

INSPECTION REPORT

**THE RAVENSCROFT SCHOOL AND TECHNOLOGY
COLLEGE**

Barnet Lane

Barnet

Unique reference number: 101346

Headteacher: Mrs M Karaolis

Lead inspector: Mr R Hancock

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 March 2004

Inspection number: 259197

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:	LEA Community School
Age range of pupils:	11 – 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	769
School address:	Barnet Lane London
Postcode:	N20 8AZ
Telephone number:	020 8445 9205
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Andy Hardy
Date of previous inspection:	13 October 1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

A smaller-than-average mixed school for students in the 11-18 age range that acquired technology college status in September 2003, The Ravenscroft School and Technology College has 769 students on roll. There are far more boys than girls. The size of the sixth form is smaller than most sixth forms. Originally a secondary modern school when it opened in 1954, the school still has an intake whose standards are well below average. Although the social background of students is very mixed, there is a high level of students eligible for free school meals – 43 per cent. In any one intake year, about 15 per cent of students are not accompanied by Key Stage 2 level data because of limited, interrupted, or no previous schooling in this country. Many students are learning English as an additional language – 40 per cent. Students' levels of language learning range from those at the early stages of language acquisition through to those competent enough in English to understand the teaching in all subjects if they are supported in class. The percentage of students identified with special educational needs is well above the national average and the percentage of those students who have statements of special educational need is also well above average. The range of special needs includes students with moderate learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has a designated unit for specific learning difficulties which has places for 15 students. Well over a third of the students come from minority ethnic groups and 140 students are supported by the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2715	R Hancock	Lead inspector	Drama
9115	T Clarke	Lay inspector	
19499	B Baughan	Team inspector	English 11 – 16 English post-16
14871	B Buteux	Team inspector	English as an additional language Media studies post-16
1249	J Edge	Team inspector	Science 11 – 16 Chemistry post-16
4426	T Fitchett	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
12331	V Grigg	Team inspector	Art and design
18912	C Large	Team inspector	Religious education
21899	G Lawson	Team inspector	Special educational needs
31821	B McCann	Team inspector	Physical education
4834	J Morrell	Team inspector	Music
6138	K Page	Team inspector	Mathematics 11 – 16 Mathematics post-16
10392	D Ratcliff	Team inspector	Geography Citizenship
1795	J Sanderson	Team inspector	History
2183	P Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology
33727	N Vinall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Ravenscroft School and Technology College provides a good education for its students.

The achievement of most students is good although overall standards are below average. Most students have positive attitudes and behave well. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and the school is very well managed. The school is also very well supported by the governing body and gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and the school is very well managed and governed.
- Standards are below average but are improving and most students achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school.
- Relationships are very good and students are very well supported and cared for.
- Although much improved, attendance rates are below average and this limits achievement.
- Parents hold the school in very high regard.
- Not enough use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) in most subjects.
- Students are not always told what they have to do to improve.
- A minority of students do not complete their homework regularly and this restricts their achievement.
- The curriculum does not cater fully for lower-attaining students.
- The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship.

The school has made good progress since its last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning has improved, attendance rates are higher, the achievement of students is greater, and standards are beginning to rise. The high quality of leadership and management has been further strengthened.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Given the starting points of students, their achievement is good. Although the results of National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below average in comparison with all schools, they were above average in comparison with similar schools. Overall, achievement is good by the end of Year 9. Standards in most subjects improve in Years 10 and 11, and GCSE examination results are nearer the national average. In comparison with similar schools, results are well above average. Standards in the sixth form are well below average but many students start from a low base and achieve well. Standards in art in the sixth form are above average. In the school as a whole, boys do not achieve as well as girls but students with special educational needs achieve well. They enter the school with very low levels of literacy but, because of effective support, they make substantial progress and most meet their challenging targets in Years 10 and 11. Students who are learning English as an additional language also achieve well because of the good support they receive.

Students' attitudes and behaviour are mostly good but a minority of students are not attracted to learning and distract their teachers, do not complete their homework and leave course work unfinished. This has an adverse impact on standards. **Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Attendance is unsatisfactory in the main school but is satisfactory in the sixth form.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The quality of the curriculum is good in Years 7 to 11 and is satisfactory in the sixth form. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. **The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school.** The assessment of students' work is good and is helping to raise standards, especially when it provides guidance to students on how to improve. Care, guidance and support for students is very good. The school is a safe place. The school listens to the opinions of students and often acts on their views. Links with parents and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and the leadership and management in the school are also very good. The governing body provides very good support. Monitoring procedures are very well developed. The area of special educational needs is very well managed, and students who are learning English as an additional language also benefit from very good management. Very good use is made of data to raise standards. There are very effective systems for monitoring attendance, for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and for tracking the progress of students. Finance is well handled.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The overwhelming majority of parents appreciate the quality of teaching, the school's strong stance on bullying, and that students make good progress. They like the school's sense of fairness, its good range of extra-curricular activities, its induction arrangements, and the well organised school review days. Most students like the fact that they are required to work hard, that homework is set and marked regularly, and that the school is well run. They are less happy about standards of behaviour.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve attendance further.
- Put in place measures to counteract the under-achievement of boys.
- Ensure that homework is consistently used to reinforce learning.
- Promote the use of ICT in all subjects.
- Broaden the curriculum so that it serves the needs of the lowest-attaining students.
- Ensure that marking consistently provides guidance to students on how to improve.

and to meet statutory requirements:

- Hold a daily act of collective worship.
- Teach religious education to all students in the sixth form.

SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form provides a **satisfactory standard of education** and is cost effective. The quality of teaching and learning is good, the attitudes of students are very positive and the sixth form is well led and managed.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well below average but the achievement of most students is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Provision for art is very good, standards are above average and courses are very well taught.
- Relationships are very good and care for each individual student is strong.
- The sixth form is well led and managed but there is no improvement plan to guide its development.
- There is no provision for a course in religious education which is a statutory requirement.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.	
Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision for English literature is good. The subject is well taught and students' achievement is good.
Mathematics	Provision for mathematics is good. AS and A-level students are achieving well and are increasing in number. Good classroom management results in students from different ethnic groups becoming fully integrated. The use of ICT as part of teaching is well developed.
Science	Provision for chemistry is satisfactory. Results have been, and remain, well below average but students' achievement is satisfactory as a result of good teaching. Provision for biology and physics is unsatisfactory because recent results show unsatisfactory progress for too many students.
Information and communication technology	Provision on the AVCE course in Year 13 is good and students achieve well.
Humanities	Provision for geography is good. The subject is well taught and achievement is good. Provision for history is good. The subject is well taught and students' achievement is satisfactory. Provision for psychology is satisfactory. The subject is satisfactorily taught and students' achievement is satisfactory.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Overall, provision for design and technology , given the introduction of a new course, is satisfactory but the course has yet to establish itself. Current achievement is satisfactory.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision for courses in art is very good. Standards on courses are above or well above national averages, the subject is very well taught and students' achievement is good. Provision for drama is good. The subject is well taught and students achieve well. Provision for media studies is satisfactory. The overall standard of teaching is satisfactory and students' achievement is satisfactory.

Business	Provision is good. The subject is well taught and students' achievement is good.
Health and social care	Provision on the GNVQ course is satisfactory and provision on the new AVCE course is good.
General education	Provision is good for the development of key skills in communication, ICT and numeracy in Year 12.
<i>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'.</i>	

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Good support and guidance is provided by tutors and teachers of subjects. Any student who comes straight into the sixth form from outside is allocated a fellow student who acts as a supportive friend. By the time students enter the sixth form, they have built very good relationships with their teachers, who continue to provide extensive support and guidance for them. The guidance, which the students receive on further study and career opportunities, is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is well led and managed. Its greatest strength is the concern and interest taken in each individual student. The small sixth form has been going through difficulties in the recent past, suffering from recruitment problems following the placing of the school in special measures. It is now, however, recovering strongly under a new and energetic leader, and recruitment is improving. However, there is no improvement plan to guide its future development. The school is looking to work with the LEA to share provision with other schools, which is a good feature. Recruitment practices are good and are motivated by a desire to do what is best for all students. Retention rates are improving. Students do not have an opportunity for lessons in religious studies which is a statutory requirement. The sixth form is not subsidised by any other revenue and, given the service it is providing to its current students and the quality of it what is planned for the future, it is proving cost effective. The governing body is staunch in its support for the school to continue with its sixth form provision but its links with the sixth form are tenuous and students have little idea of who governors are or of what they do. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Relationships are good and the students speak well of the sixth form. They like its social aspects, that they are not part of a large anonymous organisation, that their views are listened to and acted upon and that it has their best interests at heart. Students like the friendliness of the atmosphere and appreciate the quality of teaching and the depth of support provided by their teachers. They particularly like helping younger students at the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Given the starting points of students, their achievement is good by the time they reach the end of Year 11. Although the results of National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 are well below average in comparison with all schools, they are above average in comparison with similar schools. Overall achievement is good by the end of Year 9. Standards improve in most subjects in Years 10 and 11 and GCSE examination results are nearer the national average. In comparison with similar schools, results are well above average. Standards in the sixth form are well below average but many students start from a low base and achieve well. In the school as a whole, students with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language, achieve well. Boys do not achieve as well as girls.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Commentary

- The overall level of achievement in the school is good.
 - Standards are well below average by the end of Year 9.
 - Standards are well below average in the sixth form.
 - Students with special educational needs achieve well.
 - Students learning English as an additional language achieve well.
 - Boys do not achieve as well as girls.
1. The achievement of students is good when account is taken of their starting point, which is well below average when the majority of them join the school in Year 7. The literacy skills of a significant number of students, especially boys, are very weak. Although results of National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below average, in comparison with similar schools they were above average. The standard of current work in English, mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9 shows that standards are moving closer to the national average. By the end of Year 9, students achieve well in most other subjects, although overall standards are below average. Standards in physical education are well below average in comparison with all schools but achievement is satisfactory.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.1(29.4)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	32.7 (31.1)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	30.8 (29.4)	33.6 (33.3)

There were 134 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In comparison with other schools in which students achieved comparably in their National Curriculum tests two years earlier, GCSE examination results in 2003 were well above average, a big improvement from the previous year. Results in comparison with all schools were below average but targets based on prior attainment and agreed with the LEA have been exceeded and LEA comparative data indicates good progress and achievement. As is the case for Years 7 to 9, the overall trend in Years 10 and 11 is upward.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	37 (33)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	80 (85)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	95 (94)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	26.9 (29.1)	34.7 (34.8)

There were 156 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In 2003, the proportion of students achieving grades A*-C in the GCSE examination in English was well below average, largely because of poor attendance by a minority of students who did not achieve enough. Boys' results were considerably weaker than those of girls. Achievement is satisfactory because most students exceed the targets set for them at the beginning of the course. In mathematics, the performance of students in GCSE examinations in 2003 was well below the national average and has not improved significantly over time. This is in part due to the impact on achievement and attainment of poor attendance during Years 10 and 11, particularly at the time of the GCSE examination itself. The standards reached by students who attend regularly in Year 11 show that good teaching and learning are raising achievement and attainment. Standards achieved in the GCSE examination in 2003 in science were well below national averages and many students left with no graded result. This represents unsatisfactory progress. This result was below the result for 2002, the fall in standards resulting from half the students not completing coursework, mostly as a result of lack of effort or intermittent attendance. Overall, achievement in science by students in Years 10 and 11 is now satisfactory, though some boys still make insufficient progress. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is good in other subjects and courses, apart from art and design, design and technology and physical education where it is satisfactory. Subjects in which students did best in GCSE examinations in 2003 were business studies, combined science and music. Overall, results were weakest in drama, design and technology and English literature.
- Students learning English as an additional language achieve well because most teachers identify those students needing language support and use a range of teaching strategies to ensure that there are no barriers to students' understanding. Students with statements of special educational need achieve well, supported in the majority of lessons by well trained, experienced teachers and teaching assistants who liaise effectively with subject teachers to plan and structure their work. They enter the school with very low levels of literacy, reading at levels well below those expected for their age. The help they receive through individual tuition, small group literacy work and support in class, carefully tailored to their specific individual learning needs, enables them to make substantial progress. Most students with special educational needs succeed in meeting their challenging targets in Years 10 and 11. This leads to accreditation or college placement. Higher-attaining students and the gifted and talented achieve at appropriate levels.

