

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Andrew's Catholic School

Leatherhead

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125275

Headteacher: Mrs. Kim Burke

Lead inspector: Mark R. Evans

Dates of inspection: 20th - 24th October 2003

Inspection number: 259215

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 –18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	600
School address:	Hillfield Grange Road Leatherhead
Postcode:	KT22 7JP
Telephone number:	01372 277 881
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. John Earl
Date of previous inspection:	12 th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than average (600 pupils compared to 993 on average). There is a slightly higher than average proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language than average (3.1 per cent compared to , though none at an early stage of learning it. There are more pupils with special educational needs than in most schools (28.8 per cent compared to 18.8 per cent). The proportion of pupils who come from Roman Catholic homes is 36.1 percent slightly up on last year, but well below previous years, when the proportion was as high as 54.2 per cent (1997). The sixth form is very small, with 39 students. The school operates mainly on one site - only music and art are "off-site", along with the dining area. The school has recently been awarded a Schools Achievement Award (2002), the High Sheriff's award for Drama and the National Mono Photography award (both 2001).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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27058	Kathleen Cannon	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Andrew's Catholic School is a good school with many very good features. The very strong ethos of the school permeates all aspects of its work. Each individual pupil is important to the staff. It is providing good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- All at St. Andrew's are fully committed to improving further and there is a very genuine desire to educate all aspects of the children who attend. The ethos of the school is exemplary.
- The leadership provided by the senior teachers and the head teacher, and supported by the governing body is strong and one of the reasons for the school's success.
- The school goes to great lengths to promote equal access and opportunity for all, pupils and staff alike.
- Teaching overall is good and one in four lessons is very good or excellent: teachers motivate pupils and relationships are strong.
- Although pupils are not attaining national averages when they enter the school in Year 7, the standards achieved by the time they leave the school are satisfactory, because of the good teaching. However, teaching is occasionally dull or does not focus sufficiently clearly on important aspects of the national curriculum.
- The sixth form, although small, is very well run and developing fast.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is of high quality.
- The accommodation remains poor for music and art, despite strenuous efforts of the school to improve it.
- The partnership with parents is very strong – they are very pleased with the effect that the school has on their children.
- The teaching of literacy, information and communications technology and numeracy is not as well developed in other subjects as it should be.
- The performance management system does not tie together the needs of individual staff and the needs of the school as well as it should: the effect of monitoring of teaching is not as successful in all departments as it is in some.

The school has improved significantly since the last inspection. More pupils are entered for GCSE, schemes of work have been improved and the introduction of the Individual Student Monitoring system has improved pupils' progress. The teachers work much more as a team now, with only a few exceptions, and the staffing complement is as full as can be expected in the current national circumstances. Subject management has been greatly simplified. Links with parents have been much improved. Many more books and computers have been provided, and the governing body and finance staff have worked unflinchingly to improve the accommodation, though without success. Statutory requirements are met.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	D	C	B
Mathematics	C	D	C	D
science	C	D	C	C

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils have attained similarly at the end of Year 6.*

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

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

Pupils in all year groups achieve well. There are particularly good examples of pupils doing well in English, mathematics, science and geography. Those pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well indeed as do pupils who speak English as an additional language. In the sixth form, students are achieving very well. All year groups are doing better than they were at the time of the last inspection. This is due to stronger teaching and better management throughout the school.

The pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities such as social development are good. Attendance is satisfactory and good in the sixth form. They behave well and the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This is a direct response to the very strong ethos of the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by St. Andrew's Catholic school is good and there are many very good features. Teaching is good and in the sixth form, it is very good. The reason that a few lessons were not satisfactory was because of unimaginative planning or too little focus on what the pupils were expected to learn. Otherwise, in all year groups and subjects, the strengths of teaching were the strong relationships built up with the pupils and the respect demonstrated between adult and child. The pupils want to learn and they are fully aware of what they need to do to improve their learning.

The care, guidance and support that teachers and all staff demonstrate is very good and a strength of the school. Learning support assistants, administrators, catering staff all show real interest and attention for the individual pupil. Similarly, the partnership that the school has built up with parents is very strong and another significant strength, that has a positive influence on the learning of the pupils. For example, homework is a powerful tool of learning at St. Andrew's, not a last minute afterthought.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The governors provide very good support and critical assistance to the headteacher and leadership team. The leadership provided by the headteacher is outstanding. She has created a top class leadership team, which has made a significant contribution to the success of the school. The headteacher is also ably supported by the senior teaching and

administrative staff. The management of departments is mainly good, and in some, like mathematics and science, leadership and management are now strengths of the school. However, in subjects such as design and technology and modern foreign languages, not as much progress has been made in making teaching as exciting as it could be or as well focused on what the pupils need to learn.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school overall. In particular they report that their children are happy, that teaching is good, that their children make good progress at St. Andrew's and that the staff work hard. Pupils also are predominantly happy with the school, though the questionnaires completed by them were somewhat less supportive than the discussions that inspectors had with a wide range of pupils during the inspection week.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that teaching is consistently interesting and motivating, and covers all national curriculum requirements in sufficient depth.
- Enrich the teaching of literacy, information and communications technology (ICT) and numeracy across the whole curriculum.
- Develop the links between performance management, professional development and the process of school improvement, including monitoring of teaching in all departments;
- Improve the accommodation for music and art.

OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form at St. Andrew's Catholic school is **effective** and an exciting place to be. Because the total number of students is still small, it is relatively expensive on a per student basis, but it is growing fast and cost-effectiveness is satisfactory.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership provided by the Head of Sixth Form and the Head Teacher is very good.
- It is managed creatively and with notable focus on what is important for individual students.
- The cost per student is high and it is important that the school continues to pursue its plans to expand the provision.

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	The inspection focus was on English literature but media studies was also sampled. The overall provision for English literature post 16 is good . Teaching and learning in media studies are very good. Students respond eagerly and consequently, they also achieve very well.
Mathematics	Provision for mathematics is good. Teaching is good in the AS-level courses currently being delivered. However, standards of attainment at AS-level have been below average, but the standard of work seen in lessons and books is now good.
Science	Chemistry and biology are good. Two lessons were seen and the teaching was good. As a result, students learned and achieved well.
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory. Standards in ICT are average. The teaching of ICT is good. There is scope for developing company links even further.
Humanities	In history, for the last two years, results in the A-level examinations have been above average. AS results have been more variable. Teaching is very good and well adapted to pupil needs. Students of all abilities achieve well.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The advice and support provided for students is very good, although more could be done to provide high quality careers guidance. Staff know the students very well and so the students feel supported and sustained by the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is very well managed and led. Managers have shown an imaginative approach to providing a gradually widening range of courses and at the same time, increasing the overall size of the provision. The Oracle course and the video-teaching provided are creative solutions to some of the problems inherent in creating a sixth form and then enlarging it. The accommodation is much improved since the previous inspection.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

The questionnaires completed by students suggest that they are overwhelmingly supportive of the school – all reported that they enjoyed attending the sixth form and similarly that the courses provided were suitable. They correctly pointed out that careers guidance could be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The standards attained by the pupils at St. Andrew's are above average. By the end of Year 11, pupils are attaining well above average proportions of GCSE A*-C grades.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well in the national tests in English.
- The progress that pupils make in mathematics is very good.
- The proportion of pupils at St. Andrew's who gain 5 or more A*-C and A*-G grades is higher than that seen nationally.
- Standards of attainment in geography and in GCSE physical education are above average.
- Attainment in ICT is below the average for Year 9 pupils and girls do less well than boys in GCSE.
- There is room for improvement in the standards achieved in design and technology, especially in work with resistant materials like wood.

Commentary

1. A "creaming off" of some bright primary school pupils caused by the strong academic reputations of some other local secondary schools, means that the average attainment levels when pupils enter Year 7 at St. Andrew's is below average overall. However, they quickly begin to make good progress and thus their achievement is good in the main school and often very good in the sixth form.

2. In 2002, pupils' attainment in the national tests, in Year 9, was average in English, mathematics and science, when compared to all other schools. When compared with schools that have a similar cohort of pupils in terms of their prior attainment, scores are better in English and below average in mathematics. At the end of Year 11 in 2002, GCSE results were very close to average for gaining 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE, average for 5 or more A* to G grades and average for gaining 1 or more A* to G grades. When compared with schools of a similar context, results are well above average for 5A*-C grades, above average for 5A*-G grades and average for 1A*-G grades.

3. The attainment of both boys and girls as separate groups has improved over the last couple of years. At the end of Year 9, girls do better than boys in English and not as well in mathematics and science, but have caught up and overtaken them by the end of Year 11. Standards in the work seen in classrooms were average, but literacy and ICT skills are not as strong in subjects other than English and ICT.

4. The school is meeting its own targets for standards and, in some cases, exceeding them. The trend over time reflects the staffing difficulties that the school has endured – since the teaching and leadership teams became settled, results have started to rise. This is particularly evident in mathematics and science. Pupils who have special educational needs are achieving well. There is no discernible variation in the standards achieved by pupils from other groups, for example those who speak English as an additional language.

