

INSPECTION REPORT

CHENDERIT SCHOOL

Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122087

Acting Headteacher: Mr A. Warren

Lead inspector: Mr D. Cox

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th October 2003

Inspection number: 259269

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

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Terms used in this report

*Students in 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools after Year 6. Students in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Those students who remain at school after the compulsory period of education are in the **sixth form**, in Years 12 and 13. Students in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for all ages at school.*

*At the end of Year 9, students aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the students know, understand and can do at age 14. At the end of Year 11, students aged 16 may take examinations in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (**GCSE**). Others may follow courses leading to the award of the General National Vocational Qualification (**GNVQ**) or the National Vocational Qualification (**NVQ**). Sixth form students may take further courses leading to these awards, including the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (**AVCE**), or to those of the General Certificate of Education at Advanced level (**A-level**). Students may take examinations leading to the Advanced Subsidiary award (**AS**), equivalent to half the difficulty of the full A-level, which is gained by further study beyond AS standard. Some students may also take Advanced Extension Awards (**AEA**).*

*Inspectors judge the **standards** reached by students by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for students of the same age nationally. The judgements about students' **achievements** reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational **value added** over time.*

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 – 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1004
School address:	Chenderit School Archery Road Middleton Cheney Banbury Oxon
Postcode:	OX17 2QR
Telephone number:	01295 711567
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G. Marsh
Date of previous inspection:	19 th – 23 rd January 1996

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Chenderit School is about the same size as other secondary schools and educates students between the ages of 11 and 18. There are 1004 students on roll, of whom 157 are in the sixth form. The school is situated in Northamptonshire and is a mixed comprehensive. The school serves a wide rural area of 22 villages; students come from 19 primary schools. Approximately 15 per cent of students come from Banbury (Oxfordshire). Students are predominantly from White-British backgrounds. The percentage of student for whom English is not the mother tongue is lower than in most other schools. There are six students for whom English is not their first language and who are at an early stage of learning English.

The percentage of students identified as having special educational needs is broadly average; the percentage of students with statements of special educational needs is below average. Most students are on the register for dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties and social and emotional and behavioural needs. The socio-economic circumstances of the students are above average. Overall, attainment on entry is above average but varies from year to year. For example, students in the current Year 10 were well above average on entry.

The school is a specialist visual arts college. The school was awarded the Artsmark in 2001; Sportsmark in 2001 and Heartbeat in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
10297	D. Cox	Lead inspector	
13395	J. Illingworth	Lay inspector	
33139	M. Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics
19596	B. Treacy	Team inspector	English; English as an additional language
4145	C. Harrison	Team inspector	Science; Chemistry
11933	D. Driscoll	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
17868	E. Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art and design
30973	G. Hancock	Team inspector	Design and technology
15462	C. Blakemore	Team inspector	Geography
3793	J. Ratcliffe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
18846	P. Priest	Team inspector	Music
12985	S. Jeffray	Team inspector	Physical education
30427	F. Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector	Religious education; Citizenship
11720	P. Winch	Team inspector	Special educational needs
2597	C. Jackson	Team inspector	Business
15832	J. Vanstone	Team inspector	History
32371	H. Fairclough	Team inspector	English, post-16

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. The main school provides satisfactory value for money. However, the sixth form is heavily subsidised and, whilst providing a satisfactory education, it is not cost-effective. Teaching, leadership and students' achievement are satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students achieve very well in art and design in the sixth form.
- The achievement of students with special educational needs is very good within the learning support department and good in the school as a whole. The quality of leadership of the learning support department is excellent.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Students' attitudes are good and their attendance is well above average.
- Students' achievement in ICT is poor.
- Students' achievement in religious education is unsatisfactory.
- Students' achievement in business studies in Year 12 is unsatisfactory.
- The sixth form is not cost-effective.