Sixth form

- Standards on entry to the sixth form are well below average. The school expects a minimum set of GCSE targets to be achieved if students are enrolled on A-level courses but uses a broader set of criteria, including attitudes to study, for acceptance on other courses. The average number of students on vocational courses is much higher than in the average sixth form.
- The attainment picture in the sixth form is a very mixed one. Although, overall, attainment in 2003 and 2002 on A-level courses, or their equivalent, puts the school in the bottom five per cent of all maintained schools, small numbers mean that national comparisons carry little meaning in percentage terms. Given their starting points, a number of individual students did

very well; some with special educational needs especially so. Many students also achieved well on the range of vocational courses open to them. Achievement on the key skills course studied in Year 12 is also good.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	86.7 (74)	89.4 (96.2)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	33.3 (19.8)	32.6 (35.3)
Average point score per pupil	108.6 (116.7)	258.2 (263.3)

There were 7 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes and behaviour are good in the main school and very good in the sixth form. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is unsatisfactory in the main school but is satisfactory in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's action to promote good attendance and punctuality is very good.
- Attendance, although improved, is still unsatisfactory.
- Relationships between students and between staff and students are very good.
- Students' attitudes and behaviour are good, except for a small minority.
- The number of exclusions is high.
- The school deals effectively with all forms of harassment.
- Students are willing to be enterprising and take responsibility.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.4	School data	1.5
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
381	106	5
4		
84		
13		
14	11	
7		
25		1
27	5	
4		
3		
13		

Black or Black British – Caribbean	19	16	
Black or Black British – African	106	13	1
Black or Black British – any other Black background	11	4	
Chinese	9		
Any other ethnic group	48	21	
No ethnic group recorded	4		

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

Commentary

7. Attendance is below the national average. There are some students with zero attendance, who remain on the school's role and if 14 students with very low attendance, all chronic school refusers, were excluded from the figures, attendance, overall, would be satisfactory. The action the school is taking to promote good attendance is very good and is a strength of the school. The school has managed to increase attendance from under 80 percent to over 90 percent over seven years. This has been achieved through the close involvement of tutors, heads of year and members of the senior management team, all of whom work well with the education welfare officer based in the school. Learning mentors and the school counsellor are also a part of the support team. Absences are closely monitored according to year, gender and ethnic group. The poorest attendees are white British boys. Faculty teachers check regularly for post-registration truancy. Senior managers monitor punctuality well and time is made up through detention. The school has identified that poor attendance adversely affects achievement and this is widely advertised to students and parents.
8. Students' attitudes and behaviour, in spite of a high exclusion rate, around the school and in the classroom, are mostly good. Most students are polite and courteous. Some students find learning difficult and their behaviour can distract teachers and other more motivated students. Some are not prepared to undertake homework or to finish coursework. The attitudes of this small minority of students, has an adverse impact on standards. The school has high expectations of conduct and most students respond well. Undercurrents of poor behaviour were observed in some lessons but these were managed well and only rarely were lessons disrupted. The school does not tolerate unacceptable behaviour and, consequently, the exclusion rate is high. However, the number of exclusions is reducing, partly due to the introduction of internal exclusion. There are no disturbing patterns among the exclusions. The school encourages good behaviour by the extensive use of awards. Bullying and harassment are rare, but when they do occur the school has very good systems in place to deal with them.
9. Students are encouraged to show initiative and take responsibility and do so well. For example, an active and enthusiastic school council takes its responsibilities seriously and sees many of their recommendations come to fruition. School councillors have to sign a contract promising a very high standard of conduct and to act as good role models, which shows that the school takes the council seriously. Students also take the opportunity to become prefects and some train to be peer mentors, playing a supportive role in the school's pastoral arrangements.
10. Relationships in the school are very good, both between students, who work well together in the classroom, and between staff and students, who show each other mutual respect. This is another strength of the school. One student from Year 7 said that she particularly liked the school because of all the different religions in the school. Through the very good relationships and the range of opportunities available, students learn to respect each other and learn well the responsibilities of living in a community.
11. Students' cultural development is good. Music, drama and art contribute to their understanding of culture through opportunities to attend concerts, theatre trips and drama productions. Students' understanding of the multi-cultural world in which they live is

considerably enhanced by school activities. The 'Refugee Week' provides a focal point for students to understand the background of many of the students, and the art of other cultures is also effectively used to promote insights into different customs and traditions.

12. The spiritual aspects of development are to be found on occasions such as the school's observance of Remembrance Day. Talent, skill and achievement are valued and celebrated in all areas of school life. Creativity is applauded through art and other work, attractively and proudly displayed around the school. Values such as honesty are given prominence and students are encouraged to think about the way in which human emotions are conveyed through music and art. Similarly, in humanities, teachers openly express their feelings about what is unique or extraordinary about the topics they are studying and encourage students to be reflective.
13. Assemblies make an effective contribution to the moral development of students. Moral aspects of human behaviour are also often the topic of discussions in tutor time and this aspect is further broadened out in lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and in citizenship itself. In the school generally there is an emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of living in a community and a respect for the individual. The school's strong stance on moral responsibility, as seen in its mission statement, is supported in all curriculum areas. Moral issues are debated in the humanities and English. Fair play in individual and competitive sport is strongly advocated. The PSHCE programme promotes moral values. Most students behave in a responsible and considerate manner. Instances of unkindness are rare. The rights of people to work in a peaceful and safe environment are recognised and students exercise self-control in laboratories, workshops, in sport and around the school. Responsible action is frequently praised and the willingness of younger and older students to assume responsibility as year and school councillors and as prefects shows a good understanding of commitment.
14. The strong emphasis on moral development has made an impact on students' social development and this is evident in lessons where opportunities for discussion and paired work are used appropriately by students. They work together well and good manners are evident in the way they listen and speak to one another and converse with teachers and other adults. Students have a good understanding of rewards and sanctions and like to earn approval. The positive relationships enjoyed by the school community create a purposeful and happy learning environment.

Sixth form

15. Students' attendance is satisfactory because the school has the same expectations of sixth form students as it has of the rest of the school, requiring students to be present at registration in the morning and afternoon. In the year 2002-2003 the attendance level of sixth form students was over 90 per cent, which compares favourably with that of other sixth forms.
16. Students' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They act as very good role models for the rest of the school and are willing to take on responsibility. They support students in the main school and this helps to raise the profile of the sixth form. Students have taken an initiative in forming their own Interact Club, following a visit from a representative of the local Rotary Club, and through this are starting to raise money for two of their preferred charities. A photograph showing a student receiving the Interact Charter at a Rotary Club dinner confirms that students help to raise the school's profile in the community by representing the school at outside engagements. The involvement of some of the students who train as classroom assistants with the Arsenal Double Club stresses the important role that sixth form students are prepared to take in supporting younger students.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. The curriculum is also good. Support, care and guidance are very good and there are good links with parents and the wider community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Good use is made of assessment to raise standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most lessons are well planned and have good levels of challenge.
- Very good use is made of learning assistants.
- Students' behaviour is well managed.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Most teachers make good use of assessment.
- Most teachers make good use of homework.
- Not enough use is made of ICT to develop learning.
- There is insufficient emphasis on helping students to become independent learners.

Commentary

17. The quality of teaching and learning is good or better in just over three out of four lessons. In about one lesson in four it is very good or excellent. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching and learning are good overall in English, mathematics and science, although there is some unsatisfactory teaching in the first two of these subjects. The school places great emphasis on the importance of teaching and learning for raising the achievement of students. The overall quality of lessons has improved since the last inspection.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 161 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 (4%)	33 (20%)	83 (52%)	33 (21%)	5 (3%)	0 (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.

18. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly. They have a good understanding of how to organize learning effectively. It is common for lessons to start with an activity which captures the interest of students and which is then developed further into a main learning activity. Lessons are often effectively rounded off with time devoted to reinforcing what has been learned and indicating how subsequent lessons will take learning further. Well organised lessons of this nature are helping to give coherence to learning and providing students with skills, understanding and knowledge.
19. Most teachers place emphasis on the development of literacy, an essential factor given the weak basic skills of many students. Key words are emphasized which helps all students to learn. Those who find learning difficult are helped to make good progress by the effective use of support assistants who have a good relationship with the students they support and a good understanding of their needs. The teaching of students who are learning English as an additional language is good: a highly skilled and experienced co-ordinator and her team of bilingual assistants use a range of approaches to help students learn and develop independence. Students respond eagerly to this sensitive teaching.

20. Teachers have a good command of their subjects and are keen to share their enthusiasm and knowledge with students who, in turn, respond well. In some lessons opportunities are missed for developing the independence of students because teachers provide too much information themselves. Most lessons have a good level of challenge and students are made to work hard. Questions are searching and lessons move along at a brisk pace. Some teachers are making effective use of homework to reinforce learning, or to extend it, but this is not consistent, a situation that has already been highlighted by the senior managers' monitoring of students' work. It is a weaker feature of work in English, history, ICT and religious education.
21. Occasionally, lessons are unsatisfactory, for a variety of reasons. In most lessons, students are very well managed, which means that teachers can rely on creating a disciplined atmosphere in which learning can take place. Some, less experienced teachers, find this difficult to manage and students behave badly and prevent learning from progressing. In one or two lessons, teachers' expectations of students were not high enough, which meant that learning was insufficient.
22. The quality of learning is good. Many students are acquiring competence in literacy as a result of effective teaching in English and its reinforcement in other subjects. They are learning how to work with one another in subjects such as drama. They are learning the rudiments of research and investigation in geography, history and science. Lessons in design and technology provide good opportunities to learn about the process of design and making, although students do not have enough written work in this subject. They do not have enough opportunities to learn through the application of their ICT skills in all subjects. In some subjects, such as modern foreign languages, there is insufficient emphasis on the development of students' independence.
23. Teachers are making good use of assessment to improve students' learning. Most work is well marked and the information gained on the students' strengths and weaknesses is used to inform lesson planning. In the best practice, students are given good guidance on how to improve but this is not consistent across departments and is a weaker feature of work in mathematics, ICT and religious education. Teachers have a good knowledge of examination and course requirements and are able to assess work accurately.
24. Some students with significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are taught in separate groups. They respond well to skilful teaching and many are returned to class with effective support and useful strategies to help them manage their behaviour and relationships. Very good use is made of assessment to monitor progress and achievement. Students have clear and measurable targets and are shown how to meet them. The teacher who manages the centre for students with specific learning difficulties provides expert diagnostic assessment for students attached to the centre and those with specific learning difficulties throughout the school.
25. The assessment records of students who are learning English as an additional language are clear and precise and contain good detail on their progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Assessment records are shared with subject leaders who are provided with teaching strategies that can be used in all subjects.