The Sixth Form

5. Because the number of students in the sixth form is very small, and also varies course by course, each year, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the trends in standards of attainment. However, indications are that the students do well: for the second year running, 100 per

cent of students gained passes at A-level and an increasing number of individuals reaching or exceeding their target grade.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33.7 (31.8)	33.3 (33.00)
mathematics	33.9 (32.2)	34.7 (34.4)
science	32.2 (33.3)	33.3 (33.1)

There were 112 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	47 (50)	50 (48)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	91 (92)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	96 (94)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	36.8	39.8

There were 75 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	100	94.8
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	26.8	39.4
Average point score per pupil	79	78.6

There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

6. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Their attitudes, personal development and behaviour are good overall. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and have a positive effect on learning and achievement.
- Attendance is satisfactory but more could be done to promote it.
- Behaviour is good: relationships between the pupils, and the pupils and staff are strong.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good.

Commentary

7. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attitude in most lessons is good. Examples of positive attitudes to learning were seen in a Year 9 art lesson discussing the theory of colour and in a Year 10 science lesson exploring chemical patterns. Most pupils settle down quickly down to task and listen carefully to their teachers. They are courteous, polite and welcoming to visitors. Most are confident and have high self-esteem as a result of their good relationships with the staff. Pupils take responsibility for tasks around school and help in classrooms. A School Council has been elected to allow the pupils to take responsibility for voicing their opinions about school issues. A high number of

pupils also take up the opportunity to participate in additional activities such as dance, drama and music sessions.

8. Attendance is satisfactory and unauthorised absence is below the national level. However, some opportunities and measures that would raise levels further are missed. Pupils are generally punctual to their lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	7.7
National data:	7.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.8
National data:	1.2

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

9. Behaviour in and around the school is good. There have been no permanent exclusions from the school in the last three years because the staff pursue every avenue to provide pupils with additional support. The school confirms that although incidents of bullying occasionally occur pupils are confident that they can approach any member of staff with their concerns. The school counsellor or student services are always available. Parents have confirmed that incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils' views on bullying are obtained from pupil questionnaires, which keep the staff fully informed of any incidents so that appropriate action can be taken. The headteacher acknowledges that a whole-school approach to the management of bullying is seen as an area for development. However, all pupils are aware of the school's behaviour guidelines and an appropriate scheme of rewards and sanctions is in place. No incidents of challenging behaviour or bullying were seen during the inspection and racially motivated incidents are rare.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Any other ethnic group

No of pupils on roll
560
32
8
0

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
27	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

10. Relationships between the pupils and the pupils and staff are good and support learning. The pupils work together well in pairs and groups and help each other. A good example of this was seen in a Year 10 information and communication technology lesson, where the pupils worked together to model garden designs. This results in a caring and productive working environment for pupils and staff.

11. Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall and contribute to the smooth running of the school. The school encourages pupils' involvement in school matters through the school council, peer mentoring and bullying counselling. However, there are limited opportunities to reflect on spiritual issues particularly during tutor periods. Attitudes and behaviour are good. Attitudes improve significantly as pupils move through the school reflecting the school's part in developing their growing maturity and improving social awareness.

12. Overall the provision for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school is committed to ensuring that its pupils have a full and rounded education. This involves, in addition to their academic achievement, ensuring they develop qualities of care and consideration, and the skills of reflection and an enquiring mind into such issues as the meaning and purpose of life. Opportunities for the latter occur in religious education where on a regular basis, pupils can participate in 'prayer lessons' and give consideration to the events going on around them in the wider world. Similar opportunities also occur in registration times where short prayers are often part of the proceedings. The quality and regularity of these, though, is not always consistent.

The Sixth Form

13. The attitude of students in the sixth form to their studies is very good. They are committed and behave well. They demonstrate a genuine interest in school life and the range of activities provided for them. They are keen to take on personal responsibility and support one another well, for example when giving presentations to outsiders about their work with databases. There was no evidence of bullying, racism or other forms of harassment.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

14. The quality of education provided for pupils at St. Andrew's Catholic school is good. Teaching promotes good learning and pupils are valued as individuals.

Teaching and learning

15. Teaching is good; in the sixth form it is very good, and the learning matches the quality of teaching. Assessment is also good in the main school and very good in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- One in four lessons seen was very good or excellent: in the sixth form, it was one in three lessons. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Encouragement and engagement of pupils by teachers is very good – relationships are strong. However, in a few lessons, encouragement and engagement of pupils by teachers is as good as it could be, mainly when teaching is uninspiring or don't lead the pupils towards clear targets.
- Assessment is thorough and constructive in most subjects: pupils' understanding of how they can improve is good and very good in the sixth form.
- Teachers' use of learning support assistants is very good: the quality of the support they provide is excellent.
- The use of homework to reinforce and extend learning is very good – it is an integral part of the provision at St Andrew's.
- Pupils' understanding of the design aspects of design and technology is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 105 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (1.9%)	24 (22.9%)	49 (46.7%)	25 (23.8%)	5 (4.8%)	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.

16. Teaching is good: in the sixth form, it is very good. The best teaching is excellent and inspires pupils. The degree to which pupils learn matches the quality of teaching: when teaching is good, so is learning. When teaching is unsatisfactory, it is predominantly because the lessons are dull or

because they do not focus well on appropriate and specific objectives. In design and technology, teachers' fluency with the design aspects of the curriculum is not as good as it should be.

17. The best teaching at St. Andrew's is evident as soon as one walks into the classroom: the pupils are listening intently or so engrossed in their work that they do not look up. The teacher has identified clearly what the lesson is about and what the planned objectives are. The pupils can talk about this and their own input into the learning process. The lesson is planned carefully and this plan is shared (in some way) with the class. Management of the pupils' behaviour is not an issue because the class is intent on their learning, not on playing around. This combines with very good relationships between staff and pupils/students and promotes good or better learning. There is appropriate use of subject terminology, (often referred to as "key words") and teachers promote learning further through questioning and building on pupils' own comments. Homework is set regularly, in accordance with a plan and is a genuine support to the pupils' learning. It is a central part of the learning process at St. Andrew's: a real strength.

18. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, lessons fall into two camps: either they are dull and uninspiring or they have no clear aim. Learning therefore is either limited or does not relate to what the teacher thinks is being taught. Very occasionally, a teacher may not have a sufficiently strong relationship with the class to be able to stem an undercurrent of misbehaviour, usually by a few of the boys. In a few lessons, the most able pupils require more attention to develop their potential fully.

19. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is very good. The teachers and learning assistants have managed to create an atmosphere in which the pupils feel secure enough to be happy about asking for help. This level of support is not always as evident in some lessons, because there is inconsistency in some teachers' understanding and knowledge of pupils' individual educational plans. Thus, for example, although there may be well worked out strategies to help a pupil to understand text, these are not always used in all subjects.

20. The learning support assistants provide pupils with excellent support. It is particularly effective when care is taken to ensure that independence in learning is developed, so for instance an assistant may work with a range of different pupils, to promote this independence. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also supported well, although the achievement of this particular group of pupils in comparison with the whole group has only recently started to be monitored closely.

21. The school's assessment system (Individual Student Monitoring) is effective. Most departments use it well but occasionally its use is inconsistent. For example, the use of assessment to shape plans in design and technology is variable. The reporting of pupils' attainment and progress is developing well and is good overall. School marking is effective and teachers give clear guidance to individual pupils. Some departments need to become even more fluent in their use of the assessment procedures. In particular, target-setting for individual pupils across the boundaries of academic subjects (for example, in literacy, but for use in geography and history, too) needs to be developed.

The Sixth Form

22. The standard of teaching in the sixth form is very good. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and have very strong relationships with the students. This makes for an exciting atmosphere where the students want to learn. Assessment is used well to support learning.

The curriculum

23. The curriculum is good overall with good opportunities for enrichment and satisfactory accommodation and resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and well balanced.
- Extra-curricular provision is good.
- Provision for pupils with special education needs is good.
- Accommodation for music and art is unsuitable.
- Literacy is not as well developed as it could be, in subjects other than English: the same is true for numeracy and ICT.

Commentary

24. The curriculum offers broad and balanced opportunities for learning across national curriculum subjects. The curriculum is inclusive and the accommodation allows wheelchair access as far as is possible to most areas of the school. There is good provision for religious education and statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship are met. Numeracy is satisfactorily promoted across the curriculum but literacy is not so well developed across all subjects. Child development, textiles, food and industrial technology are offered as technology-related options. The curriculum for pupils aged 14 -16 years is well developed. In some subjects, group sizes are small. Science is offered as a single or double award. A GNVQ ICT course and a GCSE short course provide an entitlement for pupils aged 14 - 16 years. Pupils have opportunities for work experience. Some pupils study more than 10 subjects and these can become overloaded at particular times of the year. Personal, social and health education is delivered through the religious education programme and covers statutory requirements including drugs education and education for personal relationships.

25. Extra-curricular provision is good. Good support is provided for learning outside of the school day. A homework club is very popular with pupils. The computers available in the library are well used by pupils after school and the availability of the internet provides scope for improving the quality and presentation of homework. School productions involve up to 150 pupils. There is a dance showcase, drama workshop productions, musical evenings, a choir, and ensembles. Sporting activities include football, hockey, basketball, athletics and tennis.

26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Arrangements for in-class support are effective. ICT resources are used well to support pupils in the development of literacy for pupils with underdeveloped language skills. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well.

27. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. ICT rooms are of a good size but others are small and do not lend themselves to modern learning methods. Accommodation for music and art is unsuitable and shabby, Resources are satisfactory but there is currently no funding available to develop them further. The school has an above average number of computers and these are a positive effect on the quality of learning.

28. The use of literacy across the curriculum (i.e. in subjects other than in English) and of numeracy and ICT, is developing but is not yet consistent. For example, in some lessons seen, the use of key words was planned but did not materialise. This misses opportunities to enrich the pupils' learning.