Progress has been satisfactory since the previous inspection. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have improved at a faster rate than the national trend. Results at A-level have improved from below average to above average. However, there is still more to be done to improve GCSE results. Since the previous inspection, the attainment of boys has improved; the gap between boys' and girls' attainment has narrowed. Better assessment systems have been introduced. However, not all the issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed fully; concerns with ICT and religious education remain.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Students' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are above average at the end of Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13. Students develop good skills of working on their own. Students are articulate and confident speakers. However, the work of many middle and low attaining students is marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students' competence in mathematics is good. The achievement of students with special educational needs is good overall. It is very good within the learning support department. The achievement of students who are gifted and talented is satisfactory. Students who are at the early stages of learning English are provided with a very good quality of support and consequently make rapid progress.

Students' personal development and their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Students' good attitudes to learning make a positive contribution to their achievement. Good behaviour in lessons and around the school creates an environment that is

conducive to learning. Attendance is very good and enhances students' learning and achievement. Provision for students' moral development is very good. Provision for social development is good. A minority of students have unsatisfactory attitudes to learning and misbehave in lessons. The school misses opportunities to promote students' spiritual development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all years. In Years 7 to 9, teachers make particularly good use of the initiatives of the national Key Stage 3 Strategy. The teaching and learning of students with special educational needs are very good in classes taught by specialist support teachers. Learning is not always consolidated well enough through lesson summaries, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is unsatisfactory in ICT and religious education. Teachers do not systematically and comprehensively tackle students' basic shortcomings of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The quality of the curriculum is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 11 and unsatisfactory in the sixth form because it does not meet statutory requirements. There is a very good range of extra clubs and activities. The school has sufficient resources and accommodation, but not enough specialist teachers. Students in Years 7 to 13 are not taught all the subjects to which they are entitled. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship. The school takes good care of its students. It has sound procedures for ensuring their health and safety and it involves them satisfactorily in its work and development. Students receive good support and guidance, and this enhances their academic attainment, personal development and general welfare.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory. The leadership of the school is going through a period of transition. The acting headteacher together with the leadership team have steered the school admirably in the absence of the headteacher. Much hard work has resulted in the school gaining specialist status. Management of the school is satisfactory. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Funding earmarked for the main school heavily subsidises the sixth form; the sixth form is not cost-effective. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory because the school fails to meet its statutory curriculum responsibilities of providing ICT and religious education, and does not provide a daily act of collective worship or written reports to parents on citizenship. The governing body is well organised and the committee structure works well in informing governors about the work of the school. The sixth form is well led and managed.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Comments are based on those students and parents who responded to the questionnaires or attended the parents' meeting. Parents are very interested in students' learning and are keen for them to do well. Their high aspirations influence their children, who come to school expecting to learn and to work hard. A significant minority of sixth formers who completed the inspection's questionnaire said that they did not get helpful advice on what to study after Year 11. On the other hand, more than seven out of ten said that the courses that they had chosen suited their abilities and career plans. The evidence shows that the school gives students good guidance on the transfer from Year 11 to Year 12. Students feel that marking gives them good feedback on their attainment and progress. Pre-16 students have very good relationships with adults in the school and feel free to turn to them for effective support and guidance.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve students' achievement in ICT. (1)
- Improve students' achievement in religious education. (2)
- Improve students' achievement in business studies in Year 12. (3)
- Improve the cost-effectiveness of the sixth form. (4)

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure students have their full curriculum entitlement in ICT and religious education.
- Provide reports on students' progress in citizenship.
- Provide a daily act of collective worship.

PART A CONTINUED: SUMMARY OF THE SIXTH FORM REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory but its cost-effectiveness is unsatisfactory.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good leadership and management have resulted in a significant improvement in standards since the previous inspection.
- Students achieve very well in art and design because of the very good teaching they receive.
- Students' attitudes are very good.
- Students' achievement in business studies in Year 12 is unsatisfactory.
- Students do not receive their full statutory entitlement to religious education.
- The sixth form is not cost-effective.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Provision in English is good . Students achieve well because of the good teaching they receive.
Mathematics	Provision in mathematics is satisfactory . Teaching and learning are satisfactory, achievement is satisfactory.
Science	Provision in chemistry is satisfactory . Teaching and learning are satisfactory, achievement is satisfactory.
Information and communication technology	Provision in ICT is good . Students achieve well because of the good teaching they receive.
Humanities	Provision in geography and history is good . Students achieve well because of the good teaching they receive.
Visual and performing arts and media	Provision in art and design is very good . Students achieve very well because of the very good teaching they receive. A far greater range of opportunities is provided in art and design than is normally seen.
Business	Provision in business studies is unsatisfactory , particularly in Year 12. This is because of unsatisfactory teaching, and students underachieve as a result.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel.	Provision in physical education is very good . Students achieve well because of the good teaching they receive. A wide range of sporting opportunities is provided for students.