Sixth form

26. The quality of teaching and learning was good in seven out of ten lessons and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Several lessons were very good or excellent. Teaching is good in English, and mathematics and is very good in science. In the best lessons, students are given a high degree of independence, are questioned very well so that they have to think for themselves and make good use of ICT.
27. In weaker lessons, teachers spend too long talking and do not give students enough opportunities to find things out for themselves by carrying out research or undertaking

presentations. Sometimes, students can appear passive when in very small groups because it is difficult for teachers to generate interaction when there are so few students.

28. The quality of learning is good overall. Students use ICT effectively, are analytical, handle number well, especially in lessons in health and social care, and understand and use correct specialist terminology, especially in lessons in science and business education. In some lessons, they gain confidence through making well prepared presentations and learn how to evaluate one another's work.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good in Years 7 to 11 and is satisfactory in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good provision for vocational courses in Years 10 and 11.
- Not enough use is made of ICT in the curriculum as a whole.
- Students with special educational needs have good opportunities for learning.
- The curriculum does not meet the needs of some lower-attaining students.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The key skills course in the sixth form is effective.
- Small numbers on some sixth form courses militate against good learning.

Commentary

29. All National Curriculum subjects are taught for appropriate periods of time in Years 7 to 9 and the curriculum is further broadened by lessons in PSHCE and drama. French is studied in Year 7 and students have the choice of studying either French and Spanish in Years 8 and 9. Those who find learning difficult are appropriately disapplied from modern foreign languages in Year 9 to enable them to take extra mathematics and English lessons and a life-skills course. All students take an additional key skills course in the application of number, communication and ICT in Year 9. Students are organized in a way that helps them to learn most effectively. They are divided into two ability bands and are then set by ability within each band in Years 8 and 9. These setting arrangements enable the needs of students of different abilities to be more closely met and helps them to achieve.
30. The breadth of the curriculum is maintained in Years 10 and 11 but it also offers an appropriate degree of specialisation. In keeping with the school's status as a technology college, ICT and design and technology – electronics, food technology, graphics or resistant materials – are compulsory at this stage and provide a distinctive feature of the curriculum. Students are required to select two subjects from the arts, business studies, child care, drama, expressive arts, geography, history, music and physical education, which helps to ensure that they receive a balanced education. They may choose to study Spanish if they have studied it in Year 9. Students may also choose to study a GNVQ course in ICT at intermediate level, in addition to the compulsory half GCSE course, either during normal school hours or as a 'twilight' course for gifted and talented students. Some lower-attaining students are not motivated by existing courses because they find them too difficult.
31. There is a good stress on the development of literacy in the curriculum at large. Teachers of all subjects identify key words for students and help them understand why they are important to the study of the subject. In some faculties students are given good opportunities to write at length. Numeracy is less well developed.
32. In Years 10 and 11, provision for vocational courses is good, particularly for less able students. They are able to follow courses leading to a GNVQ accreditation in science, ICT, business studies and leisure and tourism. These courses are well taught and place great emphasis on the development of basic skills such as literacy and numeracy as well as the development of

independence and confidence, attributes that many of the students need. These well organised and purposeful courses are preparing students well for the world of work, or the next stage of their education and training. Students in Year 10 have good opportunities for work experience.

33. A small number of students who are in danger of being excluded are selected to take a very effective alternative curriculum in Years 10 and 11. In addition to courses in English, leisure and tourism, mathematics, physical education and technology, they attend a local college for one day each week to take a vocational course and undertake work experience with a local employer.
34. The PSHCE programme is currently in draft form, having been updated to include citizenship and reorganised so that it can be taught to each year group as a day course five times a year. The courses on careers, sex and health issues, citizenship and study skills are well planned and are relevant to students' age and experience. Resources are identified and the school nurse, staff from the Connexions agency and the police are all to participate in the programme, which is a good feature.
35. Tutor time is used to satisfactory effect in individual cases but not in all. Assemblies are often strong on communicating moral messages but do little to enhance spiritual awareness. Because a daily act of collective worship is not held for all students the school is not meeting statutory requirements. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, musical and drama productions, clubs for different interest groups, and extra classes for intensive work in literacy and mathematics. The library and ICT facilities are much used outside normal school hours.
36. Students with special educational needs have good opportunities for making progress because the learning support faculty provides effective help for them on all courses. There are small group sessions for developing handwriting, reading and literacy skills. Booster literacy groups have also been established. The school has adopted the Key Stage 3 intervention strategy for mathematics and science. There are study support sessions and small group sessions for students with specific learning difficulties. This provision allows students to learn, catch up, or reinforce their basic skills and enables them to study National Curriculum courses and to take part in national examinations.
37. The work-related course and college placements, together with good support for examination courses, enable most students to leave school with a satisfactory range of accreditation and to leave for a work or college placement. However, some opportunities are missed to extend students' accreditation because they are not able to study on vocational courses at the right level.
38. Accommodation is satisfactory and good use is made of the library by the English department to promote literacy. Not enough use is made of ICT in a significant number of subjects. There are insufficient resources for teaching the GCSE examination course in physical education and there are insufficient books in the geography department. Some hand tools are not used properly in resistant materials work in design and technology.

Sixth form

39. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and has some good features. The range of A-level courses is appropriate and the range of vocational courses is broadly satisfactory and is being enlarged. The vocational courses provided are demanding and require good linguistic and ICT skills. Other vocational courses, less demanding on these skills, are not available which means that the full range of students' needs is not being served. GCSE examination courses in English and mathematics are available for those who did not obtain them before entry.

40. In addition to the range of A-level and vocational courses which are appropriate for most students, the sixth form curriculum has a key skills course in Year 12 in the application of number, communication and ICT, which all students are expected to study. This is a well designed and well taught course which effectively addresses weaknesses in basic skills and is much needed. There is an effective programme of social, health and careers education and two weeks of work experience with local employers.
41. Some students are admitted to A-level and vocational courses which are unsuitable for them and fail to complete their courses. The number of students on each course is generally small and the range of courses which can be economically provided is limited. In very small classes, and there are several of these in subjects such as psychology and chemistry, it is difficult for teachers to develop the interaction between students which makes for good learning. To help overcome these problems, collaboration with another school is being explored with the help of the local education authority, which is a good initiative. A few students with special educational needs enter the sixth form and are supported effectively by learning support staff. The school does not comply with the requirement that all students in the sixth form should have some experience of religious education.

Care, guidance and support

Care, guidance and support for students is very good. The provision for students' health and safety is also very good. The involvement of students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good. Students are educated in a safe and caring environment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The procedures for monitoring and tracking students' academic and personal development are very good.
- Students have very good and trusting relationships with many adults in the school.
- Induction arrangements for new students are good.
- The guidance on further study and career opportunities is good.
- The school seeks, values and acts on students' views.
- There are good procedures to ensure that students work in a healthy and safe environment.

Commentary

42. The procedures in place for looking after students' welfare, health and safety are very good. Proper child protection procedures are in place for all students. The school works closely with the relevant social service departments to monitor the small number of students who are on the child protection register at any one time. The headteacher insists that the local authority's health and safety department carry out an annual audit of the premises to supplement the school's own procedures, which are secure and are regularly monitored by the governing body. When students are sick, injured or need medication they are treated with care by qualified first-aiders.
43. The procedures for monitoring students' academic and personal development through tracking individual students are very good and are a strength of the school. The pastoral procedures are very good because any one student has a good and trusting relationship with several members of staff, to whom they can go for advice and guidance. For example, apart from the form tutor, the head of year or deputy headteacher and classroom teachers, students can consult the school counsellor, learning mentors, the Connexions mentor or classroom assistants. The good contacts that the tutors and heads of year have with the faculty heads and the classroom teachers, through the use of internal e-mail, help to ensure that students do not slip through the net if things go wrong. Good and regular contact with parents is also a feature of the system. The school seeks and values the views of students and the school council is a very established and well respected feature of school life.

44. Induction arrangements are good. The head of Year 7 and form tutors make early visits to feeder primary schools and the induction process starts in earnest after the students from Year 11 have left. The school holds a parent induction day towards the end of the summer term. Careful attention is paid to Key Stage 2 results and heads of faculties are involved in the provisional banding of new students. At the start of the autumn term, new students' entry is staggered during the first morning to help students in Year 11 and classroom teachers provide good support for the new arrivals. At the end of the autumn term, the banding arrangements are reviewed. A particularly good feature is the school's induction arrangements for students arriving at other times in the school year, often refugee families or those seeking asylum.
45. Careers advice and guidance are good. The school is starting to pilot a careers curriculum for students in Years 7 and 8 in preparation for the autumn term when it becomes a statutory requirement. For students in Years 9, 10 and 11 there is a comprehensive careers curriculum. All students in Year 10 undertake two weeks of work experience during the summer term. Extended work experience is available for those taking part in work-related education. The head of careers receives very good support from the Connexions adviser. The advice that students receive strongly influences whether they go straight into employment, to college, or into the sixth form for further education. The school provides good quality advice to parents on how they can help their sons and daughters to revise for GCSE examinations.

Sixth form

46. Tutors, subject teachers and co-ordinators provide good support and guidance. By the time students enter the sixth form they have built very good relationships with staff members who provide students with extensive support and guidance. For those students who come straight into the sixth form from other schools there is an effective 'buddy' system of support. The guidance, which students receive on further study or career opportunities is good. They receive very good advice through the Connexions service. Students undertake two weeks work experience in Year 12. Advice on interview technique is available for students in the sixth form. They also have access to web sites and college prospectuses. The school values the opinions of students and seeks their views. They have their own school council. Support for students with special educational needs is very effective because relationships between students and staff are very good and learning takes place in a secure atmosphere.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The schools' links with parents and the community are good. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high esteem.
- The school provides very good quality information for parents.
- The school is developing an increasingly good reputation within the community.
- There are good links with the community and other agencies.
- Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Commentary

47. A particular strength is the high regard that parents have for the school. This is evident from their positive responses in school surveys, from the parents' meeting with the lead inspector and from interviews held with parents during the inspection. Parents particularly like the way the school expects students to do their best and the care and support offered to them. The school provides a range of good quality information, particularly about students' progress. The school seeks and values parents' views and values.