The Sixth Form

29. The curriculum in the sixth form offers balanced combinations of subjects. With less than 40 pupils some groups are very small. The school has been creative with establishing post-16 provision. Video-conferencing provides an online tutor for the media studies course. A teacher comes in for one day each week to teach photography. The school has achieved a 100 per cent pass rate on sixth form courses in recent years.

Vocational options include the Advanced Vocational Certificate in ICT and Business Education and the Oracle ICT systems course

30. The small sixth form block provides accommodation for the teaching of some subjects and the school has made it into an attractive environment in which to learn. There are computers available for the use of sixth form students.

Care, guidance and support

31. Overall, the provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Christian ethos in evidence throughout the school is very strong: it has a positive effect on the emotional security of the pupils and the ease with which they learn.
- The relatively small number of pupils at the school promotes the quality of support available to the pupils, which is strong - pupils are well known to staff as individuals.
- The school ensures that pupils are well supported throughout their time at St. Andrew's, but careers advice in the sixth form is not as strong as the other forms of support and guidance offered.

Commentary

32. The caring Christian ethos of the school and its small size mean that the quality of support available to the pupils is strong. As a result, the pupils feel valued and secure. Many comments written by the pupils themselves are on display in the school and are testament to this. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported, both from within the school, and when required, by the local education authority support service. In addition to this overall very positive ethos, appropriate and effective procedures are in place to ensure proper care, welfare, health and safety. A designated member of the school staff has overall responsibility for this and a school governor visits the school every term to ensure that the systems are working appropriately. Risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis and the school also has a teacher designated and trained in child protection.

33. Effective support, advice and guidance for pupils are available from their form tutors, as well as from the student services department. A school counsellor is on hand at least one day a week and the school nurse too has a supporting role. Pupils can also seek support from their heads of year. A comprehensive programme for the induction of new pupils has been arranged for those joining the school in Year 7. This includes visits by staff to feeder primary school in Year 6 when detailed information is gathered about all pupils joining the school in Year 7. This forms the basis of the planned support for when they arrive. This is particularly the case for pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils who join the school in mid-term receive similar support. A detailed information sheet is completed for all pupils new to the school. Any particular needs are noted and the pupils are monitored on a regular basis to ensure that their achievements are as strong as they can be. Monitoring of the support provided for pupils who speak English as an additional language could be stronger.

34. Older pupils also receive support and guidance, such as in Year 9 when pupils have to make intelligent choices about options, and in Years 10 and 11 to help them make choices about life after school. The pupils' own views on life at the school are sought and valued. Both the School Council and Student Council play an active role and have addressed such issues as the canteen and the playground facilities. A whole school survey has also been done where pupils were given the opportunity to express their views and opinions on any subject about which they had concerns.

The Sixth Form

35. Students are well supported and cared for. Each is known as an individual person. However, better careers guidance would improve the overall care and guidance available to the students.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

36. The school maintains very good links with parents and the local community. The school has good links with other schools and colleges

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's partnership with parents is very good and contributes to pupils' learning at school and at home
- Information that parents and others receive about the school and the pupils' standards and progress is very good.
- Links with the local community are very good.
- Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Commentary

37. The school benefits from a very good partnership with parents. The headteacher and staff are seen as accessible and approachable. Parents who do not speak English as a first language are supported well, so that they too feel they can approach the school easily. Parents' questionnaires confirm that the vast majority of parents are very happy with the school as no issues were raised. There is a high degree of satisfaction with the children's progress, with the homework set and the high expectations of staff. The parents' forum 'Touchstone', initiated by the school, provides a very good opportunity for parents and staff to meet together to discuss issues such as boys' achievement, religious education or music. The headteacher acknowledges that the forum is an area for development and hopes to extend the initiative to include more parents of Year 10 pupils and above. Some parents volunteer to assist in school and support in areas such as information communication technology, school productions and sporting activities. Parents attending the parents' meeting spoke very highly of the headteacher and her staff.

38. The school provides parents with a very good range of information regarding academic and pastoral issues. If there is cause for concern, parents and teachers are encouraged to contact one another. Annual reports give details of academic and other progress and set targets for the pupils, and the information given is helpful to parents. Nevertheless, the academic targets set for pupils in some subjects are not sufficiently precise. The weekly newsletter keeps parents informed of forthcoming events and pupils' achievements. Information evenings have also been held to explain issues such as information communication technology, numeracy and special educational needs. The school prospectus and governors' report are attractive and informative. Pupils' progress reports are good. They contain all the required information and explain each pupil's targets for improvement. This enables the pupils and their parents to understand what each child must do to improve their work. Further information is also gained from the student monitoring reports issued every two months which keep parents informed of their child's progress towards the set targets. Each year, two academic review days are held for each year group. These provide an opportunity for parents to formally discuss their child's progress and targets in detail and are very well attended.

39. Very good links with the local community support and enrich the pupils' learning. Strong links are in place with the nine local parishes. Visits to the churches take place and parish priests are frequent visitors to school. School and parish newsletters are exchanged. The school has hosted evening classes for the local community to enable adults to use their facilities to participate in sporting activities and learn sign language. Information communication technology classes have been held for local senior citizens. Links have been established with a computer company in Reading. The local nursery and hospital support the school's child development and health and social care courses.

40. Links with other schools and colleges are good, particularly the newly established link with the on-site Woodlands special school. The pupils eat together at lunchtime and joint activities such as bowling, a drugs awareness workshop and the forthcoming sponsored walk are arranged. Links with the five local Catholic primary schools and the local language and technical colleges are maintained. The technical college is helping the school to improve equipment and raise standards in graphics and resistant materials. The local construction and engineering colleges also offer vocational courses for pupils from Year 10 upwards.

The Sixth Form

41. Students benefit from a strong partnership between parents and the school. The head of sixth form makes herself available to parents whenever queries or problems arise. Links with the local community are similarly very strong, and are maintained in a manner that is in keeping with the increased and increasing maturity of the students.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

42. Leadership and management are very good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governors and the leadership team have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school: strategic planning reflects the school’s ambitions and goals.
- The clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations of the headteacher are excellent.
- Subject leaders have mainly been able to create effective teams: where it works well, it is very effective but this does not extend to all subjects. Leadership in the sixth form is very good.
- The school leaders’ commitment to inclusion, promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individuals is very good.
- Monitoring performance data, reviewing patterns and taking action is good, and improving: however not all subject leaders are as fluent with the analysis of this data as they could be.
- Staff performance management and its effectiveness in bringing about improvement is only just becoming a focus.
- The secure and active approaches to financial management adopted by the school, help it to achieve its educational priorities, despite currently running a deficit budget, which has been licensed by the Local education Authority.

Commentary

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income		Balance from previous year	
Total expenditure		Balance carried forward to the next	
Expenditure per pupil			

43. The governance of the school is very good with the governing body helping to shape the vision and direction of the school. They understand the schools strengths and weaknesses very well and are directly involved in the formulation of the school improvement plan giving of their time unstintingly to this task. The governing body supports the leadership team very well, participating in school self-evaluation and they are actively involved in a strategic role with the leadership team to improve performance through, for example, the recruitment and retention of personnel. This has resulted in the appointment of a personnel officer and the subsequent formation of effective teaching teams in most areas with the exception of design and technology and modern foreign languages.

They are also involved in the evaluation of school examination performance. The governing body challenges the leadership team in a friendly but critical way and sets the head teacher's annual objectives although the monitoring of performance management in general is in its early stages. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties and promote inclusion policies very well.

44. The leadership of the head teacher is excellent. She shows excellent clarity of vision and sense of purpose and this has resulted in clear strategic planning that has brought about significant improvements in teaching, learning and standards. She is ably supported by two deputy headteachers, an assistant head teacher and the head of the sixth form, providing together, top class leadership. This committed team and other key personnel who share their vision, inspire, motivate and influence both staff and pupils. They share a strong commitment to respond to the needs of individuals and act as very good role models for other staff and pupils. Nearly all subject leaders have been able to create effective teams: where it works well, it is very effective but this does not extend to all subjects. For example, leadership in design and technology and modern foreign languages has not yet been as well focused or as successful.

45. School leaders and other staff demonstrate a real commitment to inclusion, promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individuals. For example, the management of inclusion for pupils who speak English as an additional language is very effective. The leaders frequently demonstrate real creativity and effort in meeting the needs of individuals, in taking on greatly increased short term teaching commitments for a group of pupils or making significant changes to the timetable of the school. The opportunities and access provided for pupils with special educational needs, and for pupils who speak language other than English as their mother tongue, is good.

46. The school's self-evaluation is very effective and the resulting issues inform the formulation of the annual school improvement plan. The analysis of school performance data is part of this and is carried out well highlighting key areas for future development. The analysing skills required to do this are in place for most subject leaders and for the remainder are developing.

47. Staff performance management arrangements are satisfactory but lack rigorous monitoring to assess their effect on bringing about improvement. The monitoring of teaching and learning however, does take place on a termly basis through the departmental review process. Staff development is good and training days have targeted teaching and learning. Staff induction is particularly effective and this has been recognised by the local education authority. The school's contribution to initial teacher training is very good and the quality of the training placements is carefully scrutinised before being allocated.

48. Financial management at the school is very good. Overspends that took place some years ago are now carefully controlled. The deficit budget, licensed by the Local education Authority, is scrupulously monitored by staff and by the governing body. A recent audit report demonstrated that there were no significant areas for development.

