As a result, students work hard and are often encouraged to think for themselves. Relationships between students and the teacher are good. In some lessons students contribute much, demonstrating their knowledge and understanding, though some teaching is strongly teacher driven. Too little use is made of ICT and other resources to extend and develop students' understanding of the work further. Homework is set and marked regularly, but teachers' annotation offers little guidance to students in terms of how to achieve target grades.
164. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Planning is effective for a range of courses, which meet the needs of all students. Student numbers have increased though entry requirements onto courses are lower than normal. Standards at AS and A2 level are improving though not at a fast enough rate with respect to the former. Issues raised in the last report have been satisfactorily addressed. Accommodation is excellent. There is a commitment to raising standards further. Teachers are approachable and prepared to use their time outside lessons to provide support since the amount of teaching time available on the curriculum in Years 12 and 13 is below average.

SCIENCE

165. The focus was on biology, but chemistry was also sampled. In 2002 chemistry AS level results were below and A-level results were well below the national average. Results in 2003 were better, and from the standard of work seen for current students, further improvement in results is likely. Students can apply their knowledge to new situations, design experiments, make accurate predictions, and evaluate their results. Teaching is good because the brisk pace in lessons, the variety of tasks, and the teacher's use of imaginative examples encourage students to learn.
166. In the last two years the number of students opting to take science subjects in Year 12, and those who choose to continue into Year 13, has increased significantly.
167. Psychology was also sampled and is commented on in the quality of education section of the report as results last year were of concern to parents and the school.

Biology

Provision in biology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Teachers show very good subject knowledge and support students effectively.
- Results showed a marked improvement in 2003.

- Insufficient use is made of ICT, particularly for investigative work.

Commentary

168. AS level results in 2002 were above the national average, but A-level results were below. In the more recent 2003 examinations, results were better, and achievement overall was satisfactory. From coursework marks, test scores and the standards of work seen, results are likely to improve further, though achievement at this early part of the school year remains satisfactory.
169. Teaching is good, and because lessons are planned well, with good use of challenging questions, students' learning is good. Students can explain scientific concepts with ease, using appropriate technical language. Students' investigative work is of a high standard; however, insufficient use is made of ICT including data logging equipment.
170. Teachers show very good subject knowledge, and because of their clear and comprehensive explanations, students are supported effectively and are well prepared for their examinations. Homework and assessments are marked regularly, and teachers provide good feedback on how students might improve their work. The department makes use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning, and to track students' progress. Overall, management is satisfactory. Leadership is good; there is a shared commitment to improving standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and enables students to achieve well.
- Teachers' subject expertise gives effective guidance to students' practical work.
- Good teacher student relationships and the use of humour support learning.
- Students are interested in the subject.

- Students have limited experience of ICT in preparation for an advanced ICT course.
- Teachers do not take enough notice of standards students reached when younger.

Commentary

171. In 2003, A-Level ICT results are in line with school standards overall and likely national averages. Standards of work are average. The majority of students are challenged in their studies and most achieve well. More males than females take the course.
172. Teaching and learning are good. Students have good attitudes to work and respond well. Teaching is well planned and resources are used to good effect. Teachers need to use students' past performance to inform their practise to develop teaching and learning further. Students are interested in the subject and work well, sustaining concentration and contributing positively to group work and discussions. Year 13 students are producing good 'Visual Basic'

programs using the drag and drop event procedures. They respond well to the high level of subject expertise the teacher displays. Project work shows a range of skills and knowledge used and the quality of students' written work is good. The quality of teachers' marking and feedback is good. Students work independently and collaboratively and complete tasks set with good support from their teacher.

173. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. There is a clear line of responsibility. The subject is well led with a clear scheme of work and resources are being developed to support learning. Students use one of the main computer rooms along with a smaller computer room where they undertake computer programming on stand alone machines; computer provision is good.

Information and Communications Technology across the curriculum

174. Sixth formers make good use of computing facilities available both in the upper school and in the school library. Examples of good practise can be found in art where digital images are used, music and geography. Research using the internet and electronic encyclopaedia is a feature of several subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography was the focus. Two history lessons were sampled; teaching, learning and achievement were satisfactory overall. In a Year 12 lesson on de-segregation in the American south of the 1950s, teaching and learning were good. Overall standards are average.

Geography

Provision for geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership gives a clear direction to teachers' work.
- Teaching is very well planned and uses a variety of challenging tasks delivered with pace.
- Students' work is assessed very thoroughly enabling them to improve.
- Relationships are a strength creating excellent learning environments.
- There should be further analysis of students' achievement in order to raise the proportion of A and B grades attained.
- There are too few opportunities for staff to engage in professional development.

Commentary

175. A level results in 2002 were broadly in line with national averages, though the proportion of A and B grades was below national figures. In 2003, results were again broadly in line with likely national averages with a similar pattern of A and B grades. Students achieved satisfactorily when their prior attainment is considered.