48. Parents make a good contribution to students' learning through their links with the school. For example, the school recently changed from having open evenings to student review days which enable parents to spend valuable time with their child's group tutor each term. The school issues three reports during the year, which grade the students according to attainment and effort. It is also made clear on the reports what the levels of attainment mean. Good links are maintained with parents through the student contact books which highlight students' targets and homework. The contact books are used well.
49. The school has good links with the local community and other agencies. For example, the school nurse and the police liaison officer both take part in the PSHCE programme. The school is active in local associations. A number of the links have a direct impact on students' learning and development, for example some students in Year 7 and the sixth form benefit from the school's link with a prestigious football club. Local businesses and school both benefit from the work experience programme. These, and many other community links, have helped the school gain an increasingly good reputation within the community.
50. The school's has good links with a local college through the provision of work-related education. NVQ courses, which are available at the college for students in Years 10 and 11, are for either a whole or half a day per week. Among the provision are courses in art and design, beauty therapy, hairdressing, catering, arts and media and construction for less academic students. Students' files show that attendance at the courses usually improves over time. GCSE examination courses in ICT and leisure and tourism are available for more able students.
51. The school has good links with other schools, both primary and secondary. For example, because of its technology college status, the school has been able to help children at a local primary school with a design technology project by providing the necessary resources and expertise. Sixth form students assist in local primary schools. There are also some sporting links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. Leadership and management in the school taken as a whole are very good. The governing body provides very good support.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent.
- Leadership and management in the school as a whole are very good.
- The governing body provides very good support for the school.
- Monitoring is very well developed.
- The area of special educational needs is very well managed.
- Students who are learning English as an additional language benefit from very good management but there are insufficient assistants.
- The sixth form is well managed but there is no improvement plan.

Commentary

52. The leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent. She shows great understanding of the school and is proud of its strengths and clear about its future direction. She exercises a strong positive influence over its development and her skill, energy and commitment have been major factors in enabling the school to improve rapidly since it was placed in special measures four years ago. She enjoys the support of staff, governors, parents and students. The headteacher is able to transmit her vision to others and has forged a very strong team of senior leaders, each of whom has specialist complementary strengths.

53. The headteacher and senior leaders are very visible in the school. No one is left in any doubt as to who is responsible for setting consistent standards and ensuring that everyone behaves appropriately and does their best to make the school successful. This is epitomised by senior leaders supervising the arrangements for monitoring students who are late to school, being present in playgrounds and corridors outside lesson times, being on hand in the dining room at lunchtime and being available to support teachers should they need assistance in classrooms.
54. Leadership and management are underpinned by a strong professional desire to serve the best interests of all students. This aspect has developed further since the school was last inspected and leadership and management show good improvement. Emphasis is still placed on ensuring that all staff in key positions are well informed and monitoring procedures are now numerous and effective. Particularly good systems are in place for maintaining and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Lessons are observed on a frequent and regular basis and teachers are provided with good feedback on the strengths of their work and areas for development. The system for monitoring students' work is very well developed and thorough analysis of students' work books enables both teachers and senior managers to have a firm grip on standards, especially in terms of standards of presentation and the effective use of homework. Teachers are provided with key information about their students, which means that they are in a strong position to prepare lessons carefully so that individual needs can be met.
55. The school improvement plan provides a strong basis for effective action. It emphasises the significance of teaching and learning and the key part they play in ensuring that standards rise. The professional development of teachers is given a high priority and each week there is a major focus on an aspect of staff training. The priorities of the improvement plan are replicated in faculties, most of which are very well led and managed. The school's pastoral system, including the monitoring of attendance and systems for improving it, is also managed very effectively and has established very good systems for ensuring that all students are well supported.
56. The leadership and management of special educational needs in the school is very good. Staff in the faculty of learning support have a clear, shared vision of future development. There is good systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning with shared outcomes and effective planning for future progress. This results in the good progress of the majority of students with special educational needs. Communication systems are very effective and the head of faculty is a member of the senior management team and has substantial support from the headteacher and governors. Teaching staff are kept up-to-date with new developments in the area of special educational needs by regular training sessions and work with departments. A strength of the faculty is the work done by a very good team of experienced and skilled teaching assistants whose work supports students very effectively. The school uses money from the school budget to supplement the annual funding for special educational needs and provides good value for money. There has been good improvement in the provision for special educational needs since the last inspection.
57. The cornerstone of the provision for students who are learning English as an additional language is the very good leadership of the co-ordinator who manages her small team of dedicated teaching assistants sensitively. The best possible use is made of the resources now available. Limitations in accommodation mean that it is not easy for the co-ordinator and teaching assistants to work independently with small groups. There are insufficient teaching support assistants to cope with the increasing number of students needing language support.
58. Very well led, the governing body provides very good support for the school. Now at full strength, the governing body shows a very well developed sense of what the school has needed to do to improve and what it needs to do in the future. It works closely with the school on health and safety matters, developmental planning, assists in the appointment of key members of staff, has helped the school in its work on the improvement of behaviour, and is taking interest in the development of the school council. It analyses data related to the overall performance of the school and works closely with the school to set appropriate targets for

improvement. It enables the school to meet all statutory requirements other than the need to hold a daily act of collective worship and for religious education to be studied in the sixth form. It has unfailingly helped the school to work within its resources and to budget carefully. The school's finances are handled in a business-like way and there is a good awareness of the principles of best value. Although the expenditure on students is well above average for London schools with sixth forms, students are achieving well in relation to their starting points and the school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	3,629,934	Balance from previous year	231,215
Total expenditure	3,695,785	Balance carried forward to the next	165,364
Expenditure per pupil	4,805		

Sixth form

59. The small sixth form has been going through difficulties in the recent past, suffering from recruitment problems following the placing of the school in special measures. It is now, however, recovering strongly under a new and energetic leader and recruitment is improving. The school is looking to work with the local education authority to share provision with other schools, which is a good development. There is no separate sixth form improvement plan, which is a weakness because there are numerous complex issues which do not have the benefit of a well thought through strategy to help them to be realised. Relationships are good and the students themselves speak well of the sixth form. Recruitment practices are good and are motivated by a desire to do what is best for all students.

60. Students' progress is monitored regularly. They are expected to undertake work experience and to contribute positively to the welfare of the wider community and to act as good role models for the rest of the school. They are helped to get into good working and personal habits by attending registrations and showing good levels of commitment to their studies. They do not have an opportunity for lessons in religious studies which is a statutory requirement. The sixth form is not subsidised by any other revenue and, given the service it is providing to its current students and the quality of it what is planned for the future, is proving cost effective.

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 **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the faculty are good.
- Results in GCSE examinations are well below the national averages, but students who attend school regularly often exceed their predicted grades.
- Boys do less well than girls.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Assessment of work is very thorough and students understand what they need to do to improve.
- The use of homework to raise standards is not consistent.

Commentary

61. When students enter the school, their attainment is well below national averages. By the end of Year 9 the gap has narrowed. In 2003, although results in National Curriculum tests were well below average in relation to all schools, they were better than this in relation to similar schools. This represents good achievement. In 2003, the proportion of students achieving grades A*-C in the GCSE examination was well below average, largely because of poor attendance by a minority of students who do not reach the grades they are capable of. Boys' results are considerably worse than those of girls. Consequently, achievement is not so good at this key stage but is still satisfactory because most students exceed the targets set for them at the beginning of the course.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have very good knowledge of their students and they take account of the needs of all in their planning. Students with special educational needs, and those who are learning English as an additional language, receive effective attention and support from the two specialist departments. Lessons are stimulating and have clear objectives that are shared with students at the start of lessons and reviewed together at the end. Time is well used and there are high expectations of behaviour and pace of work. Teachers give students constant feedback and written work is marked carefully with clear indications of what is needed for improvement. For the most part, students respond very well but there was a small amount of poor behaviour in lower sets in Year 7 which teachers found difficult to manage, and which led to unsatisfactory lessons. Students in Years 10 and 11 develop good skills of literary analysis but the written work of many students is marred by common errors of spelling, expression and sentence construction. There is a lack of consistency in the use of homework.
63. Leadership and management of the department are good. The current head of faculty has been in post a relatively short time but has already made considerable impact on the organisation and teaching of English. Resources are well managed, including very good use of the school library. There are stimulating and inspiring displays of work in the departmental area, together with statistics of examination results and posters connected with the subject. Through the head of faculty and the advanced skills teacher in the department, the school is involved in curriculum development in English and literacy in the local education authority at large, which also brings great benefits to the students. A scheme of work is firmly in place. It is under constant review and, although at the moment it lacks clear arrangements for teaching the elements of ICT that it should, the head of faculty is developing plans to ensure that this requirement will be met in the near future.

64. Since the faculty was inspected in 1997, there have been considerable improvements, including a clear system for lesson planning, effective measures to improve standards in reading and the development of very good practice to support students' literacy skills, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

65. The school makes very good provision for developing the literacy skills of its students, most of whom have very poor competence in reading and writing when they join the school. There is a strong central literacy policy, managed by the literacy co-ordinator, who regularly reviews and analyses the support given in all subjects of the curriculum. He has worked with an external literacy adviser to provide effective training for staff. Reading skills are developed in a variety of ways: there is intensive help for individual students given by the staff in the special educational needs department; a weekly silent reading period takes place during tutor time in Years 7, 8 and 9; all students in the first three years are taken to the library for a substantial session of reading, guided by the librarian and by their English teachers. Writing is also well supported across all departments, with focused attention on technical vocabulary and its spelling. In subjects such as English and history, where essay writing is an important feature of the work, students are given specific guidance on how to organise and express their ideas appropriately. As a result of these measures and the identification of key words for learning in the work of all faculties, many students gain confidence and skill in all aspects of language as they move through the school. However, the work of a significant number of students shows little improvement, despite teachers' best efforts, because their attendance is so poor that they do not have enough systematic practice at improving the accuracy of their written work.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good and has many very good features.
 - Leadership and management of the department are very good.
 - The achievement of students is good in both French and Spanish.
 - There are insufficient opportunities for students' independent learning and for promoting their speaking of the foreign language.
 - Although below average, GCSE examination results are in line with those of similar schools.
66. By the end of Year 9, standards in both French and Spanish are generally below average and this is mainly because speaking confidence is weak, whereas listening skills and the skills of reading with understanding are stronger and are closer to national expectations. Students achieve well in both languages because they are beginning to develop a sound grasp of basic grammar, show good accuracy in writing and are confident at understanding written and spoken text. Beginners in both languages make very good progress. Results in the GCSE examinations are in line with those for similar schools although they are still below national averages. Some abler students are attaining the highest grades, but boys do less well than girls and a substantial number of students are not completing modules of the course, resulting in a large number of the lowest or unclassified grades. Observation of students' work by the end of Year 11 indicates a wide range of attainment, with standards still below average in French but closer to average in Spanish.
67. The quality of teaching is good. There were some very good features in a number of lessons. Teachers have a very strong subject knowledge, are enthusiastic in their delivery and plan very structured lessons which meet the needs of all students. Almost without exception, lessons start promptly with a clear explanation of the purpose of the lesson and the pace of lessons is invariably brisk. Whilst teachers use the foreign language for much classroom

communication, this is not always consistent. Classes are well managed and teachers establish positive relationships with students, whose attitudes and behaviour are good. Students' work is marked conscientiously with helpful directions on how they might improve. There are, however, insufficient opportunities to develop students' independent learning as many students lack confidence, particularly in speaking, and are too heavily reliant upon prompts or the teacher. Students rarely ask questions or seek help in the foreign language.