The Sixth Form

49. Leadership is very good. The head of sixth form has a clear vision of how to secure and expand the provision. She provides a good role model. The managers' commitment to inclusion, promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individual students is very good. Monitoring of performance data, the reviewing emergent patterns (and taking action based on these) is good, and improving.

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

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

50. Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained by pupils in both national tests and in the GCSE are rising: standards in drama are high.
- All pupils now achieve well in national tests.
- The comprehension and writing skills of many pupils require improvement.
- Standards of speaking and listening are above average.
- The department does not systematically share its best practice in teaching.

Commentary

51. Overall standards in Year 9 national tests in 2002 were average. Boys were above average for their gender, whilst girls were below. Unconfirmed figures for 2003 show an improvement, particularly by girls, and more pupils attaining level six and above. GCSE results in 2002 indicate that standards in English were below average whilst those for English literature were above. The 2003 results in English are better than those of the previous year but literature results are not as high.

52. Standards of work seen in Years 7 to 9 are average. Speaking and listening are above average because pupils receive regular opportunities to use discussion to share and explore ideas in class: however, there are significant weaknesses in both reading and writing, particularly in Years 7 and 8. In these years, many pupils have weak deductive and inferential skills and the least able also have difficulty with reading to find information. All but the most able have problems with spelling and punctuation throughout the school, but this does not inhibit their personal writing. Creative writing is often vibrant and sincere and of a much higher standard than writing to explain or inform. This is because many students are not familiar with, or confident in using, a range of formal vocabulary and writing styles.

53. Standards of reading and writing are below average when pupils enter the school; but they achieve well in Year 9 National tests. A significant reason for this is that the department has the National Literacy Strategy firmly in place and the new units of work designed specifically to meet pupils' literacy needs are well taught. Pupils' achievement is helped by the very good relationships in English classes and their positive attitudes to the subject. Their learning is also enhanced by a broad curriculum which includes drama for all classes in Years 7 to 9 and frequent opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) for writing, research and presentations. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers work very closely with learning assistants to ensure that they receive good quality support and that their progress is carefully tracked. Smaller groups, an additional weekly lesson in Year 7 and a paired reading scheme supported by the sixth form are also helping these pupils to improve their literacy skills.

54. Teaching and learning are good overall and sometimes very good. The best lessons are lively and stimulating; and learning is fun because teachers plan carefully for all needs and use a variety of teaching methods which ensure that pupils are consulted, involved and challenged. In the few less successful lessons, teachers expect too much listening from pupils and do not provide

enough active learning opportunities in the hour-long sessions, especially in Years 10 and 11. Consequently, some pupils lose concentration and interest. The department uses assessment very well to support and guide pupils. Marking is always positive and teachers' comments usually show pupils exactly what they have to do to improve.

55. Leadership and management are good. The new head of department is inspiring and motivating colleagues very well and encouraging them to review regularly their own teaching methods and pupils' achievement. Although teaching and marking are monitored, there is not yet an effective system for the development of teaching through the frequent sharing of the very good practice which already exists in the department. Planning for continuity and progression in pupils' learning is good in all years and the new units of work now include an interesting range of ICT activities, including web site design in Year 7.

56. Standards in drama are high. It is a popular part of the curriculum and pupils are highly motivated. Teaching is very good, using and adding to the positive attitude of the pupils to promote effective learning.

57. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Standards dipped for a short while but are rising again. Resources, including audio visual equipment and books, are now good; all marking is helpful and pupils have frequent opportunities to use ICT. Pupils' technical problems with writing, especially spelling, remain.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Overall, the standards of English language and literacy skills are average by the end of Year 11. Pupils' speaking and listening ability is above average because they are given many opportunities to discuss and to use talk to make decisions, solve problems and share ideas. However, a significant number of pupils enters the school with below average reading and writing skills. Comprehension, particularly deductive and inferential skills, are weak and many pupils have a limited vocabulary. All staff have had some training in planning units of work to develop pupils' literacy, and the English department is giving good support through the National Literacy Strategy: however, there are inconsistencies in the thoroughness of planning, teaching and marking, both within and across departments. There is already some very good practice, in science and history for example; however, opportunities, such as for drafting and planning extended writing, or developing critical reading, are missed in other subjects. Pupils have individual literacy targets in English, though these are not shared with other departments. There is inspection evidence which indicates that inadequate literacy skills are adversely affecting standards in some GCSE subjects.

59. In order to improve standards further, it is necessary to ensure greater emphasis on developing whole school literacy through the closer involvement of senior management and rigorous monitoring by all heads of department. At the moment, insufficient use is made of pupils' performance data to determine their literacy needs and to track their progress. There is no cross-curricular working group and the library's contribution to literacy development has not been fully considered. By addressing these areas, and building on the paired reading scheme now being introduced, the school will provide regular opportunities for identifying, sharing and promoting best practice, and provide measurable literacy targets for pupils.

Modern Foreign Languages

60. Provision for modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

French, German and Spanish

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of teaching is reflected in the pupils' learning during lessons.
- Languages are taught by competent and confident subject specialists.

- The academic needs of higher and lower achieving pupils are well met.
- The lack of computer access restricts the range of learning opportunities, particularly for younger pupils.
- Assessment procedures are insufficiently developed and sometimes inaccurate.

61. Currently, French is taught to pupils between the ages of 11 and 14, with French, Spanish and German being taught to pupils in of 15 and 16 years. German is being phased out, to allow a more focused approach to the teaching of modern foreign languages.

62. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment in modern languages are broadly in line with national averages. All three languages are taught through chosen options to pupils in Years 10 and 11 leading to the General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations. In 2003, the examination results for French, Spanish and German were below the national average for A*-C grade passes, and lower than the results of the previous year.

63. Most pupils enter the school in Year 7 with little previous experience of modern languages. However, because of the good quality of teaching, they achieve well. They understand and respond to everyday questions and phrases, and participate well in oral sessions. By the age of 14, they prepare their own role play conversations and engage well with their peers in simple discussions on likes and dislikes. They use regular and irregular verbs accurately in their oral and written work and match gender, adjectives and nouns correctly.

64. All pupils study French in Years 7, 8 and 9 with more able pupils studying a second language in Years 10 and 11. They make satisfactory progress towards their examinations by developing their linguistic and written skills, writing personal accounts of their joint language and history trips to the French and Belgian War Graves. This promotes their knowledge of European citizenship and extends their personal development.

65. The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons are well planned and balanced, but some lack sparkle. There are too few hands-on artefacts to make learning interesting. Nevertheless, relationships are good and pupils interact well with their peers and staff. The needs of higher and lower achieving pupils are well met through the provision of more challenging or simplified tasks. Additionally pupils work in small groups or pairs with good one to one support from teachers. Teachers use cassette tape-recorders and overhead projectors effectively during lessons, but there is little opportunity for pupils to use computers. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make internet video links with a local language college and this is good. Teachers monitor progress through pupils' individual target sheets, but the whole school assessment procedure is currently based on pupils' literacy levels, which creates unrealistic targets for modern languages. Consequently most 16 year olds fail to achieve their predicted examination targets.

66. There is a strong team of three language specialists and management of the department is satisfactory overall. Subject documentation has been recently reviewed to focus on French only for 11 to 14 year olds. Resources are satisfactory, but restricted by the lack of computer access. Accommodation is satisfactory, and staff have made the best use of their demountable buildings with attractive displays of pupils' work.

67. Although the department has made limited improvement since the last inspection, it is currently and actively working towards raising the standards of pupils' achievements.

Latin

68. Provision for Latin is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of teaching is reflected in the pupils' learning during lessons.

- Latin is taught by a competent and confident linguist.
- The academic needs of higher pupils are well met.
- The first results of the GCSE examinations are very positive.
- Access to computers for independent research is not well planned.

Commentary

69. Latin is taught to a small number of higher achieving 15 and 16 year olds as an optional subject. In 2003, Latin was introduced as a GCSE examination subject and, of four pupils entered, two gained A*-C GCSE and all gained A*-G grades.

70. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and balanced, and there is a good emphasis on Roman literature. Pupils read aloud clearly and with good expression, demonstrating a clear understanding of the literal translation of, for example, Horace's poems. They engage very well in debating the sentiments expressed by 'Pyrrha', and are mature and sensible in discussing the emotions of the boy in this situation..

71. Latin is taught by the Modern Languages co-ordinator, who has a very good knowledge of the subject and is able to link this to other languages, which gives pupils a good awareness of the influences of Latin on English and the 'Romance Languages'.

72. Subject documentation is well considered and based on the teaching of classical rather than Church Latin. Resources are good, but restricted by the lack of computer access. Accommodation is satisfactory, and staff have made the best use of their demountable buildings with attractive displays of pupils' work.

MATHEMATICS

73. Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving very well from Year 7 to Year 11.
- Pupils work hard and want to learn.
- Teaching and learning are at least good and much is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good focusing on raising standards.
- The extent of pupils' achievements of learning objectives in lessons is not systematically recorded to help teachers to refine their short term planning.
- Some groups of lower-attaining pupils do not have the support of teaching assistants.

Commentary

74. On entry to the school standards are below average. Results at the end of Year 9, 2002, show that standards were average but the proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels was below average. However, the 2003 results are very good and indicate very good progress from Year 7 to 9 and very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average. GCSE results in 2002 and 2003 were below average, reflecting these pupils' lower than average standards prior to starting the GCSE course. On the other hand, the present Year 11 and especially the Year 10 pupils starting the GCSE course are achieving very well, reflecting the recently improved standards achieved in Years 7 to 9.