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

Good attention is given to students' welfare. The quality of pastoral care and personal guidance is good. Provision for educational guidance is also good. There are good procedures for taking account of students' views. The monitoring of students' performance is good; each student has a number of interviews with the head of sixth form throughout the year; remedial action is taken if thought necessary.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The quality of leadership and management of the sixth form is good. Examination results at A-level have risen from below average to above average since the previous inspection report. The head of sixth form provides good support for students and leads a good team of tutors. Governors do not fulfil their statutory duties in providing sufficient religious education for all students.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Approximately four out of ten sixth formers who completed the inspection's questionnaire said that they did not get helpful advice on what to study after Year 11. On the other hand, more than seven out of ten said that the courses that they had chosen suited their abilities and career plans. The evidence shows that the school gives students good guidance on the transfer from Year 11 to Year 12 and provides plenty of information on courses in the sixth form and in colleges of further education. However, some individuals decide not to follow the advice that they are offered. Many students find the work in the sixth form much harder than they expected, but the good support that they get from members of staff enables them to cope with it. They feel that marking gives them good feedback on their attainment and progress. They say that teachers use it well to advise them on how to improve their work. They also appreciate the help that the sixth form 'Core' programme gives them with developing their study skills.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Students join the school with standards of attainment that are above average and by the time they leave Year 11 their standards are still above average. Students' achievement is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 are well above average and have been improving at a rate that is better than the national trend.
- Students are articulate and confident speakers.
- The achievement of students with special educational needs is good overall.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory in religious education and poor in ICT.
- The work of many middle and low attaining students is marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Commentary

1. By the end of Year 9, standards are well above average in mathematics and science, above average in all other subjects with the exception of geography, religious education, music, physical education and citizenship where they are average, and ICT where standards are below average. Students achieve well in all subjects with the exception of English, geography and citizenship where achievement is satisfactory. Achievement is unsatisfactory in religious education and poor in ICT.
2. By the end of Year 11, standards are above average in most subjects with the exception of citizenship where they are average, religious education where they are below average, and ICT where standards are well below average. Students achieve well in geography, design and technology, art and design and physical education. They achieve satisfactorily in all other subjects with the exception of religious education where achievement is unsatisfactory and ICT where achievement is poor.
3. Students develop good skills of working on their own. Students are articulate and confident speakers. Students also learn and use subject-specific vocabulary. Most students read with good understanding and are able to find information using the Internet and other reference materials. However, the work of many middle and low attaining students is marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Students' competence in mathematics is good.
4. Achievement is poor in ICT because teaching is unsatisfactory and throughout Years 7 to 9, students do not receive enough lessons in ICT. As a result, coverage of the National Curriculum is only at a basic level and higher attainers in particular suffer because it is not possible for them to reach the higher levels in any aspect of the work. In addition, they are not taught to use computers to measure events. In Years 10 and 11, students continue to receive too few lessons to be able to study for an examination.
5. In religious education, achievement and standards are severely affected by the lack of curriculum time, and the discontinuity that further limits opportunity to develop skills and understanding. There is insufficient coverage of the agreed syllabus; the incomplete body of information from earlier years provides an inadequate foundation to support the development of students' understanding.