68. The department is very well managed by a strong head of department, who is a very effective leader and role-model for her colleagues. Staff are supported well and the head of department has created a coherent team that work together and has a strong professional interest in the development of the department. Since the last inspection of modern languages, teaching has improved, standards have risen steadily, and students' achievement is greater. Assessment and marking are much more effective. Improvement has, therefore, been good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment at the end of Year 9 is well above the average for similar schools although standards are below the national average.
- Standards at the end of Year 11 are well below national averages because many students in Year 10 do not maintain the progress made in Years 7 to 9.
- Students who have special educational needs, or who learn English as an additional language, achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and is raising levels of achievement.
- Most students are unable to take responsibility for their own improvement due to the limited feedback received on their marked work.

Commentary

69. The results of National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were well above the national average for similar schools but below that for all schools. There has been a good trend of improvement in Years 7 to 9 since the subject was inspected in 1997 and present standards, although below the national average, show that students in Year 9 are achieving well.
70. The performance of students in GCSE examinations in 2003 was well below the national average and has not improved significantly over time. This is in part due to the impact on achievement and attainment of poor attendance during Years 10 and 11, particularly at the time of the GCSE examination itself. The standards reached by students who attend regularly in Year 11 show that in lessons, in which the quality of teaching and learning is good, students' achievement is improving.
71. In Years 7 to 9, achievement in lessons shows that the majority of students make good progress. However, the average and least able students do not maintain this good progress in Year 10 because teaching and learning frequently repeats work already covered in Years 7 to 9. The achievement of the majority of the more able students is good.
72. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. The standard of support for students who are learning English as an additional language ensures that they achieve well and sometimes better than other students. Students with special educational needs make good progress because the high quality teamwork provided by teachers and support staff ensures that weak literacy skills are addressed effectively. The majority of students are unable to take responsibility for their own improvement due to the limited

feedback received on their marked work. In particular, this slows the progress being made by gifted and talented students.

73. The overall quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 is good and has improved since the subject was inspected in 1997. Standards and achievement rise when teachers use their very good subject expertise to demonstrate and model new learning effectively with the aid of ICT, practical apparatus and relevant contexts. Good classroom relationships and the regular use of subject specific vocabulary, together with good opportunities for speaking and listening, increase the confidence of all students to a level where they are willing to discuss and present mathematics within whole class activity. Unsatisfactory teaching occurs in one in seven lessons when there is insufficient challenge and a weak match between the lesson's learning objectives and activities.
74. The quality of leadership is good. The head of department provides a good role model for teaching and learning. The developmental process of using and applying the schemes of work provides a good basis on which to raise the attainment of all students, although it is not yet fully effective in practice. Management is good and has led to the consistent monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice. The effective use of data has resulted in more accurate targeting of students' needs. Resources are also used effectively. However, management has had less impact in targeting those areas of the curriculum where students continuously experience difficulty and in maintaining the rate of progress of students as they move through Year 10.
75. The overall progress since the subject was last inspected has been satisfactory. Students are more competent in mental calculations and their attitude towards learning has improved. This, coupled with improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, has led to an improvement in standards in Years 7 to 9 but not yet to significant progress in improving standards in the GCSE examination.

Mathematics across the curriculum

76. Competence in mathematics is below the national average but is improving because the school provides extra-curricular tuition for students with weaknesses in this area and is also increasing the opportunities for students to develop their numeracy skills throughout the curriculum. The numeracy co-ordinator has constructed an excellent policy on the development of calculation skills based upon the national mathematics strategy for Years 7 to 9. These initiatives have led to the development of numeracy skills being included in the schemes of work of other subjects. For example, lessons in geography and ICT improve the accuracy of students' numerical skills through the collection and interpretation of numerical data in contexts such as map reading, fieldwork and the use of spreadsheets, and in modern foreign languages and science, students' skills of calculation and estimation are developed when they work with time and formulae. Students' numeracy skills are improving as a result of this cross-curricular initiative.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is continuous improvement in standards and achievement from Year 7 to Year 9.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- The science course in Years 10 and 11 is not suited to lower-attaining students.
- GCSE examination results in 2003 were well below average and below those for the previous year.

Commentary

77. Results in the National Curriculum tests were well below average in 2003. Standards on entry are well below average and there are also a significant number of students who join the school in different years who have often had little science education. Despite these factors, progress is better than the progress of students in similar schools. The trend of improvement in standards by the end of Year 9 is also rising significantly faster than the national trend. These developments are a direct result of the work of well-led staff who have improved schemes of work, provided effective revision strategies and organised visits to places of scientific interest. They have also made good use of external advice in the form of the National Science Strategy.
78. Standards achieved in the GCSE examination in 2003 were well below national averages. Many students left with no graded result. This represents unsatisfactory progress from their starting point when they joined the GCSE examination course Year 10. This result was also below the result for 2002. The fall in standards is because half the students were on a new course and did not complete their coursework – mostly because of lack of effort or attendance.
79. Current work in science shows that overall standards, whilst still below national averages, represent good achievement. This is a better picture than in recent years. Standards now reached by students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are better than they were in 2003 and their achievement is good because teaching is so effective. For students in Years 10 and 11, standards are broadly as they were in 2003, though coursework standards are not yet secure. The other course is a science General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ). Most students are interested and staff are making strong efforts to make sure all work steadily to complete the course, but the course itself is not fully meeting the needs of all the lower-attaining students allocated to it, although the school is taking sensible steps to deal with this issue.
80. Overall, achievement by students in Years 10 and 11 is now satisfactory, though some boys still make insufficient progress. Achievement in all years for students learning English as an additional language is good, because they are very motivated and their needs are well addressed. Support for students with special educational needs is also very effective and they achieve well.
81. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It is good in Years 7, 8 and 9 and is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 where not enough attention is paid to ensuring that all students persevere with tasks and that high-attaining students are provided with the extra work they need to give of their best. The main strengths in teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 is the variety and interest of the work, together with the imaginative methods used to keep students alert and ready to learn. Teachers assess work well though not enough is done to ensure that students know what they have to do to improve.
82. Standards now are higher than at the time the subject was last inspected and overall improvement has been good. Staff work as a team because of the very good leadership of the head of department. An ambitious faculty development plan is in place and its priorities are being achieved. Procedures for monitoring teaching are effective. There has been useful investment in text books, in the provision of ICT equipment and in laboratory refurbishment. However, as yet the use of ICT is not well integrated, and some laboratories still inhibit learning. Science staff have extensive, accurate data about students, which they use well to identify the best ways of meeting the needs of most students.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising strongly as a result of very good leadership and management.
- Teaching is good and benefits from the strong subject knowledge of teachers.

- Standards are below average but students achieve well.
- The staff development programme is very good and has substantially increased staff confidence in the use of ICT.
- Work in subjects has benefited from the substantial increase in computer resources, but most subjects still do not make enough use of ICT.

Commentary

83. Teachers' assessments of students' work at the end of Year 9 in 2003 showed that standards were well below average. In the same year, results in the GNVQ examinations showed that standards were higher, although they were still below average. The standards of work seen during the inspection were below average for students in Years 7 to 9, higher than last year. In Years 10 and 11 the standards of higher-attaining students are above average but the work of other students is below average. Overall achievement is good but some but some students' progress is limited by their poor numeracy skills. Presentation work, combining text and graphics, is a strong feature. Most students are skilful and confident when using computers.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is good and helps students to achieve well. The small number of lessons taught by non-specialist teachers of ICT were satisfactory. The good subject knowledge of teachers is used to question students effectively and to challenge higher-attaining students. In the best lessons, students who find learning difficult are given broad guidance on how to proceed, but are challenged to make further progress themselves, rather than relying solely on their teachers. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 has benefited from the good practice promoted by the national strategy, such as the emphasis on key words and a review of learning at the end of each lesson. Because the use of homework has inconsistencies, it is not making a major contribution to students' achievement. Assessment is effective, in part, because students have a good understanding of the level they are working at but are less clear about how to improve. Teachers' management of students is a strength and they know the students well. Good behaviour in lessons is expected and students respond positively when working independently. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported and make good progress. An excellent feature is the translation of key words into their first language for students at an early stage of acquiring English.
85. Leadership and management are very good. Following a detailed review in 2003, extensive and well planned improvements to ICT have been made across the school and the curriculum has been improved. The head of faculty is a good role model. Standards are rising strongly and there is a team commitment to continued improvement. Staff, including learning support assistants, have benefited from the very good training programme and are confident users of ICT. The wealth of assessment data is used to set targets for students and to evaluate standards. Good use is made of external sources of additional funding. The main computer teaching rooms are well resourced and there is good technical support. There is good capacity for further improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

86. Although some subjects are making good use of ICT, the majority of subjects still have to do so. Students' work shows some evidence of thorough internet research and satisfactory use of presentation software and spreadsheets for coursework in a number of subjects. There is good practice in mathematics where all the ICT subject criteria are met. Teachers of mathematics are showing growing confidence in the use of the new interactive whiteboards. Vocational courses, such as business studies and leisure and tourism, make good use of their own ICT resources to improve learning. Teachers of design and technology use their new suite well for computer-aided design and manufacture but do not make enough of ICT generally. Equipment and software for automatically recording and storing data are used confidently in science. In a geography lesson, good use was made of the extensive bank of learning resources available on the school network. A school intranet is in the early stages of

development. The school web-site works well and is a useful source of information about the school.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is very good with a clear focus on improvement shared by the department.
- Good teaching contributes to good achievement over time.
- There is insufficient use of ICT and there is a shortage of books.
- Not all students take care over their work, which slows down their learning.

Commentary

87. The standard of students' work at the end of Year 9 is well below average. However, this represents good achievement from very low levels on entry. Positive attitudes and good behaviour are helping to develop good learning. Students listen well in lessons and work with interest. Most students have good knowledge, if limited understanding, of physical processes and human activities. They are able to interpret maps. The learning of a significant minority of students is slowed down by the careless mistakes they make because they do not follow instructions. The independence of students is limited because of an over-reliance on their teachers to direct their use of resources. Those at an early stage of learning English, and those with special needs, benefit from the support of learning assistants and the way in which resources are adapted for them. These students also experience some difficulty in understanding the questions in assessment tests.
88. By the end of Year 11, standards are just below average. This indicates good achievement over time. Girls' achievement is better than that of boys but both work hard and their concentration in lessons is good. The written work of higher-attaining students, including some who are at a more advanced stage of learning English as an additional language, shows increasing understanding and a particularly good use of subject vocabulary. Students' coursework is well presented and is indicative of hard work and strict adherence to instructions. Not all students are so diligent with written work and, especially, with practice examination questions. Gaps in the work, particularly of lower-attaining students, result in poor notes that do not support revision.
89. The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good. Good subject knowledge makes lessons interesting and builds students' confidence. Planning is good, including activities that extend and consolidate learning and develop skills. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour; their class management is firm and fair and relationships are good. Questioning challenges students and develops their listening and thinking skills. Teachers are, however, insufficiently critical of carelessness and missed work, especially in Years 10 and 11. Teachers offer too much guidance, especially in Years 7 to 9. Infrequent access to ICT facilities, compounded by the lack of computers in classrooms, detracts from teaching and learning. There are too few opportunities for assessment through enquiry-based fieldwork or research, particularly using ICT.
90. Leadership is very good with a clear focus on improvement that is shared by the whole department. Teamwork and collaborative planning are also very good. Management is good and the department is well organised. The monitoring of students' progress is good and data analysis is used to inform planning. Improvement since the subject was last inspected has been satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is better and behaviour has improved. Resources, such as books for Years 7 to 9 and computers, remain inadequate.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE examinations are well below average.
- Consistently good teaching helps students achieve well in all years.
- Students receive very clear explanations on how to improve their work.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Weak literacy skills affect written work adversely.
- Absence from school and non-completion of homework limits attainment.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in lessons.