75. The standard of work seen in the current Years 7 to 9 reflects the pupils' increasing confidence and competence in all areas of mathematics. They extend their knowledge of number, algebra, geometry and handling data. They do a variety of exercises to practice calculating, problem solving and investigating. The pupils become adept at managing fractions, decimals and percentages. In Year 7 they are introduced to algebra and, by Year 9, they can solve complex

equations. Practical work helps pupils understand patterns and the mathematical properties of shapes. Year 7 pupils were skilful in estimating the size of angles and understood the properties of triangles and Year 8 pupils recognised and constructed the graphs of linear equations.

76. The standard of work seen in books and lessons of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is above average and pupils are on course to cover all the topics of the GCSE syllabus so that they will be sufficiently prepared for the examination. They study in groups at one of three levels and there are now more pupils studying at the intermediate and higher levels than in previous years. The higher/intermediate level groups enjoy the challenge of demanding mathematics. A Year 10 class applied Pythagoras's theorem to problems relating to line segments and a Year 11 class used computers to draw linear and quadratic graphs using them to solve simultaneous equations. The foundation level groups are appropriately challenged and one class coped well with the concept of rotational symmetry. It is planned that as they gain confidence some foundation-level pupils will be taught at intermediate-level. Pupils at all levels display a mature attitude toward the examination course.

77. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 is good and is better than at the last inspection. Lessons begin with 'starters', which allow pupils to practice mental arithmetic, reinforce basic-skills or focus on new skills. Lessons include a variety of activities to help pupils achieve their learning objectives. Teachers challenge pupils and are skilful in eliciting their thought processes so ensuring that they move forward in their learning. Pupils are encouraged to work independently by being given regular homework and advice on how to approach it, and to work collaboratively through small-group discussion. The teachers continuously assess the pupils' progress and adjust questions, explanations and activities to match the needs of individuals who need extra help or extra challenge. They are generous with praise for effort, which encourages the pupils to work hard. At the end of lessons the teachers inform the pupils of the extent of their successes and efforts. Some teachers record this information to help them adapt their planning to match the needs of individual pupils. However, this recording process is not yet a regular practice.

78. Pupils with particular needs are given valuable support by teaching assistants but some classes of lower-attaining pupils do not benefit from such support. The standard of marking is good with comments of encouragement and advice. Pupils' literacy, particularly speaking and listening skill-development is good because the teachers encourage them to explain how they have solved problems. Teachers explain key mathematical words, which pupils use with confidence. The pupils use computers to help support their work and there is good access to one of the school's computer suites.

79. The department had serious staffing difficulties in the past but it is now an exceptionally strong team of experienced, conscientious and effective teachers. The head of department, appointed only two years ago, provides very good leadership and management and has brought about the necessary changes to raise standards. The subject improvement plan focuses on standards and strictly timed action plans ensure its implementation. New schemes of work, assessment, target setting and tracking systems are securely in place. Excellent teacher-pupil relationships and strong teamwork create a positive working environment for pupils and teachers. Future plans include further development of KS3 Strategy, including increased use of ICT and various innovations to provide further enrichment.

Mathematics across the curriculum

80. The pupils' skills in number allow them to enrich their learning in a variety of subjects across the curriculum and their use of numeracy in other subjects supports their work in mathematics lessons. In science the pupils numeracy skills are used effectively to collect and interpret data, to take measurements and to make various calculations in physics. In geography, pupils practice using co-ordinates during map reading exercises. They prepare spreadsheets in financial planning exercises in information technology lessons. In art, pupils use mathematics in their work on patterns, shape and perspective, and in physical education to calculate measurements such as speed and fitness.

81. Most heads of departments are aware of the need to prepare a numeracy policy and some have done so. The mathematics department has already provided training in the use of numeracy across the curriculum and it has produced a useful reference handbook. An audit of the extent of other subjects' use of numeracy in other subjects is planned to identify where and when particular topics are being taught. Consultations between the mathematics and other departments have begun. It is the aim of the head of department as numeracy co-ordinator to ensure a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics in all subjects. Such initiatives will inform the department's planning to provide reinforcement work or to avoid unnecessary repetition. The mathematics department's initiative while in an early stage of development is proving to be effective in ensuring that pupils have every opportunity to develop their numerical skills and that their skills are applied appropriately.

SCIENCE

82. Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching leads to effective learning for most pupils and they achieve well.
- Very good leadership and management lead to effective teaching of well planned lessons.
- The use of effective assessment and systems, to track and monitor pupil progress, result in realistic target setting for pupils.
- Good relationships and respect for individuals result in a safe, caring environment.
- Data logging is not used as effectively as it could be to log and analyse experimental data where appropriate;
- There is inconsistency in the use of science to address the teaching of literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils working on either the double award and or the separate single award being taught in the same group, are not as well provided for as they should be.

Commentary

83. In the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 9, results were in line with the national average and with similar schools. The science results were better than those for mathematics but below those for English, and boys tended to do better than girls. Over the three years to 2002 attainment has risen in line with the national trend. The results for 2003 were much better. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were below the national average for A*-C grades but above the national average for A*-G grades. The results were average relative to other subjects and girls did better than boys. Over the three years to 2002 results have been variable. The results for 2003 were better than for 2002.

84. Pupils' standards in work seen for Year 9 are average and pupils have achieved well since entering the school. For example high attaining pupils are able to record experimental observations in a detailed systematic way without prompting. All pupils are achieving well in lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9 building on previous knowledge and understanding. Pupils' standards of work seen in Year 11 are also average and they achieve at least what is expected of them based upon their performance in the national tests at the end of Year 9. The highest attaining pupils are able to calculate the orbits of satellites using complex formulae. However they are not always able to evaluate their experimental work effectively. Lower attaining pupils demonstrate a general understanding of the National Grid System but are unable to give scientific reasons for the inclusion of some of its features such as transformers. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 generally achieve well in lessons gaining knowledge and understanding. Written work is well presented for all years. Although pupils' skills in information and communication technology are utilised well for word processing and internet research, little use is made of computers in the laboratory for data capture.

85. The quality of teaching for all years is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations. They plan carefully to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met and deliver the

lessons well with particular concern for the welfare and safety of their pupils. Very good teaching is characterised by encouraging pupils to be highly productive and work at a good pace together with a thorough 'end of lesson' evaluation. For example in a Year 11 lesson the teacher used a series of strictly timed tasks including a practical activity to ensure that the pupils knew and understood the prerequisites for a thorough understanding of the blast furnace. This resulted in very good learning by the pupils. This was checked and evaluated by the teacher questioning each individual pupil before they left the laboratory. In less good lessons the pace tended to be a little slow, pupils did not learn as effectively and time ran out before the teacher could thoroughly ascertain what the pupils had learnt. In some lessons insufficient attention was devoted to identifying opportunities for developing numeracy and literacy.

An example of excellent practice

Excellent teaching was demonstrated in a lower set Year 8 lesson on digestion that resulted in excellent achievement by pupils. The main objective was for the pupils to produce their own description or explanation of digestion through their own research. The lesson took place in the information technology suite and all pupils had access to a computer. The teacher was extremely enthusiastic about what she expected pupils to achieve from the outset and informed pupils of their learning objectives. Descriptions and explanations of digestion were provided for pupils in the form of brief national curriculum level descriptors ranging from 4-6 and a set of three corresponding texts. All pupils had access to all three different texts. The pupils were quickly on task highlighting the key words that they intended to research via the web site, www.learn.co.uk. Pupils selected their own resources with a high degree of proficiency in the use of ICT and were continually encouraged to extend themselves and go further by the teacher on an individual basis. The exercise was highly interactive in that pupils were answering questions, obtaining diagrams and reading text. Strict timing brought this to an end and pupils were then asked to produce their own word processed descriptions and explanations of what they had learnt without further reference to their resources. By the end of the lesson pupils had demonstrated excellent achievement in what they could describe and explain about the digestive system, many pupils working at level 6 and the remainder at level 5. This remarkable achievement by pupils had come about by the very high expectations of the teacher, excellent planning, a commitment to ensure that each pupil knew exactly what to do to attain a particular level and the very effective use of classroom management.

86. The curriculum provision is good. Pupils' experiences in science are enriched by visits to locations of scientific interest and through visiting speakers. Whilst the needs of all pupils are generally met, in a Year 11 set of high attainers the provision is predominantly for those pupils taking separate subject sciences for the GCSE. However, the minority of double award pupils in this group are not benefiting from the arrangement as much as they could.

87. The leadership of the department is very good. The head of department demonstrates a strong commitment to improve teaching and learning by teaching to a very high standard herself and monitoring and supporting the teaching of colleagues. The management of the department is also very good. The head of department gives clear direction to colleagues on a day to day basis and detailed schemes of work that include exemplar lesson plans are in place. She monitors the learning of pupils very well and ensures that colleagues set regular homework. A well focused, carefully monitored departmental plan is in place.

88. Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of significant improvements:

- Attainment at the end of Year 9.
- Teaching.
- Leadership and management.
- The use of assessment to track pupil progress.
- The use of information and communication technology.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

89. The provision of ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has an above average number of computers
- ICT systems in the library are well-used and improving learning across subjects
- Computer systems are well managed and work reliably
- Attainment in ICT is below the national expectation by Year 9
- Some teaching is unsatisfactory
- The provision of ICT for music is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

90. Attainment in ICT by age 14 is below the national expectation for the subject. The school is yet to implement ICT under the National Strategy and current standards of work are below the expected level. There is currently insufficient progression of pupils' learning through Years 7 to 9.