6. The achievement of students with special educational needs is good overall. It is very good within the learning support department because of the co-ordinator's excellent management and the expertise of specialist staff. Students improve rapidly in reading as a result of extra classes before school begins, and small group lessons for students in which they receive individual attention. In 2003, students with learning difficulties did very well in GCSE examinations, helped by the guidance received in the learning support area.
7. The achievement of students who are gifted and talented is satisfactory. The school admits very few students who are at the early stages of learning English. However, those students who need it are provided with a very good quality of support in both learning the language and adapting socially, and consequently make rapid progress.
8. The school set challenging targets for improvement. The school met its Key Stage 3 targets but fell slightly short of its targets for GCSE.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.8 (31.6)	33.3 (33.3)
Mathematics	38.2 (35.4)	35.3 (34.7)
Science	37.5 (35.1)	33.7 (33.3)

There were 164 students 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 students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	58 (62)	50 (48)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	97 (94)	91 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98 (98)	96 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	44.3 (45.8)	34.6

There were 146 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

At the time of writing, national comparisons for GCSE results in 2003 were not available.

- Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2003 are well above average in English, mathematics and science.
- Students' achievement in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 6 was satisfactory given their results when they were in Year 6.
- Overall, results were well above average and have been improving at a rate that is better than the national trend.
- Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were above average and similar to those noted in the previous report. Students' achievement in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 9 was satisfactory given their results at the end of Year 9. The trend in results is in line with the national trend. Results in 2003 were similar.

Sixth form

Students enter the sixth form with above average levels of attainment. By the end of Year 13, standards are above average. Achievement is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well in art and design because of the very good teaching they receive.
- Examination results have risen significantly since the previous inspection report.
- Students are attaining very high standards in chemistry in Year 13.
- Students underachieve in business studies in Year 12.

Commentary

9. In the subjects inspected in detail, students attain well above average in history and art and design. They attain above average in all other subjects with the exception of business studies where standards are below average. Standards in chemistry are very high in Year 13 and average in Year 12. Student achievement is very good in art and design, and good in all other subjects with the exception of mathematics overall and chemistry in Year 12. Maths is satisfactory and chemistry is satisfactory in Year 12 and good in Year 13. Students underachieve in business studies in Year 12.
10. In art and design, students have very good skills in drawing and painting from observation. They research and develop ideas for their topics in very good depth.
11. Students underachieve in business studies in Year 12 because they struggle to interpret and evaluate information from various sources and cannot understand basic principles such as profit and loss accounts. Not all students are sufficiently challenged.

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	41.1	39.4
Average point score per student	275	263.3

There were 63 students in the year group.

- Results overall in the 2002 A-level examinations were above average with both males and females attaining similar results.
- Results have risen significantly since the previous inspection report, from below average to above average. Results in 2003 are similar.
- An analysis of the 2003 results indicates that students who continued with their studies and attained A-levels, achieved satisfactorily.
- Results at AS-level indicate good achievement.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Main school

Students' attitudes and values enhance their learning and achievement. They are interested in their work and are keen to be involved in activities. Their attendance is well above the national average

and their punctuality is good. Students behave well and make good progress in their personal and social development during their time at the school. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is uneven but is satisfactory overall. The school promotes students' moral development very well and makes good arrangements for their social development. Cultural development is satisfactory. However, provision for their spiritual development is unsatisfactory because the school does not give it a high enough profile.

Main strengths and weaknesses in the main school

- Students' good attitudes to learning make a positive contribution to their achievement.
- Good behaviour in lessons and around the school creates an environment that is conducive to learning.
- Attendance is very good and enhances students' learning and achievement.
- Provision for students' moral development is very good.
- Provision for social development is good.
- A minority of students have unsatisfactory attitudes to learning and misbehave in lessons.
- The school misses opportunities to promote students' spiritual development.