Commentary

91. Standards are below average at the ends of Years 9 and 11 but achievement is good. In GCSE examinations, the proportion of A*-C grades was well below average in 2003 but was close to it in 2002. Several students failed to obtain grades because they did not attend the final examinations in 2003. However, high-attaining students did obtain the highest grades. Generally, students perform as well or better in history than in their other subjects.
92. Students enter Year 7 with very limited reading and writing skills that affect their ability to describe and explain historical events. By the end of Year 9, these have improved considerably though overall attainment is still below expectations. Students understand chronology. They realise the need for evidence but do not usually assess its reliability. Orally, they select and organise information effectively. Students now write much more extensively because teachers have taught the use of key words and helped them to organise their ideas on paper.
93. At the end of Year 11, students have a sound knowledge of the topics, though they explain them better when speaking than when writing. They understand the need to use sources as evidence but may not assess their reliability. Their written work continues to improve so they have the basic skills needed for examinations, but many still find writing hard. In most years, students do not consolidate their learning sufficiently by doing their homework. Teachers follow up vigorously by checking planners and exercise books. Records indicate that more is now being finished but the use of homework is still not fully effective. Students with special educational needs and those who have begun to learn English make the same good progress as others. Higher-attaining students are challenged by more demanding work.
94. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and has some very good features. There are high expectations of behaviour and a determination to create a purposeful atmosphere of learning in every lesson. Students encounter this first in Year 7 and are soon motivated to try hard in class. There is a strong visual element in most tasks that helps all students understand and remember. All written work is very carefully marked for the use of English, as well as for historical accuracy. The department uses excellent assessment sheets for extended work that explains the National Curriculum level or grades and how to improve them further.
95. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has thoroughly analysed all aspects of the assessment data. He is working hard to help students improve their literacy skills and to complete their homework. The number of students choosing history is increasing substantially. Teachers have succeeded in establishing a strong ethos for learning. They are aware that they need to increase the use of ICT. Teaching and progress are now good and assessment is very good so improvement is good.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

- Standards in GCSE examinations have improved as a result of good teaching.
 - Students have good attitudes to the subject and this leads to good learning.
 - The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual development of students.
 - There is a lack of opportunities for ICT and visits to places of worship.
 - Time allocations in the sixth form do not meet statutory requirements.
96. Standards in the school as a whole are below average. The attainment of students at the end of Year 9 is below average but is improving. Most students understand how religion affects the lives of believers and relate teaching to their own lives. Students in Year 9 have a good grasp of questions that human beings raise, such as beliefs about life after death. They are weak in using the correct terminology in their written work and comparing their own views with those of religion. By the end of Year 11, standards are below national averages but there is a significant upward trend in results which are just above those of the school average. A positive feature is the number of students achieving A* and A grades.
97. Achievement in the school overall is good for all students. By the end of Year 9, they have made good progress. Students learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs achieve well because of good support from the teachers, teaching assistants and their peers. In lessons, there is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls, although, generally, boys are more confident when voicing their opinions. Higher-attainers and students who are gifted and talented achieve well. In Year 11, the good achievement continues. Students take their work seriously and try hard in class. A minority do not complete homework and this restricts their achievement.
98. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good in Years 7 to 9, and is good overall. In Year 11, there is a balance of good and very good teaching. Students are taught the skills to help them in examinations. In the best lessons, teaching is enthusiastic and based on good subject knowledge. Questioning is challenging, requiring students to reflect on their own experience and beliefs. This leads to very good spiritual development. Relationships are very good and students always show respect for the beliefs and values of others. Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to learning. Good lesson planning takes account of the learning needs of students in most classes although, in a minority of lessons in Years 7 and 8, there is insufficient use made of visual resources and the experience of the students themselves. The assessment of students' progress is good overall and students know the level at which they are working, but are not always clear about what they need to do to improve that level. Teachers comment regularly on students' work, giving important points for action but do not always ensure that students respond to them.
99. The leadership of the department is very good. There is very good teamwork and a shared vision of future developments. Teachers are well qualified and committed. Management is good. The department is well resourced and good planning is now in place for most aspects. Weaknesses at present are the uncertainty about developments in the sixth form and the lack of planned visits to places of worship to support the multi-faith nature of the syllabus. There is some inconsistency across the department in the application of good practice in teaching and assessment. Progress since the last inspection of religious education has been very good. Time allocations and staffing are greatly improved and the subject has risen significantly in status.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below the national average.
- Opportunities to write about technology and prepare for examinations are insufficient.
- Assessment, monitoring and recording of students' work are very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

100. Standards on entry to the school vary greatly from student to student but are well below the national average overall. At the end of Year 9, the standards of current and recent work remain well below the national average. Girls perform significantly better than boys and reach standards which are broadly in line with the national average. Students with special educational needs are integrated in lessons and are well supported by learning assistants. They make satisfactory progress. The progress made by students with English as a second language varies in accordance with their stage of language development but is satisfactory overall. Standards in the lessons seen were average. Achievement is satisfactory.
101. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 varies from lesson to lesson but is satisfactory overall. Students learn to design and make products and make use of a good range of materials and processes to a satisfactory standard. All teachers plan lessons and introduce topics well. Students receive good help and advice during practical activities and tasks are demonstrated well. The assessment, monitoring and recording of students' work are very good. Very good emphasis is placed on students' need to learn key words and written work is marked and commented on effectively but students do not have sufficient opportunities to write about technology in their work. When lessons are less effective, the control of students' behaviour is not sufficient and students lose concentration on the work in hand. Some hand-tools are not properly used in resistant materials. Students enjoy making products and develop good making skills by the time they reach the end of Year 9. Students' attitudes and behaviour are generally satisfactory or better.
102. Nearly all students study the subject in Years 10 and 11 but, in 2003, GCSE examination results were well below the national average with just over a quarter of students obtaining A* - C grades and nine out of ten A* - G grades. Students did best in resistant materials and graphic products. In resistant materials, the results obtained by the most able students, a mixture of boys and girls, were in line with the national average. Overall, girls performed better than boys, which is in line with the national trend. Standards in the lessons seen were average and sometimes higher. Achievement is broadly satisfactory.
103. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 is always satisfactory and is good in lessons where students focus on their coursework. Lessons have good technical content. Students' progress is variable and depends to a large extent on their ability to write effectively about their work. About one in ten students fail to complete coursework and are not entered for examinations although much has been done recently to reduce this proportion. Attendance at lessons is a problem and low attendance restricts progress. Students do not have enough opportunities to prepare for examinations. Insufficient use is made of ICT to present work, research topics or to analyse results.
104. The leadership and management of the subject are very effective. The head of the curriculum area has done much to improve attendance rates, schemes of work and facilities. He is well supported by his four colleagues. There have been difficulties in recruiting staff and, as a result, textile technology is no longer offered. Progress since the last report has been largely satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good because there are high expectations of students.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped.
- Visits to broaden students' experiences are not part of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9.
- The use of sketchbooks is not encouraged in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

105. In 2003, GCSE examination results were well below national averages, although better than the averages of other subjects in the school. Boys' standards were very low, but the standards attained by girls were in line with national averages. Students' absences played a significant part in the low results, not only because of poor attendance at school, but also because of non-attendance at the examination. By the end of Year 11, standards of current and recent work reflect the examination results. Those students who attend regularly have standards that match national expectations but, overall, standards are significantly lowered by those with very poor attendance. When students enter the school, they have standards that are well below national expectations, because they have had an incomplete experience of the subject. By the end of Year 9, students attain standards that are below national expectations and have achieved well. Between Years 9 and 11, overall achievement is unsatisfactory, because of the effect of the poor attendance.
106. The quality of teaching is good overall and is based on secure subject knowledge. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace which means that much ground is covered and learnt. Tasks are interesting and imaginative and motivate students. Questioning is probing, encouraging students to think around the subject and therefore learn. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour which contributes to the positive working and learning atmosphere in classes. Teachers encourage students' individuality and creativity, which contributes to the very high standards seen in the highest attainers' work.
107. Leadership and management are good. The scheme of work offers a wide variety of experiences although the use of ICT is underdeveloped, which is recognised by the department. Visits are not included in Years 7 to 9, which means that students' experience of art is not sufficiently broadened. Students are not encouraged to use sketchbooks to record and develop ideas, which is a weakness. The system of assessment is very good, although when students set targets they are frequently general. Relevant art targets are not used as a basis for raising standards. Improvement since the last inspection of art has been good.

Drama

Provision for drama is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not high enough.
- There are good opportunities for drama to be studied throughout the school.
- There is good emphasis on the involvement of all students in lessons.

- The assessment of students' work is well established.
- Links with the wider curriculum are not strong.

Commentary

108. Standards are below average, both at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11. In Years 7 to 9, because significant numbers of students find it difficult to concentrate for any length of time, work lacks attention to detail. Students do not pay enough attention to controlling the physical aspects of drama and their spoken work, although largely fluent, direct and lively, lacks shape and purpose. Their overall skills of improvisation are in line with national expectations. Given the extremely varied experience of drama of students before they join the school, their overall achievement is satisfactory. Skills and understanding are better developed in Years 10 and 11 and the overall standard of current practical and theory work is in line with national expectations and achievement is good. In 2003, GCSE examination results were well below average. Students' achievement in examinations is limited by their poor literacy skills, which are especially evident in their writing.
109. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons always have a clear sense of direction. Learning activities are appropriate to the age and ability range of the students but, because many students find it difficult to concentrate, the amount they learn is often limited, especially in Years 7 to 9. High standards of behaviour are insisted upon and help to create an orderly environment in which drama can flourish. Lessons end with helpful summaries of the learning that has taken place. Homework is used well to reinforce what has been learned. Good use is made of learning support assistants to work unobtrusively but effectively with those students who need support. Some students find it difficult to work with one another.
110. The department makes a major contribution to school productions and pays good attention to the development of students' literacy skills. However, it is not fully exploiting links with the English department, particularly in connection with the study of Shakespeare in Year 9. The department is well led and managed and has made good progress: it is now more firmly established with good schemes of work providing continuity of learning from Year 7 through to Year 13 and thorough assessment arrangements. There are now no major safety hazards, such as those referred to at the time the subject was last inspected, but a number of minor ones indicate that attention to health and safety matters is not yet punctilious.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management have revitalised the subject.
- There has been a big increase in the number of students involved in music-making in Years 10 and 11.
- Constant revisions to the curriculum meet the needs of all students.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- ICT is not used enough.