91. In Years 10 and 11, most pupils study GNVQ ICT with some pupils following GCSE ICT. Attainment is at the national average but girls do less well than boys. Current standards of work are in line with the national average and most pupils are expected to pass. Coursework shows an emphasis on the use of ICT to communicate, including the design of a logo, a CD cover and garden. During lessons pupils demonstrated good levels of independence and the ability to review and improve their work.

92. The achievement of pupils in ICT is good in relation to their capability. Pupils demonstrate good design skills in relation to page layout and choice of graphics. Good use is made of the school's broadband connection for background research. By Year 9 pupils can create a brochure and undertake an evaluation of their work. By Year 11 pupils can undertake a series of thematic tasks using a range of applications and promoting skills of design, research and evaluation.

93. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory overall. In one third of lessons teaching is good but unsatisfactory teaching was seen in one lesson. Teaching is best in the sixth form and most variable on the GNVQ course. There is some ICT teaching by non-specialist teachers. Not all teachers feel they have sufficient knowledge to teach the subject to the expected level and further training is necessary.

94. In a Year 11 lesson where teaching was judged as good, careful planning enabled pupils following two different courses to make good progress. Pupils made good progress either in developing criteria for an investigation or producing an itinerary. Good support for learning was provided through electronic and printed materials. The teacher provided good individual support for pupils that encouraged them to evaluate their work. Pupils showed fluency in using their chosen application and worked with sustained interest.

95. In a lesson judged as unsatisfactory, pupils undertook a search using the internet without the purpose, context or criteria being made clear. The task was unsuccessful in retaining pupils' interest over the whole lesson and gains in learning were low in relation to pupils' capability.

96. Relationships are very good. Pupils' response to the teaching is nearly always good. Pupils demonstrate growing independence and good skills and can move information between several applications to build presentations.

97. Leadership for ICT developments is good. Recent decisions over provision are having a positive effect on the quality of learning. There are some weaknesses in the management of ICT in respect to ensuring progression in Years 7 to 9 and the monitoring of teaching to ensure

consistency. ICT systems are effectively managed and work reliably. The department is working with five partner primary schools in developing ICT and this has scope to raise the attainment in ICT of pupils on entry to the school.

98. The breadth of use of ICT across the programme of study requires further development. Students show a good attitude to work when using ICT. The ability to make use of source materials from the internet is improving pupils' research and presentation skills. Since the last inspection, attainment by Year 9 has remained below the national expectation but subject teachers now have increased subject skills than was reported during the previous inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

99. There is a greater than average number of computers in the school. A new ICT area in the library is in continual use by subject areas, notably mathematics, science and English. Other subjects make less use of ICT, although there is capacity to book ICT rooms, and the provision of ICT for music is unsatisfactory.

100. Most teachers have successfully completed a national training programme for ICT in subject teaching. Around half of teachers have been provided with laptop computers under a national scheme. There is a growing level of interest and awareness amongst teaching staff of how to use ICT to improve learning in subjects. Most department plans include opportunities for using ICT. Some teachers make good use of data projectors. An example of the effective use of ICT in subjects is the use of software to find a graphical solution to simultaneous equations. ICT is used effectively to support learners with weakly developed literacy skills.

101. Pupils are increasingly choosing to use ICT as a medium in which to learn in their subjects. Good use is made of resources from the internet to support subject work. The achievement of pupils when using ICT in their subjects is good.

HUMANITIES

Geography

102. The provision in geography is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are above average in all year groups
- Standards of teaching are very good, resulting in very good learning
- Achievement is good from low attainment on entry to the school to above average GCSE results
- The attainment of boys is considerably lower than that of girls

Commentary

103. In 2002 GCSE groups were too small for meaningful statistical comparisons with national figures. Girls' results were considerably better than boys'. In 2003 the number of entrants was still low, but all attained grades in the A* to C bracket. Work seen during the inspection, together with the very good standard of teaching seen, suggests that this high standard may continue. By Year 11 the higher-attaining pupils are capable of fluent and well-argued writing on a number of topics, and are producing some very good quality pieces of coursework about local housing issues. The work of lower-attaining pupils shows good learning and understanding, but lacks the level of organisation required by the highest grades.

104. End of Year 9 teacher assessments in 2002 were in line with the national average overall and improved in 2003. However, this overall figure disguises the fact that girls' results were above average whereas boys' were below. As a result of the boys' performance, targets for 2003 were not

met. The standard of Year 9 work seen during the inspection shows clear development of skills and knowledge from a weak start in Year 7, and current Year 9 work is above expectations. The high-attaining students have produced some very competent extended writing and research about ecosystems and the results of human and natural interventions in the environment. Most of the lower-attaining students have also produced good work that shows understanding of how plants and animals have evolved to live in extreme conditions.

105. These standards represent very good achievement in all year groups from below average attainment on entry to the school.

106. Students with special educational needs are well provided for by special worksheets and by extra support from classroom assistants. They are regularly encouraged to answer questions and contribute to the lessons when they feel ready. High-attaining students are given extra activities to challenge them. Overall the achievement of these groups of students is very good, in line with that of their classmates.

107. The very good teaching leads to very good learning across Years 7 to 11 with no unsatisfactory lessons observed and one that was excellent. The best lessons were based on very good planning and organisation and imaginative use of resources. Pupils learn well from interesting tasks in which they are required to think for themselves and to use their own research to develop understanding. Teachers have high expectations and they assess learning effectively through questioning and through regular assignments based on national curriculum levels. Reading and writing are effectively developed, with writing frames being provided for pupils who need more guidance. Pupils' numeracy skills are sufficient for the work they need to do in geography. Although ICT use is planned into the curriculum, opportunities for class use are limited because of problems booking equipment.

108. Over the last two years the progress of some classes has been interrupted by staffing changes, and at present the head of department is on maternity leave. However, the role is being more than adequately filled by an experienced member of staff who is managing and leading the department very well, alongside other responsibilities. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good, with rising standards of attainment and teaching, and provision for the full range of attainment in all lessons. A strong commitment to high standards pervades the work of the department.

A Year 7 geography lesson provided an excellent example of teaching a difficult concept to a mixed ability class in such a way that every pupil achieved more than would normally be expected of this age group. Preparation was crucial and detailed: the teacher had set up a PowerPoint presentation using a website that allowed instant movement between Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photographs, and these images were projected onto an ordinary whiteboard so that the teacher could overwrite them with annotations to assist in the interpretations of the photographs – a simple substitute for the expensive technology of an interactive whiteboard. Two support assistants in the classroom were each provided with a slightly different guidance sheet on how best to support “their” individual pupils, so nobody was left out of the action for want of understanding. Very skilled questioning by the teacher ensured that pupils always had to think for themselves before responding; there were no easy right or wrong answers. A closing session assessed learning by asking pupils to complete three simple sentences, but this was hardly necessary because the whole atmosphere was buzzing with the interest and excitement of what had been learned.

History

109. Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress.
- There are few opportunities to use ICT in lessons.
- In Years 7 - 9, there are few textbooks suitable for all abilities.

Commentary

110. Standards are average.

111. At the end of Year 9, standards are close to average. In GCSE examinations in 2002, the proportion of A*-C grades was below average but all pupils obtained a grade. Results in 2003 improved somewhat and were close to average.

112. Pupils in Year 7 have limited historical skills. They do not understand chronology well or the use of evidence. Many have weak reading and writing skills. As they reach average expectations at the end of Year 9, achievement is good. Pupils now grasp the significance of dates and time spans and use evidence from a variety of sources. Extended writing skills develop slowly (partly because of limited time in Year 7) but are satisfactory at the end of Year 9.

113. At the end of Year 11, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the topics studied. Writing skills continue to improve and all pupils complete their coursework. Higher attaining pupils evaluate and discuss evidence well. Pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as others.

114. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and good in some lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and challenge pupils to think by questioning. Pupils' understanding and use of technical language develops well because of the constant emphasis on literacy. Generally lessons are well planned but sometimes do not take account of the wide range of need in some lessons. In Years 7-9, textbooks are geared to one ability level only and it is not always easy to adapt them effectively. In the best lessons, pupils have good opportunities to discuss ideas fully but in others, these are limited. When teaching is good, in particular in the GCSE and A/AS level lessons, pupils learn well and are developing a real love of history. Homework is regularly set. Marking and assessment are good. Pupils learn to present their work carefully and are told very clearly how to improve.

115. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Day to day running is smooth despite room changes and movement of resources. This is the result of the considerable commitment of the head of department who has overcome various problems caused by changes of staffing since the last inspection. The sizes of GCSE groups have fluctuated but are currently rather larger. Schemes of work have been written, incorporating opportunities for work in citizenship, numeracy and ICT. Unfortunately limited access to computers restricts the practice of the latter. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory because standards of attainment, teaching and learning have been maintained and other issues addressed.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils perform well in external examination results at the end of Year 11 in food and textiles examinations.
- Pupils achieve well in food throughout the school.
- Teachers work hard to support pupils on a one-to-one basis and have very good relationships with them.

- Pupils do not achieve sufficiently well in resistant materials and graphics.
- Pupils have limited understanding of the influence of design on the way in which products are made.
- Management of the subject has been unsatisfactory, but is now improving.
- Teachers do not use sufficient strategies for supporting pupils with weak literacy skills or the more able.