Commentary

12. Overall, students have good attitudes to learning. They arrive on time for lessons, listen with care to their teachers and concentrate well. Where the teaching is good or very good, as in art and design, students show enthusiasm for the subject, enjoy the tasks set by their teacher and work productively. Attitudes and behaviour are rarely unsatisfactory. In a small minority of lessons they are superior to the quality of teaching. On occasions students work hard to achieve well even though the teaching is not stimulating. Attitudes to learning are unsatisfactory in a minority of lessons that lack purpose, pace and challenge. Students lose interest and become inattentive and chatty. Older students in particular tend to become bored by tasks that they think pointless. This was the case in a Year 11 ICT class. Many of the class worked grudgingly, and some did not work at all, because they do not value the course.
13. The school has high expectations regarding students' conduct and works very effectively to achieve them. It is successful in promoting good standards of behaviour. Students behave well in class, except in a few lessons where the quality of teaching is less than satisfactory. They also behave well around the school. They respect the code of conduct, with the exception of some rules on school uniform, which are widely disregarded. Aggressive or oppressive behaviour is rare. Students have very good relations with adults in the school and with one another. They have few worries about bullying, and they know whom to go to for help if any concerns arise. Because students generally behave well, the number of exclusions is below the average for schools of a similar size.
14. Students are developing a clear understanding of right and wrong supported by consistent application of the school behaviour policy. They were able to contribute to the policy through discussion groups and surveys. Moral issues are highlighted and discussed in various subject areas, and most students are willing to voice their opinions in support of them. Students are developing their social skills in physical education where the planned activities, and the expectations of teachers, are resulting in a high level of responsible involvement by students. In social and moral education, students listen to each other's opinions, and when they have the opportunity they collaborate well, although generally in single gender groups. They enjoy working independently although they have insufficient opportunity to do so. When they are given duties, such as being involved with the appointment of a new headteacher, they rise to the challenge and enjoy the responsibilities. The range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities to travel in Europe and further afield widen students' horizons and support the

development of their social skills. The recently opened art gallery provides a very good area for quiet reflection. The spiritual and cultural development of students is well supported through the visual arts college initiative, where students are encouraged to reflect on the spiritual nature of the art of other cultures. Overall, however, there is insufficient opportunity for students to reflect on the ultimate questions about the meaning of life in order to develop their own beliefs and values. The school is enhanced by displays, but there are few multi-cultural images or opportunities to appreciate the diversity of British culture.

Ethnic background of students

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
912	30	1
3		
4		
0		
2		
6		
5		
4		
0		
0		
0		
0		
0		
1		
2		
1		
64		

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

- Attendance in 2001-2002 was well above that usually seen in other schools. Although the rate of absence was relatively low, the rate of unauthorised absence was above average. However, this was a consequence of the school's refusal to authorise holiday leave. It was not attributable to truancy or to inadequate measures to promote good attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2001-2002) (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.8
National data (secondary)	7.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.6
National data (secondary)	1.2

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

Sixth form

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes to learning are very good. Students use their initiative and are very willing to take responsibility for their work. They behave very well and have very good relationships with each other and with members of staff. Their attendance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are keen to learn and to make the most of the opportunities available to them.
- Students are mature and responsible and have very good relationships with one another and with members of staff.
- Behaviour is very good.

Commentary

16. Sixth form students show very good attitudes to learning and to the wider opportunities offered by the school. They are very well motivated and are keen to succeed. Some of them find the courses in mathematics and physics difficult. A few students in Year 12 have dropped the latter subject after recognising that it does not suit their capabilities. It does not reflect lack of motivation on their part or disenchantment with the sixth form. Students respond positively to challenging work and value the efforts of teachers to help them to cope with it. They enjoy lessons where the teaching is good and participate in them with enthusiasm. Because students have very good attitudes, they do their best to make progress in difficult circumstances. This was evident in a business education class in Year 12. The quality of teaching was poor and failed to meet the needs of the class. In spite of this, students were well behaved and tried to learn.
17. Students' personal development is very good. They are mature and confident young adults who are prepared to accept responsibility. They show good initiative and independence in their academic work and when organising school events such as the annual 'Extravaganza'.
18. Students in the sixth form have good opportunities to make a significant impact on the main school through their support in a range of lessons, and for students with special educational needs. They are confident and become good role models for younger students. As sports coaches and referees they develop leadership skills and find satisfaction in the success of others. The annual 'Extravaganza' involves most of the sixth form in an enthusiastic collaboration that relies on the students for organisation, direction and participation. They collaborate well and the production becomes a highlight for the school. The students are canvassed for their opinions on a range of school issues and are willing to take responsibility for their learning. Opportunities for spiritual development are limited. Assemblies do not contain an act of worship and there is not enough religious education for the sixth form that would provide a forum for discussion of issues of faith and belief. Opportunities for cultural

experience through the arts are good; however, the school makes little use of the multi-cultural opportunities that arise in school to broaden their appreciation of alternative cultures in Britain.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all years. The quality of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Satisfactory attention is given to the care and welfare of students.