176. Teaching and learning are good. The course is well planned with good progression from Year 12 to Year 13. Lessons feature a good deal of group and individual work with teachers having key inputs. The enquiry based approach is particularly effective. Year 12 students working in groups were dealing with many complex urban issues based on an enquiry case study of Barton Hill in Bristol. They had excellent teacher produced resources reflecting the teacher's excellent subject knowledge. Year 13 students working on an enquiry into flooding in Keswick were skilfully guided to a matrix analysis of possible solutions. Lessons are characterised by recap of earlier work at the beginning, tasks with pace, and a summary, all of which enhance learning. Relationships with students are very good and also support learning.

177. Students' work files are generally well organised and there is much helpful teachers' marking of tests and assignments. Work shows a variety of case studies at all levels from very local to global. Progression is also evident with more advanced ideas developed in Year 13 and students responding in a more informed style. This is well illustrated by Year 13 students' work on explanations of climatic variation in tropical West Africa with reference to Halley Cells and the migrating Inter Tropical Convergence Zone together with topographical considerations.
178. Leadership of the subject is very good and shows a very good understanding of the requirements of the course; students appreciate the help they get. There is much subject review and evaluation of students' performance that should lead to further improvements. Teamwork is evident and there is regular sharing of good practice. Residential field work is well planned and carried out, enabling students to produce very good individual studies from a variety of situations. Opportunities for professional development of teachers, in particular in relation to examination feedback and development, are slim.
179. Since the last inspection improvement has been satisfactory. There is greater analysis of students' performance.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and lead to good achievement.
- Tutorials with individual students have a positive effect on their progress.
- The work is interesting and challenging.
- Students are articulate and confident when explaining their work.

- Aspects of the work are limited because of small class size.
- A few students in Year 12 are over reliant on teacher input to direct their work.

Commentary

180. The school offers product design at A/S and A level. Both courses were inspected.
181. Standards in the two courses are marginally above average. Teaching and learning are both good and this leads to good achievement. The subject is well led and management is satisfactory. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection.
182. A level results in 2002 for all students were above average. Males' performance was well above average. Results in 2003 are about average if compared to national standards in 2002 (national data is not yet available for 2003). This represents good achievement overall based on students' prior attainment. Comparative data is not available for the AS courses but students tend to achieve higher than expected based on prior attainment. Retention rates on both courses are high.
183. In Year 12, standards are above average. Focused research skills are well developed in a project linked to sport and leisure; the teacher was helpful in promoting this aspect of the work by skilful questioning when talking with individual students. In another lesson, however, a very small minority of lower ability students experienced difficulty in moving from GCSE level work to AS level. It was necessary for the teacher to direct both the direction of the work and the pace of study. Individual tutorials are particularly effective in these circumstances but all students benefit from this practice. A group of females have gained considerable subject knowledge and understanding as well as learning about career opportunities by attending a bridge building

seminar. Year 13 students find interesting design problems to solve for themselves and devise some sophisticated and ingenious solutions. Students are fluent when explaining the development of their work. They do not confine themselves to working with a narrow range of materials and are willing to experiment.

184. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers do not have fixed ideas about outcomes. They see themselves as providing opportunities for students to explore design situations for themselves. They do not provide all the answers but point students towards finding their own solutions. Students respond positively to what is offered and they achieve well. Students have good attitudes and are willing to tackle challenging tasks with enthusiasm. The products they make are of good quality because practical skills are well taught. Teachers give good feedback to students so that they know how they can improve their work.
185. The head of faculty provides good leadership. Management is satisfactory. Currently, small sixth form groups mean that students do not have the opportunity to exchange ideas or to discuss issues in a wide forum. Since the previous inspection good improvements have been made to the structure of the courses making them more interesting and providing greater challenge.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

Art and design and was the focus subject. One lesson of media studies was observed. Teaching and learning were good. Standards in oral work were good and students showed a good understanding of the complexities of the newspaper industry. A lesson of drama was also sampled. There are usually up to ten students who take AS and A2 drama, and results are at least in line with national averages; a steady improvement in recent years is detectable. Most students over the past four years have obtained grades A to C. The standards of the current Year 13 are average overall; not all took GCSE drama. Teaching is good and the students, who take considerable responsibility for their own learning, achieve well.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and students enjoy good relationships and students benefit from good levels of personal tuition and guidance.
- Students share ideas freely and work well together.
- Standards are improving.
- Standards in AS and A2 examinations have been well below the national averages.
- Students have too few opportunities to develop work on a large scale in both two and three dimensions so their skills are not sufficiently developed.

Commentary

186. In 2002 A2 results were well below the national average.
187. Standards in the current Year 13 are average with those in Year 12 showing the potential for improvement. Achievement is satisfactory and portfolios show that most students have carried out thoughtful investigations and some creative exploration of ideas. Students display some ability and understanding of how ICT can be used and work in sketch books shows some good annotation and an understanding of compositional principles. An opportunity to develop work in both two and three dimensions on a larger scale would develop skills further. Preliminary sketches for research show an understanding of design principles, but development into finished design is inconsistent.

188. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the best lessons students are set work that challenges them and to which they respond with enthusiasm. A greater variety of methods to build progressively on students' knowledge would give them confidence to undertake more demanding tasks. In Year 12, students initially sustain much of their interest and skill from their GCSE work. This was evident in a lesson based on direct observation drawing, where judgments on proportions and spatial layout were good and art history connections were successfully observed. Some sharing of ideas and opinions on the influence of styles, genres and approaches to their own work and the work of other artists were evident. Many students speak well of the support provided by teachers.

189. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Strategies for raising standards at A2 level are now being implemented and will have a positive impact in Year 12. Project briefs have now been structured to give clear focus to the students' work. They are informed of how work can be improved and theory and practical work are integrated effectively. Students' knowledge is extended with visits to galleries which include aspects of contemporary practice. The present technical support is insufficient for the teaching of courses with such a range of media choice and hence inhibits students' progress. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The monitoring of lessons by the head of department is ensuring that the best practice is shared. With improved facilities, ICT is now well integrated into art units of study. The library provision of good quality reference books is good, meeting the elements of knowledge and understanding needed for a subject with such a wide cultural base.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

Leisure and tourism at GNVQ intermediate is taught with other vocational courses because numbers of students are small. Both students in 2003 were awarded a merit. They achieved very well.

BUSINESS

Business studies was the focus subject. Law has been successfully introduced at AS level and students have asked for it to be taught at A2. A lesson was sampled. Teaching and learning were good and students' attitudes very good

Business Studies

Business studies at AS, A2, AVCE and Intermediate GNVQ levels was inspected.

Provision in business studies is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the 2003 A2 examinations appear high and are likely to be well above average; standards are lower in the vocational courses.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and teaching is very good because there is a clear vocational focus.
- Management of the department is good.
- Students make good use of information from part-time employment but only GNVQ students have work experience as an integral part of their course.
- Attitudes of students in Year 12 and 13 are generally good, but this not always the case and some students fail to complete coursework and thus do not gain a pass mark.

Commentary

190. Results at A2 in 2002 were well below average and standards in vocational courses were similarly low. There were staffing problems within the department but there is also evidence of some underachievement and unsatisfactory attitudes of students in some years. In 2003 results at A2 were much higher with the majority of students gaining A or B grades. Results in business studies were better than in any other subject. However, standards in vocational courses were affected by the failure of individuals to complete essential course work. Consequently, achievement overall was satisfactory.
191. Standards in the present Years 12 and 13 are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory overall. It is sometimes good at intermediate level and successful students do progress to the AVCE course and occasionally to AS and A2. Retention rates are good. There are more male students overall but no clear differences in attainment between genders. Individual students with learning difficulties have achieved well because of the quality of support available.
192. Teaching and learning are now very good; there are no longer staffing difficulties and students are making better progress. At AVCE and GNVQ Intermediate level the consistent vocational approach to the subject challenges students and supports those who encounter problems. Intermediate level students benefit from formal work placements and others make good use of their part-time employment to inform their studies. Teachers are skilled at questioning, to assess understanding and to encourage students to think for themselves. Teachers use their own experience in business and industry to provide insights into the business world. They use case studies very effectively and provide valuable models for their classes in illustrating the potential of computers in business, for example in cash-flow forecasting.
193. AVCE students in Year 13 show a secure understanding of market segmentation because of the good examples provided. Higher attaining students on the A2 course have a good knowledge of motivational theory as this has recently been revised. Understanding of how communication in business is managed is good because of very good examples provided by the teacher. In Year 12, students have secure knowledge of business theory and practice, and they use the appropriate vocabulary with confidence. Learning in all lessons is effective because students are encouraged to apply their knowledge and operate as independent learners. Assessment is rigorous and the data is managed well.
194. The department is led and managed well. A team approach has helped to compensate for the long-term staffing issues. There is clear vision for departmental development. New courses have been effectively introduced and planning is good. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good and there is now a real focus on raising achievement and promoting high standards.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

195. Health and social care is taught with other vocational subjects. There is only one student, who was absent during the sample lesson. In 2003 both students were awarded a merit.

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	5
How inclusive the school is		4
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	5
Overall standards achieved		4
Pupils' achievement	3	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities		5
Attendance	4	4
Attitudes	3	5
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	5
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		5
The quality of education provided by the school		4
The quality of teaching	3	5
How well pupils learn	3	5
The quality of assessment	3	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4	4
The leadership and management of the school		5
The governance of the school	4	4
The leadership of the head teacher		5
The leadership of other key staff	3	5
The effectiveness of management	4	5

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

poor (6); very poor (7).