Commentary

117. Despite the fact that pupils perform well in external examination at the end of Year 11 in food and textiles examinations, standards overall are below those achieved nationally. Nevertheless, pupils achieve higher standards when they work in some materials, for example food, than in others, for example graphics. In Years 10 and 11, girls' achievement is better than that of boys because girls tend to take food and textiles while boys choose to work in graphics or resistant materials. Where pupils' achievement is satisfactory or good, it is the result of high levels of feedback from teachers. As a result, pupils know how to improve and their work is well presented. In lessons where pupils are challenged, they put high levels of energy into their work. At the age of 14 and 16, pupils' achievement is limited by their unsatisfactory skills of design. Nevertheless there are some good finished products: pupils' achievement in resistant materials and graphics is improving.

118. The teaching of specialist processes is generally satisfactory and pupils become competent when using specialist equipment to make things. Teachers have good knowledge of different materials and processes. However, some higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might in all areas and some lower attaining pupils do not always finish their work because all pupils do the same tasks. Where pupils' learning is unsatisfactory, teachers have spent too long giving demonstrations and verbal instructions to pupils. As a result, pupils become inattentive. Teachers provide very good one-to-one support for pupils. They work very hard to ensure a good pace to the learning and insist on high standards of behaviour. Planning is very detailed, but not always well focused on what it is intended that pupils will know, understand and be able to do. The department has too few resources to demonstrate the influence of design and manufacturing processes on the industrial production of goods. Learning assistants support pupils well on a one-to-one basis. However, on occasions they do too much for pupils. Assessment is inconsistent and it is not consistently used to shape and sharpen the focus of teachers' lesson plans. The management of the subject is improving well. The appointment of new permanent staff is a major step in the right direction for the department. Although the accommodation is adequate, the floor in the food room is very slippery and staff and pupils have both had several falls.

119. Overall, there have been important improvements since the last inspection. However, some weaknesses in the consistency of practice, in the quality of pupils' designing, provision for pupils of different abilities and the use of computers are still evident.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good which results in good learning.
- There are few opportunities for students to develop ideas through ICT.
- Teachers possess good subject knowledge and planning is good.
- Students are keen to learn and settle readily to their work.
- Students have access to a very limited range of media and materials.
- One of the art studios is unsatisfactory due to its layout, which effects pupils' learning adversely.

Commentary

121. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is below the national average. In 2002, teacher assessments for Year 9 students indicated that attainment was just below national expectations. In 2003 there was significant improvement and attainment was well above the national average, but attainment by boys remained well below that of girls'. In the GCSE Examination in 2002, attainment was well below that of students' nationally. However, attainment by these students was broadly in line with attainment in all of their other school subjects. In the 2003 examination there was significant improvement in attainment, which is now in line with national expectations.

122. Students in Years 7 and 8 enjoy art and settle readily to their work. Achievement is good and most students demonstrate reasonable control over their chosen media. The standard of work is in line with national expectations but some Year 8 groups are too large for the available studio space which contributes to boys' underachievement. The majority of Year 9 students work well to deepen their knowledge and improve their skills in drawing and painting. Girls work with greater concentration than boys, but both produce work of a standard that is above national expectations. Achievement is good, as students enter the school with levels of attainment in Year 7 that are below national expectations, but above by the end of Year 9. The majority of Year 11 students are producing work of a standard that is broadly in line with national expectations with some working above. There is evidence of improvement in the standard of drawing in their visual diaries and achievement from the start of Year 10 is satisfactory. Students with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 11.

123. There is a strong sense of the spiritual in students' work and they are encouraged to use signs and symbols to investigate their own ideas and concepts. Students in Years 7 and 8 have investigated the artwork of Aborigines in Australia and the totem poles carved by native North Americans.

124. Teaching is good overall and there are some very strong features. Teachers have high expectations and all students are expected to work to the best of their ability. Teachers are well informed and possess good subject knowledge, consequently they can provide good advice and support for students. Management of time and resources is very good, particularly as limited access to resources effects the range and variety of activities that can be offered to students.

125. Leadership and management are good and there are good assessing and recording systems in place. Oral feedback is provided for students during each lesson and short written comments are entered in their visual diaries. Schemes of work are good, thorough and detailed, providing guidance for teachers and students. However, greater use could be made of objective data for setting targets for individual students.

126. There are two large art studios, one of which is unsatisfactory due to its poor layout. This means that there are occasions when students can be working unseen by the teacher. The studios are dilapidated and in need of refurbishment, presently not conducive to learning. The sinks are too small for an art, craft environment and become clogged regularly.

127. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Assessment of students' work is now carried out and recorded more effectively than during the last inspection but the application of ICT within the department has not been sufficiently well developed.

Music

128. Provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Energetic leadership and management are very good, providing a clear vision.
- Teaching, learning and achievement are very good.

- The music curriculum throughout the school is broad, balanced and very well delivered.
- Extra curricular provision is developing: 7% of the school's population receive individual music tuition.
- Satisfactory standards in Years 7 to 9 are improving but constrained by shortage of time.
- Resources for music are unsatisfactory: in some cases good but with significant shortcomings, especially ICT for music where it does not meet statutory requirements.
- Accommodation remains poor and is deteriorating rapidly.

Commentary

129. GCSE results are stabilising but remain unsatisfactory. However, given pupils' prior levels of attainment, individual achievements are good. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 show standards to be satisfactory with boys' attainments only slightly poorer than girls. Work in class confirms this and augurs very well for continuing rising standards in the future.

130. On entry to the school, pupils' standards of attainment in music are very poor: often far less than national expectations at age 11. Standards are satisfactory by the end of Year 9, representing very good achievement, although a few pupils have difficulty with some important musical concepts. The majority have greater confidence in singing and playing both as individuals and in larger groups. Pupils' attention is improving significantly, especially when listening to music. This provides a secure foundation for those who elect to follow GCSE courses. By the end of Year 11, pupils' musical skills are further improved but standards remain unsatisfactory.

131. Teaching and learning in music throughout the school are never less than good and ordinarily very good with some outstanding features. In all year groups, the effect of very well qualified teachers and musicians' expertise is clearly seen in very detailed planning, preparation and presentation of lessons. Teachers' very high expectations of pupils' and students' engagement with music in performing, composing and critical listening is characterised by unusual levels of energy and dynamism coupled with sensitivity to the needs of individuals. This engenders very positive attitudes, behaviour and attention to the task in hand by pupils and students who clearly value their music lessons highly. Lapses in such high standards are rare and very well managed by the teachers. Every lesson observed had positive outcomes, especially in the very high levels of achievement seen. The music staff and pupils demonstrate their enjoyment of music making and their commitment to the life of the whole school. They are involved in a wide range of instrumental and vocal ensembles, presenting concerts in school and in the local community.

132. Leadership and management are very good and visionary with unusually high levels of commitment and energy. The curriculum is broad, balanced and rich in its cultural and stylistic variety. It is regularly reviewed, revised and refined as changing circumstances demand. The department makes significant contributions to SMSC, embodying the essentially Christian but all-inclusive and very good ethos of the school. The very high expectations of teachers are now improving standards rapidly. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement are very good with some outstanding features. There has been significant progress since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in GCSE physical education and dance are good.
- Provision for extra curricular sport is good.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' motivation are good.
- Assessment at the end of Year 9 needs refinement.
- Additional curriculum time is required at Years 10 and 11.
- Planning for special educational needs and literacy needs improvement.

Commentary

134. Standards across the school are in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory for the majority of pupils. However, the department would benefit from moderating assessment with other schools to provide accurate teacher assessments at the end of Year 9.

135. In Years 7 to 9 pupils are able to reflect and evaluate on previous work in lessons. They are encouraged to explain reasons for particular activities. They understand the reasons for a warm up, the names of major muscle groups and appropriate stretching exercises. Teachers challenge pupils to improve their techniques through praise and encouragement. Most pupils succeed and benefit from their achievements. Teachers' planning ensures that national curriculum requirements are met. Further development of differentiation for pupils with special educational needs will improve achievement.

136. In Years 10 and 11 overall standards of achievement are in line with national expectations. However, the performance at GCSE 2003 was well above national average. Pupils in the Year 10 dance group demonstrated very good levels of achievement and good teamwork which contributes to the personal development of the pupils.

137. There is good provision for extra curricular sport. Fixtures are arranged throughout the school year allowing pupils to compete against teams from other schools. All physical education staff are involved in supporting this provision which contributes to the personal and social development of the pupils.

138. The department is well led and managed and teachers are appropriately qualified. Across the school pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum. In Years 10 and 11, however, the curriculum time allocation needs alteration. The school has plans to increase the amount of curriculum time in the next academic year. Apart from this there has been an improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. Standards at Year 11 GCSE have improved and during the inspection, there was no evidence of poor behaviour.

139. Departmental documentation has been developed which includes appropriate schemes of work and a pupil self-assessment scheme. The department contributes to literacy by displaying key words in the gym area but this aspect is not fully developed in lessons. The facilities are satisfactory to deliver the curriculum although the addition of a sports hall and a dance studio would further improve opportunities for teaching and learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

140. Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision of personal, social and health education and citizenship is an integral part of the life of St. Andrew's.
- The school has devoted a great deal of time and effort establishing it in the curriculum of the school.

Commentary

141. Personal, social and health education is taught in conjunction with religious education. As the latter was not a focus for this inspection, evidence is limited. Nevertheless, the effects of the personal, social and health education **are** clear, in and around the school, in good behaviour, positive attitudes and good personal development of the pupils. Although the teaching of citizenship was only sampled, documentation from staff demonstrates that citizenship is well planned.