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching is satisfactory in all years and leads to satisfactory learning. The quality of assessment of students' work is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 7 to 9, teachers make particularly good use of the initiatives of the national Key Stage 3 Strategy.
- The teaching and learning of students with special educational needs are very good in classes taught by specialist support teachers and good in the school as a whole.
- Learning is not always well consolidated at the end of the lesson, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory in ICT and religious education and, as a result, students' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers do not systematically and comprehensively address students' basic shortcomings of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Commentary

19. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 9 is good in all subjects with the exception of English, geography and citizenship where it is satisfactory, and ICT and religious education where it is unsatisfactory.
20. In Years 10 and 11, teaching is good in art and design, design and technology, physical education and geography. It is satisfactory in all other subjects, with the exception of ICT and religious education where it is unsatisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 165 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5 (3%)	35 (21%)	66 (40%)	50 (30%)	7 (4%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)

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

21. When teaching is most effective, teachers thoroughly prepare their lessons, very good resources are used, there is plenty of variety and students are required to be active in their own learning. In a Year 7 English class, students were required to conduct research using the Internet and other reference materials available in the library. They worked with great concentration, learning how to co-operate closely with others and notably improving their skills of scanning, skipping and search reading. In Years 7 to 9, many lessons begin with a 'starter' session to introduce a new topic or to revise an old one. However, this approach is not so evident in Years 10 and 11, and teachers do not structure their lessons as well. For example, in history, learning is not always well consolidated at the end of the lesson. In the majority of lessons, teachers plan a balance between different types of activities to maintain the interest of

students. This is better in Years 7 to 9, where well-structured lessons ensure a brisk business-like pace.

22. Occasionally, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. This happens because the teacher does not entirely succeed in managing students' behaviour; students do not all concentrate on what they should be doing and do not learn enough during the lesson.
23. In ICT, there is only one specialist teacher of the subject, with other lessons taught by a team of teachers who are non-specialists. Teaching is unsatisfactory because some teachers do not have sufficient specialist knowledge, even to teach in the lower school, while others cannot overcome the unsatisfactory attitudes of students in Year 11, so some students in each class are not made to work. In other lessons, teachers do not plan well enough to ensure that sufficient work is completed or middle and higher attainers do work that is hard enough for them. These lessons contrast sharply with the teaching of the specialist teacher, who makes very good use of resources to provide stimulating and challenging work, even for the highest attainers.
24. In religious education, the inadequate curriculum time results in teachers attempting to deliver the required syllabus content, but without the opportunity for students to develop their understanding of the concepts that underpin the faiths studied. The use of six-week blocks of time with 12-week gaps results in a lack of continuity and by the time students and staff have developed effective methods of working together it is time to move on elsewhere. Achievement is severely affected by the lack of depth that results. Marking does not provide sufficient information about students' progress or how to improve their work. There is insufficient demand on students to improve the standard of their written work or to complete work left unfinished. This in turn affects the students' own expectations.
25. Teachers provide ample opportunities for students to develop listening, reading and speaking skills in most subjects. However, teachers do not systematically and comprehensively address students' basic shortcomings of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
26. The teaching and learning of students with special educational needs are very good in classes taught by specialist support teachers. Teachers have excellent knowledge and understanding of the best ways to help students learn – for example, by providing a variety of tasks and resources, including computers. They have high expectations of how students should behave and concentrate in their lessons. As a result, students have very good attitudes to learning. Assessment is very good. Test results are effectively used to plan future work and write new targets for individuals.

OUTSTANDING PRACTICE IN A LESSON IN THE LEARNING SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

This was a Year 7 lesson for four students working well below the level expected of 11 year olds, because they found reading and writing extremely difficult. Their teacher had planned an excellent variety of activities to interest the students, boost their self-confidence and so help them learn. First, she led them through movement exercises to develop co-ordination and listening skills. Following this activity, students quickly settled to work and did very well in a listening test. A very good pace was maintained because students recorded answers on whiteboards and handwriting was kept to a bare minimum. Already, students tasted success and were eager to move on. A very brisk revision of work on short and long vowel sounds showed the teacher that students remembered previous work and were ready to move on to new work, involving words beginning with 'S'. The teacher's positive manner, clear explanations and outstanding expertise in helping students to overcome barriers to learning led to quick improvement. Students then moved enthusiastically to the fish tank where, in response to the teacher's careful questioning, they described patterns on the fish and other aspects which caught their attention. Speaking skills improved rapidly and students' interest was such that they asked sensible questions about what they could see. They tackled with gusto the final task of completing a passage about the task, choosing words from a given list. They left the lesson with a keen sense of achievement.