Commentary

111. The 2003 teachers' assessments show that by the end of Year 9, the attainment of the large majority of students was well above average. The proportion of students attaining A* to C grades in the GCSE examination was below average. The number of students achieving A* to G grades was also below average. However, for a large majority of students, these results were their highest GCSE marks and they achieved higher than their estimated grades.

112. Inspection evidence shows that standards in Year 9 are presently consistent with national expectations. Results for summer 2003 did not accurately reflect students' ability owing to insufficient use of ICT and moderation of end of Year 9 assessments. As students' attainment on entry is well below average, standards at the end of Year 9 represent good achievement. Standards in Years 10 to 11 are consistent with course expectations and these also represent good achievement. There are not enough opportunities to work with ICT and this is having an adverse impact on the achievement of many of students who show less aptitude for the subject.
113. Teaching is good in Years 7 to 11. Learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and in Year 11. Learning is only satisfactory in Year 10, where a majority of students do not show enough commitment to the subject, which inhibits them benefiting from the good teaching. In other years, students are able to recall information from previous lessons through the teachers' very good use of questioning. Most students make good progress because lesson plans include demanding tasks for the more musically able, whilst offering realistic challenge for the less musically able. As a result, students with special educational needs, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress. They also benefit from the guidance of the learning assistants who intervene appropriately whilst allowing students to take responsibility for their own learning. Students enjoy the practical nature of the curriculum and are able to apply themselves to set tasks quickly because of the teacher's clear explanations and well prepared resource sheets. The teachers make a good contribution to the students' development in literacy and numeracy by ensuring that they understand and can illustrate musically key words and rhythmical concepts. However, not enough use is made of homework in Years 7 to 9 to further students' learning and to help to develop their independent learning and literacy skills.
114. Leadership and management are very good. The curriculum now offers students a series of progressive modules in which previous learning is revisited and reinforced and used as a foundation for learning new concepts. Assessment procedures are very good but more rigour is still required in Years 7 to 9 when using National Curriculum criteria to assess students' work. Extra-curricular activities offer all students a range of challenging opportunities leading to concerts both in and outside the College, and musical productions including 'Grease' and 'Little Shop of Horrors'. Students also benefit from the regular presence of teacher trainees whose individual music talents serve to boost the already good teaching offered by the department.
115. Improvement since the last inspection of the subject has been good. The issues raised have been tackled where possible. However, accommodation is too small for the Years 7 to 9 classes. Rooms are badly lit and ventilated, and there are still not enough practice rooms for group work and instrumental lessons. There are insufficient computers and the shortage of percussion, and multi-cultural instruments is preventing the department from celebrating the rich diversity of cultures present in the school community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and most students learn well as a result.
- The achievement of girls, though improving, is behind that of boys.
- Most students are enthusiastic and work hard.
- The curriculum has been broadened, resulting in improved levels of participation.
- There are insufficient resources for delivering the GCSE examination course.
- There are no effective curriculum links with feeder primary schools.

116. Teacher assessment indicates that, in 2003, the attainment of students by the end of Year 9 was well below average, particularly for girls. Standards in the present Year 9 are below

average overall but are higher in football and basketball. In the 2003 GCSE examination, 43 per cent of students gained A*-C grades. Although below the national average, this is an improvement on previous years. All students entered gained a pass grade. This represents good achievement. Standards in the present Year 11 are similar to those of last year, whilst the number of students following the examination course has increased significantly. Individual students attain above average standards in athletics, cross-country, gymnastics, football and basketball.

117. Given their starting point, the achievement of students in Year 9 is satisfactory. The achievement of girls is beginning to improve as a result of curriculum changes that have led to higher levels of participation. In core physical education in Year 11, achievement is satisfactory for boys but inconsistent for girls. For example, one group of girls achieve very well, particularly in aerobics, whilst another group rarely participate and so achievement for them is unsatisfactory. Students following the GCSE examination course, including several students with special educational needs, achieve well.
118. The quality of teaching and its impact on learning is good. In a minority of lessons, teaching and learning are very good. Relationships between teachers and students are positive. This results in good learning because the majority of students respond with commitment and enthusiasm. Opportunities for students to exercise initiative, by leading warm-up activities or acting as coaches or officials, are often missed.
119. The head of department has been in post for only a few months and leadership and management are currently satisfactory, as there has been little time to develop new initiatives. Revised schemes of work, showing clear progression, have been introduced and the curriculum has been extended. Satisfactory improvement since the last inspection of physical education has seen the amount of curriculum time in Years 7 to 9 increased. The head of department has identified the need to introduce additional accredited courses for older students and to offer dance at GCSE level. As the department has insufficient information about students on entry, there are plans to improve curriculum links with primary schools.
120. The range of extra-curricular activities is limited because all teachers in the department teach other subjects, as well as holding senior posts of responsibility. There are not enough resources for the increasing number of students taking the GCSE examination. Students have to share textbooks and ICT is not being used to support learning. The playing fields cannot be used for long periods because of poor drainage. This is having a negative impact on standards. Court markings in the sports hall have almost disappeared. They are in urgent need of re-painting to help the development of indoor sports.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business studies

121. One in six students currently takes the subject in Years 10 and 11. In 2003, the GCSE examination results in business studies were below the national average with just over four out of ten students obtaining A*-C grades and nine out of ten A*-G grades. Girls performed better than boys. This course is being replaced by the Applied GCSE in business studies. One lesson was sampled. Students in Year 10 were seen learning effectively about the stakeholders in business. Achievement in the lesson was good.

Child development

122. Small numbers of girls take the subject in Years 10 and 11. In 2003, the GCSE examination results were well below the national average. One lesson was sampled. Girls in Year 11 were seen learning about families by considering different types of families and their social context. This was a satisfactory lesson. There have been difficulties in staffing this course.

Leisure and tourism

123. The subject is taken by students who find it difficult to adapt to school as a part of the work-related programme in Years 10 and 11. In 2003, ten students took the GNVQ, part 1, examinations at foundation level; the results were well below the national average with four students obtaining D grades. The results were better than predicted and represent a good achievement for these students. The course has been replaced by the Applied GCSE in leisure and tourism. One lesson was sampled. Students in Year 11 were seen learning about products and services in the leisure industry and developing a leaflet for a leisure centre on computers. This was a good lesson.

Technology

124. The subject is taken by students who find it difficult to adapt to school as a part of the work-related programme in Years 10 and 11. In 2003, ten students took the GCSE examinations in design and technology, resistant materials; the results were poor compared with the national average with six students obtaining D-G grades. This was a satisfactory achievement for these students. One lesson was sampled. Students in Year 10 were seen making a wooden storage box with a locking mechanism. This was a good lesson in which students enjoyed the practical work.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

125. The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme is currently in draft form, having been updated to include citizenship as five one-day workshops each year. The courses on careers, sex and health issues, citizenship and study skills are well planned and are relevant to students' age and experience. Resources are identified and input is planned from the school nurse, Connexions agency and the police force. A drawback of such provision, however, is that the arrangements do not make for continuity as the topics studied may not be looked at again for up to three terms and the overall allocation of time is insufficient.

126. In addition to the day courses, students benefit from further guidance provided by form tutors on a weekly basis. This informal programme is devised for the most part by tutors with some direction by heads of year and is delivered in tutor time totalling one hour and a quarter each week, spread over four days. This is, in some tutor groups, a productive use of time, well spent on literacy and numeracy, in short discussions on the 'thought for the week', in monitoring student planners and checking up on homework. Insufficient monitoring, however, allows inconsistencies in practice across tutor groups.

Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

- Students' responsible attitudes positively support the schools' mission statement.
- Valuable links have been forged with external agencies.
- Standards and achievement in citizenship are not clearly assessed.
- Instances and examples of citizenship are not explicitly identified to students.

127. At the time of the inspection, no citizenship took place in the form of designated lessons or citizenship days and the only evidence of formal learning about citizenship was derived from subject areas and from records of the school's first citizenship day. All other evidence is based on what goes on in other areas of the school.

128. The development 'of responsible citizens' is the ultimate aim of the school mission statement. This is well supported by good links made with charities, various organisations and local and national government, which has created a pool of expertise to support citizenship initiatives. Visits by local and county dignitaries, government ministers and even royalty introduce

students to examples of governance. External influences help sixth formers think about their personal development and teamwork and apply their collaborative skills to meet the needs of others, both in and out of school. External links provide a focus for fund-raising among younger students. However, fund-raising for charity is not identified to students by teachers as responsible citizenship in action.

129. The school provides good opportunities for students to assume responsibility and learn about their future obligations as voters. The external democratic election procedures are effectively replicated in the school's electoral system for the year and school councils and house captains. Elected representatives understand the moral obligations involved and, together with sixth form and Year 11 prefects, demonstrate responsible citizenship in their commitment to their peers and school. Moral responsibility and citizenship go hand in hand as seen in the positive attitudes and conduct of most students.
130. Examples of citizenship are found in all subjects and a recent cross-curricular audit shows a good coverage of the aspects, qualities and skills of citizenship. However, these are not explicitly identified in the schemes of work of several subjects so many teachers miss the opportunity to develop them and to explain the links with the subject being taught.
131. The work done in units of study, where strong citizenship content was identified in the audit, is not being evaluated by heads of department, against the citizenship attainment targets so, standards and achievement in citizenship are not made clear. However, there is evidence of good citizenship education in French in the sixth form, geography, history and mathematics in the main school and in the induction course for students at an early stage of learning English. Standards are not high but achievement for these students is good.
132. Citizenship days are a new experience for teachers and students and are the only other opportunity for formal citizenship education. The five hours per year for each year group is unlikely to fill the gaps found in cross-curricular provision. However, that day courses can be both interesting and enjoyable is confirmed by feedback from students in Year 10. They enjoyed the first citizenship day researching political systems, discussing political issues and organising mock elections. However, these skills were not assessed and although students evaluated the planning of the day and expressed the opinion that they did well they did not undertake self-evaluation. The limited written work done indicates gains in knowledge but limited understanding, especially about the responsibilities involved.
133. Leadership at present is confined to the organisation of citizenship days and is enthusiastic and committed. The aims and objectives for citizenship days are high and are shared by key staff. Management is efficient in organising resources. However, the co-ordination and monitoring of the whole school provision is not so efficient and assessment procedures have yet to be implemented.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

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
Biology	1	100	96.4	0	39.2	10	78.3
Other Languages	4	100	96.9	50	64.5	108.0	92.3
Business	4	50	88.6	0	20.6	20	60.1
Health and social care	0	NA	93.2	NA	22.3	NA	NA
Art and design VQ	4	100	92.1	50	39.0	90	70.2

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Provision in English literature is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in GCE A-level examinations are well below the national average at grades A and B, but in recent years all students passed at grade E or above.
- The quality of teaching in Years 12 and 13 is good and enables students to achieve well.
- Students do not make enough individual and sustained contribution to class discussion.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

134. English literature courses at AS and A-level are popular and well attended. Although results in the A-level examination in 2003 were below the national average, all candidates achieved a pass grade. Students' achievement is good. There was a wide range of grades in the AS-level examination in 2003 and several students re-took the subject recently, most of them raising their grades. This is an indication that they are making good progress and achieving well. The writing of students currently in Year 13 shows good perception and response to the books they are studying. The overall standard of current work is average.

135. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are stimulating and well paced and there is clear progression between work in class, individual study and the subsequent review of a topic. Teachers' assessment of students' work is of high quality: there is great attention to detail and students are given very clear indication of ways to improve. In class discussion, however, there is rather too much reliance on contributions from teachers.

136. Courses in Years 12 and 13 are well managed. Although the courses in both years are shared by teams of teachers, there is a unified approach achieved through very careful planning and purposeful discussion.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

137. Standards of literacy in the sixth form are well supported through the communication module of the key skills course. Students have benefited in their earlier years in the school from the general emphasis on improving skills in reading and writing, and this approach continues through their A-level and general studies work. There is a greater emphasis in Years 12 and 13 on the skills of presentation and discussion, and on developing a more critical and analytical approach to language.

MATHEMATICS

138. The inspection focused on AS-level and A-level examination courses. Provision for students re-sitting GCSE mathematics and classes studying the numeracy module of the key skills course were also sampled.

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students on AS and A-level courses are increasing in number and are achieving well.
- Good classroom management results in the effective involvement of all students.
- Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan a good range of learning approaches.
- The use of ICT is well developed and improves understanding.
- Efficient use of regular assessment leads to students knowing what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

139. Twelve students in Year 12 sat AS-level modules in 2003 but results were well below the national average. However, four of these students have continued into Year 13 to study on the A-level course. No students sat the GCE A-level examination in 2003. Standards in Years 12 and 13 are below the national average but standards on the mechanics and statistics modules of the course are above those attained in recent examinations.

140. Attainment on entry to AS-level courses in Year 12 is well below the national average but the standards being reached in the present AS and A-level groups means that over time students are achieving well. Students of average ability are making good progress, particularly in algebra, because they willingly demonstrate and explain the skills and understanding they apply when constructing and simplifying expressions and equations. In Year 13, students have a good understanding of statistical measures and successfully solve complex probability examples. The least able, the majority of whom are taking the GCSE examination and key skills courses, make good progress in acquiring skills but struggle to understand new concepts because they lack the necessary literacy skills.

141. On all courses, the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Effective classroom management results in students from different ethnic groups becoming fully integrated and developing confidence in their own ability. Teachers use their very good ICT capability and subject knowledge to plan a wide range of teaching and learning approaches, so students improve their understanding by recognising and building upon previous knowledge. The use of regular assessment in lessons, as well as the use of examination questions during plenary sessions, leads to students knowing what they need to do to improve and reach their target grades. Students respond well. Attendance is good and students work hard.

142. Leadership is very good. The reputation of the department amongst the students is good and is leading to higher numbers commencing the courses provided and fewer leaving during the school year. Management is good. The expertise and experience of teachers is used well to meet the needs of students. Improvement since the 1997 inspection has been good.

Teaching and learning and the progress students make in lessons have improved. The number of students on mathematics courses has also increased. However, examination results continue to fluctuate without any discernible trend of improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

143. The development of mathematics as part of the teaching and learning in other subjects has had a positive impact on achievement on vocational and key skills courses. The whole school numeracy policy is effectively used during the team teaching of key skills and in applications of measurement on GNVQ courses, such as health and social care.

SCIENCE

144. The school offers A-level courses in biology, chemistry and physics. The main focus of the inspection was chemistry. Biology and physics were also sampled. Standards were below national averages for these subjects. Recruitment, achievement and retention are too often unsatisfactory. The inclusive approach of the school offers chances to students to attempt A-level study. Some do not succeed. The achievement of others is satisfactory and sometimes good. The successes are because staff motivate and support students very well. Even so, recent results for biology and physics show unsatisfactory progress for too many students.

CHEMISTRY

Provision for chemistry is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Until recently, leadership and management have been unsatisfactory but provision is now well managed.
- Standards are well below national expectations.
- The quality of teaching is good and helps some students to achieve well.

Commentary

145. Recent results in chemistry have been well below national standards and the proportion of students who failed to achieve a grade has been high.
146. Current standards remain well below national expectations. Students start their course in Year 12 with barely adequate overall grades from their GCSE examinations. Achievement is satisfactory with a balance of some students still not yet able to secure a grade at A-level, and others who are making useful progress. In Year 13, some students reach standards in line with national expectations. This is better than expected from their starting point in Year 12.
147. The quality of teaching and learning is good. A key strength is that students' needs are precisely targeted. Teachers build effectively on the gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, the willingness, hard work and effort of students in Year 13 is met with plenty of new work from the teacher, pitched at exactly the right level to encourage students to achieve well. This results in very good progress overall. In Year 12, teachers plan tasks well, and assess well how much intervention and support to provide. As a result, students work productively. Some achieve better than expected on the basis of their GCSE examination grades.
148. Provision now is in line with that reported in the last inspection report. Standards remain the same. Other factors have a bearing on standards in chemistry. Students report, correctly, that they are kept well informed about their progress and that they receive ample help about how to improve. They have good access to study areas which are suitably equipped with computers. There is good support for independent learning. Until recently, the leadership and management of chemistry in the sixth form has been unsatisfactory. The recruitment process took on students

for whom A-level science was too difficult and, consequently, many obtained ungraded results. The provision started in 2003 without a scheme of work for A-level chemistry. Now leadership and management for chemistry are satisfactory because effective steps are being taken to structure the provision. Teachers are creating good opportunities for the students to attain beyond expectations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

149. A small number of sixth form students are studying for the vocational AS-level examination. Teaching and learning were good in the one lesson sampled. It is expected that the rising standards in Years 10 and 11 will lead to greater sixth form numbers in the future.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

150. There is good emphasis on the use of computers to develop learning in lessons. Students have good access to equipment and make extensive use of word-processing. Particularly good use is made of ICT for presentations in lessons and students also make extensive use of ICT for research. The majority of students are competent users of ICT. Students who are less confident benefit from studying the ICT module of the key skills course in Year 12.

HUMANITIES

151. Lessons were sampled in geography, history and psychology. No humanities subject was inspected in detail. The quality of teaching and learning was good in the one history lesson observed. The small number of students obtain grades in line with their abilities and achieve well. In geography, students in Years 12 and 13 reach average standards in relation to their level on entry. They work hard and their written work indicates some depth of knowledge and understanding and good application of geographical skills. However, the amount of work done to date is insufficient practice for the examinations. Students are well taught, benefit from small group teaching and gain considerably from their teacher's good subject knowledge. They make good use of opportunities for independent learning. Their achievement overall is good. In the one lesson observed in psychology, the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. The results gained by the small numbers of students on this course indicates satisfactory achievement over time.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

152. No subject was inspected in detail. A new A-level course in product design, resistant materials, was started at the beginning of this year in design and technology. No student was examined in 2003. One lesson was sampled. The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory and overall achievement was also satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

153. Lessons were sampled in art and design and drama. Media studies was inspected in detail. Two subjects were sampled in the art department.
154. In art and design, results for the AVQ course were above national averages in Year 13 in 2003. These standards were reflected in the inspection and students achieve well. The quality of teaching is very good, and has contributed to a high degree of independent learning. Most students complete the course. Facilities for independent study are very good and students are very positive about the support that they receive. Many continue into higher education in some aspect of art.
155. Results were very high in the GCSE examination in photography in 2002. Standards are above national expectations. Teaching is very good, and has led to a high degree of motivation. All students are very good independent learners and achieve well.

156. In drama, the quality of teaching and learning was good in the one lesson sampled. Results at both A/S and A-level are broadly in line with the national average and students' achievement is good.

Media studies

Provision in media studies is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are encouraged to achieve as well as they can.
 - Teachers share their subject knowledge enthusiastically and prepare students well for success in public examinations.
 - There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop their practical skills or to undertake research.
 - Students recognise media concepts and theories but do not have enough opportunities for sustained explanations or in-depth discussions.
157. Media studies courses are increasingly popular because they provide opportunities for students at all levels of ability to achieve well. All students who completed the AS level course in 2003 have continued on the A-level course, which has been reintroduced to meet students' needs in 2004. Two students reached the top band in the AS-level examinations in 2003, although results overall were slightly below standards attained nationally. This represents satisfactory achievement overall, given the levels of students' attainment on entry to the media studies courses.
158. Students have a sound introduction to the concepts of representation, ideology and narrative. Students in Year 12 discuss the impact of different styles of newspapers on their target audiences, observing perceptively that newspapers which record opinions as facts can, and do, influence the attitudes of society. However, opportunities for extended discussions are missed and students are not challenged sufficiently as speakers, or given scope to express their own views and opinions in structured arguments. Students in both year groups understand the codes and conventions of a variety of film genre such as horror, western and crime.
159. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers share their subject knowledge enthusiastically, prepare their students well for public examinations and assess their progress regularly, keeping students well informed of ways to improve their written work. As a result, students feel secure in their learning and enjoy their lessons. Written work lacks depth. Teachers make good use of the learning materials produced by the examination boards encouraging their students to follow a well-structured framework for making detailed notes throughout lessons. This works well to ensure students' success in public examinations but denies them a broader view of the media treatment of topics, issues and events that are taking place in society
160. The subject leader is well qualified and knowledgeable and the management of the courses is satisfactory. A clear scheme of work has been devised for the AS-level course but planning for progress at A-level is less well determined. Students do not carry out enough independent research, or make enough use of ICT.

BUSINESS

161. No course was inspected in detail but two courses were sampled. One in six students currently take business in Years 12 and 13. In 2003, four low-attaining students were examined for the AVCE in business. The results of the examinations were well below the national average; all students passed with double E grades. However, the results were better than predicted and represented a good achievement for the students. Two lessons were

sampled. Teaching and learning were good. Students' work shows that they use computing effectively. Achievement in both lessons was good. A new GNVQ course in business studies at intermediate level was started this year. No student was examined in 2003. One lesson was sampled. The quality of teaching and learning was good. Achievement in the lesson was also good.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

162. No course was inspected in detail but two courses were sampled. One in ten students currently take the subject in Years 12 and 13. In 2003, five students were examined for the GNVQ in health and social care at intermediate level. The results of the examinations were well below the national average: three students obtained a pass grade. The results were broadly in line with those predicted. A new AVCE in health and social care was started at the beginning of this year. No student was examined in 2003. Students from this and the GNVQ course are taught together. One lesson was sampled. The quality of teaching and learning was good. The achievement in the lesson was good.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

163. No lessons were observed in PSHCE but planning documents were analysed. In Year 12, this course provides students with insights into various topics relating to their future employment or for their time in further education. Basic literacy is covered, together with sessions devoted to the skills of research and investigation. The emphasis is on practical applications and on giving students direct experience of applying their skills. The wide-ranging course also embraces matters relating to consumers and health. The course is relevant to the students' needs and is well planned. In Year 13 the programme is further extended with a focus on the completion of university application forms, job applications, interview techniques and student finance. Good use is made of external agencies and specialist help.

164. In Year 12, there is a well taught accredited course on the key skills of communication, numeracy and ICT, which is closely matched to the needs of students.

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

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