142. Statutory requirements are met. The overall provision for personal, social and health education is therefore good.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

143. In the inspection, three subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail, one was sampled and is written up briefly. Work in other subjects and courses was also sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

144. The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002. **However, great care should be taken in interpreting the data, because of the very small number of students involved.** Few students "cash in" their AS results because of the high proportion continuing to A-level. Students at St. Andrew's must attain a 'C'-grade at AS level to go onto A-level, which artificially depresses the AS scores.

Level 3 GCE AS level courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
English	5	100	91.4	0	37.9	1.6	38.9
Mathematics	6	100	71.4	17	34.3	2.33	31.3
Biology	6	100	85.7	0	33.2	2.00	33.2
Physics	5	100	80.0	20	36.2	2.6	34.3
History	7	100	80.0	43	37.9	2.85	37.8

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
English	12	100	98.3	33	36.5	6.33	80.1
Mathematics	5	100	93.3	20	52.2	6.00	84.7
Biology	3	100	91.6	33	36.3	4.67	74.1
Physics	3	100	92.8	33	42.8	4.67	78.6
History	4	100	97.1	100	41.0	9.00	81.2

Level 2 vocational qualifications

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
IT GNVQ	8	100		20		0	

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

145. The overall provision for English literature is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations of their students, and ensure that learning is both challenging and enjoyable.
- Very good subject management ensures that assessment information is well used by teachers and students to evaluate performance and to identify areas for improvement.
- Students show a high commitment to the course and work very well, both collaboratively and independently; and their achievement is good.
- Students do not always show sufficient awareness of the author's style, purpose or audience in their writing.

Commentary

146. The inspection focus was on English literature but media studies, currently offered only at AS level to a combined Year 12 and Year 13 class, was also sampled. One lesson was seen. Teaching and learning in media studies are very good. Students respond eagerly and sensitively to a range of media texts and, in their lessons and practical work, they use and understand the subject's specialist language and concepts very well. Consequently, they also achieve very well.

147. Standards attained at A2 level in recent years have varied between being well above to well below average. In 2002, they were average. Unconfirmed figures for 2003 show an improvement on the previous year's results. Because of the low numbers entered in some years, it is not possible to make any valid judgements about the difference in performance between male and female students.

148. Students enter the sixth form with a wide range of ability. The overall standard of work seen is average. They readily discuss and debate a range of social, moral, cultural and ethical issues which arise from their texts: however, whilst they can show good, independent responses in their writing, their close analytical skills are not strong enough to earn them the top grades. Some students write about characters and plot as if they are real people and events and not literary constructs. In both years, although students can identify the main features of form, language and structure in texts, they do not show a detailed understanding of their effect on the reader.

149. Achievement is good. Students have very positive attitudes and show strong commitment to the course, particularly in the small Year 13 group. They enjoy literature and, because of the excellent relationships between students and with their teachers, they both support and challenge each other very well. They work very well, collaboratively and independently, especially when they are given choices in how they tackle assignments. Their learning is also enriched by regular use of information and communication technology for research and presentations.

150. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations of their students whom they know very well: therefore, they challenge them in discussion and debate and use a good range of teaching techniques to help them develop as effective independent learners. A strength of teaching is the excellent use made by teachers of the examination board's grade descriptors to show students exactly what they need to do to improve.

151. The leadership and management of this small team of teachers are very good. The department is a thinking department which is constantly reviewing and evaluating its practices in order to improve standards even further. Although examination results are currently lower than they were at the time of the previous inspection, teaching is very good and consequently students achieve well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

152. Provision is **good**. Standards are average. Because of very good teaching and the maturity and commitment of students, they achieve well. Leadership and management are very good

MATHEMATICS

153. Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in both the GCSE and AS-level courses currently being delivered.
- Plans are in place to develop AS and A level mathematics.
- Standards of attainment at AS-level are below average.
- Too few students choose to study mathematics beyond GCSE at St Andrew's.

Commentary

154. In previous years, too few students were entered for A/AS examinations for comparisons to be made with national averages. In 2003 there were no A-level and only one AS-level candidates who did not achieve a grade. This is not surprising since most of the GCSE candidates, who attained the necessary higher grades to enable them to study AS/ A-level mathematics, had transferred to other 6th forms. The one student who studied the AS course last year had achieved well in the 'statistics' module but had failed in the 'pure mathematics' module. A decision was made that, rather than re-sitting modules, he would stand a better chance of achieving good AS and, later, A-level grades by repeating the whole course. The current Year 12 group consists of this student and one other and there is no Year 13 A-level mathematics group this year.

155. The Year 12 AS-level students are currently studying the 'mechanics' and 'pure mathematics' modules. The standard of work seen in their lessons and books is good. The students enter into academic conference, demonstrating their increasing familiarity with the language of mathematics and their higher level thinking skills, which will enable them to cope with abstract mathematics. The students are achieving well in both modules. They are expected to attain AS-level grades in 2004 and then continue studying mathematics to A-level.

156. There are two teachers delivering the AS course, one teaching the 'mechanics' module and the other, the 'pure mathematics' module. The standard of teaching and the relationship between teachers and students are very good. The teachers are very knowledgeable, they share their love of mathematics with the students and they elicit the students' logical thought processes. The students are aware of their present standards of attainment and have set themselves target grades so that they remain mindful of the need to work hard.

157. The Year 12 students who are preparing to re-sit the GCSE examination in 2004 are taught by the head of department and are making good progress. Their programme of study has been condensed for completion in two terms. In one lesson the students showed good understanding of circle geometry. Most of the students are expected to improve on their current standard by at least one grade. However, a few attend irregularly and their success is uncertain.

158. The head of department works closely with the other two teachers and is tracking the progress of the AS-level and GCSE-level students to ensure that they are well prepared to secure good grades next year. The good quality teaching and management of the subject in the 6th form are raising standards and the current Year 12 students should achieve their target grades. Planning for the future development of the A/AS-level courses has been carefully considered. As a result of improved teaching and management, there are now more higher-attaining pupils in Year 11 and an even greater number in Year 10 than in previous years. These pupils have higher GCSE target

grades and have been identified as those more likely to succeed with the intellectual demands of AS/A-level courses in mathematics. They have been encouraged by their successes and have already indicated their wishes to continue the study of mathematics to A-level at St Andrew's. The head of department and the team of talented and dedicated teachers have already brought about raised standards in mathematics in the main school and are now in a good position to develop the subject in the 6th form, increasing A/AS-level student number and improving standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

159. Development of the teaching of mathematics across the curriculum in the sixth form is currently a focus of attention for the head of department and the head of sixth for. It is currently satisfactory.

SCIENCE

160. Provision in science is **good**.

Commentary

161. Both chemistry and biology were sampled as they currently being taught in Year 12. There are no physics students at present being taught in the school. The number of students who took AS physics in 2002 was too small to make a comparison with national results. However, students achieved what was expected of them based upon their prior performance in the GCSE. Student numbers were small for the 2002 AS and A-level biology examinations. However, students gained the grades expected of them based upon their prior attainment at GCSE. There were no AS or A-level chemistry students for the 2002 examinations. For the 2003 AS and A-level physics and biology examinations students gained the grades expected of them based upon their prior attainment at the end of Year 11. The standard of work seen in Year 12 chemistry was average and in Year 12 biology it was above average. Two lessons were observed, one in biology and one in chemistry. In both lessons the teaching was good and as a result students learned and achieved well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

162. Provision of ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Current standards are in line with the national average
- The teaching of ICT is good
- An industry-produced vocational ICT course is promoting high standards
- There is scope for further developing company links as a resource for the AVC ICT course.

Commentary

163. There are no recent examination results in this subject. Students study an Advanced Vocational Certificate in ICT or an Oracle vocational ICT course.

164. Current standards are in line with the national average. The achievement of students is good in relation to their prior attainment. Students can speak confidently about aspects of database design showing precision in the use of specialist terminology. They can undertake a critical comparison of document styles and layout in relation to their function. They demonstrate good skills of independent learning and an awareness of the criteria for higher level performance.

165. The teaching of ICT at this level is good. Teachers have good specialist knowledge. ICT lessons move with a pace and there is good balance between teacher input and practical tasks.

Effective use is made of a projection screen by teachers and learning resources are available from the school intranet.

166. In a lesson where the teaching was good the teacher used a series of company forms and leaflets effectively as stimulus to a discussion about the design of company forms. Pupils responded confidently offering critical comment to support their statements. There was a very good climate for learning based upon good relationships. The teacher provided individual guidance that was effective in drawing out criteria on which to base design decisions.

167. Discussions with students demonstrated development of subject knowledge and an awareness of the criteria for achieving higher grades. Coursework is of the expected standard. Students' responses to lessons in the sixth form are good. Well-developed relationships and a business-like approach create purposeful approaches to the work.

168. The management of the subject is effective in promoting learning at this level. Resources for teaching and learning in this subject are good on the Oracle course but on the AVC course there is scope for developing company links further as a resource for learning. An ICT network with fast links to the internet provides an effective tool for research. Students are self sufficient in finding and evaluating information.

169. The Oracle ICT course is a good example of a vocational course with strong links to a particular area of commerce. The materials and training provided by the company support a rigorous approach to studies that lead to an industry-recognised qualification.

HUMANITIES

History

170. Provision in history is **good**.

Commentary

171. History was sampled, with one lesson observed. For the last two years, results in the A level examinations have been above average. AS results have been more variable. Teaching is very good and well adapted to pupil needs. Pupils of all abilities generally achieve well.

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

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