27. A substantial amount of data is collected on the students when they enter the school and this is used well to set targets for students' achievement. Satisfactory use is made of assessment information by teachers to ensure that planning is accurate. In science, history, geography and design and technology, teachers assess work thoroughly, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and provide good detailed feedback so that students know how well they are doing, and how they can improve. In ICT and religious education, however, assessment is unsatisfactory. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection when the improvement of the use of assessment data by teachers was a key issue.

Sixth form

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and results in satisfactory learning. Procedures for, and use of, assessment are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in art and design and results in students achieving very well.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject.
- Annual analyses of examination performance are rigorous.
- Learning is not as strong when students become passive.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory in business studies, and students underachieve as a result.

Commentary

28. In the subjects inspected in detail, the quality of teaching is very good in art and design. It is good in all other subjects with the exception of mathematics and chemistry where it is satisfactory, and business studies where it is unsatisfactory.
29. Teachers know their subject well. Teachers have a good knowledge of the course requirements and students are aware of what they need to do to achieve a specific grade. When teaching is good, students are encouraged to participate in discussions. They respond well to questions and volunteer suggestions in articulate ways. Teachers plan well and lessons are well structured. They proceed with a brisk pace and allow students to consolidate each stage of new learning before progressing to the next stage. Less effective teaching was seen when students assumed an essentially passive role as the teacher led them through the work, providing them with ideas and interpretations. Learning is not as strong when students become passive. On occasion, students are not challenged enough to develop answers or to engage with other students; this results in over-reliance on the teacher.

30. The quality of teachers' feedback on written work is thorough and provides clear guidance to students on how to improve. Students value the oral feedback and discussion that follows the written assessment of their work.
31. In business studies, in many lessons in Year 12, students are not made aware of what the lesson is about. The activities are not suitable for all students and there is a lack of awareness of differing individual needs. Lessons are poorly planned and organised; time is wasted. Students do not know what they are doing and as a result of this they underachieve. However, there are instances of excellent teaching within the department in Year 13.
32. There is a wealth of assessment data available to departments and its use is consistently effective. Annual analyses of examination performance are rigorous and directly influence planning for teaching.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is unsatisfactory in Years 9 to 11 and unsatisfactory in the sixth form. There is a very good range of extra clubs and activities. The school has sufficient resources and accommodation, but not enough specialist teachers.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students in Years 7 to 13 are not taught all the subjects to which they are entitled.
- All students study a visual arts based subject in Years 7 to 11.
- There are many opportunities for students, in all years, to attend extra clubs and activities.
- The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship.

Commentary

33. The curriculum is unsatisfactory because students in Years 7 to 11 are not taught enough ICT and religious education to allow them to reach the standards of which they are capable and there are not enough opportunities for students to practise their ICT skills in other subjects. Furthermore, the school has no complete list of gifted or talented students, so some teachers are not sufficiently aware of whom these students are and such students do not receive enough opportunities to genuinely excel.
34. A small number of students in Years 10 and 11 do not study a foreign language and the school has not been through the proper consultation or procedures to ensure that this is an appropriate course of action for the students concerned.
35. There are, however, strengths in the curriculum. In Years 7 to 9, for example, all students study dance and drama and later have the opportunity to study three foreign languages. In Years 10 and 11, all students study a visual arts based course, such as art and design, drama or music.
36. The curriculum for students with special educational needs is good overall. In the learning support department it is excellent. Students improve basic skills because of the well-organised withdrawal work in literacy and numeracy, with extra reading and spelling sessions before school. Teaching assistants and sixth form students give valued help in lessons and students respond well to the individual attention. In team enterprise and life skills classes, older students learn to accept responsibility and are prepared for life after school. The lunchtime homework club enables students to work in a pleasant environment and receive good support. In the

school as a whole, students achieve best when they receive help from a teaching assistant, or when teachers provide different work to suit students' capabilities.

37. The school makes very good provision for extra clubs and activities. The school's status as a specialist college has allowed it to provide extra late buses so students can stay on at school to further their interests or improve their standards. There are many activities offered through art and design, such as photography and enamelling, where students can learn new skills as well as others where they can improve their existing skills or coursework. There is a very large number of sporting activities offered every day, including an extensive range of competitive fixtures. There are usually many music-based activities too, although some of these are not taking place at the moment as the school is awaiting the arrival of the new head of department. Nevertheless, some bands and orchestras have been maintained through the use of peripatetic music teachers. Students' appreciation of these activities is obvious in the very good rates of participation. There are many trips and visits, both to places in this country and to other countries, as far afield as Peru. The school regularly suspends its normal timetable to carry out special activities that support either students' work or their personal development.
38. In recent months the school has had a number of teaching staff absent for various reasons, particularly in subjects such as English, mathematics and science. Whilst the school has made every effort to maintain the education of its students, these absences are beginning to have an impact on students' achievement. For example, in English, the head of department and the second in department are on long-term absence. Consequently, the monitoring and support of teachers, particularly those who are inexperienced or temporary, are not as effective as might normally be expected.

Sixth form

The school provides a range of courses, at different levels, that are suitable for the students staying on to the sixth form. However, the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall because the school does not teach enough religious education. Students in the sixth form have the same very good opportunities to enrich their studies as other students in the school.

Care, guidance and support

Main school

The school takes good care of its students. It has sound procedures for ensuring students' health and safety, and it involves them satisfactorily in its work and development. Students receive good support and guidance, and this enhances their academic attainment, personal development and general welfare.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have very good relationships with adults in the school and feel free to turn to them for effective support and guidance.
- The school monitors students' achievements and personal development well.
- There are good arrangements for the induction of new students.
- The learning support department gives exceptional support to students.
- Students are prepared well for the next stage of education and their future careers.
- The school council has a relatively limited influence on decision making and school routines.
- The quality and impact of tutorials are uneven.

Commentary

39. The school is a secure, supportive environment in which students feel confident. Arrangements to ensure their health, safety and welfare are satisfactory overall. Provision for child protection and most aspects of safety is good, but the physical education department has not completed all the risk assessments of its routines. Students receive good personal support. Anyone who feels in need of special guidance has access to alternative sources of advice and to specialist services. In addition to form tutors and heads of year, students can talk to the school counsellor, or to the staff of 'Bodyedge' agency. The system of pastoral year teams works well. Students think that the system is effective. They are particularly appreciative of the personal help that they get from heads of year. The time allocated to tutorials is adequate, but is not used consistently to the best effect. In the most effective, students discuss topics in a sensible manner. In the least effective tutor periods, students see little point in the work that they are asked to do, and therefore do not achieve as much as they should.
40. Good monitoring enhances the quality of personal support and guidance that students receive. The school keeps comprehensive records on their welfare and progress, and has effective arrangements for sharing relevant information among staff. It has a good system for tracking the behaviour of individual students and identifying anyone who gives cause for concern. Students who have behavioural problems, or are in danger of dropping out of school, are given help that is tailored to their particular needs. The school works hard to improve the motivation of a small number of disaffected boys, using a combination of mentoring, college placements, and work experience. The programme of support has been successful in keeping some difficult individuals in education.
41. Students receive good preparation for the next stage of their education. There is a full programme of induction events for Year 7 that enables the new intake to become familiar with the school and settle quickly. Year 9 students receive good advice during the time when they select their optional subjects for Year 10. The quality of careers education and guidance is good and enables students to make informed choices about their future.
42. The school takes adequate steps to sound out students' views about routines and proposals for change. For example, it has recently carried out a survey on its procedures for reporting on students' progress. There is provision for ongoing consultations through year councils and the school council. However, many students think that the latter is limited to discussion of minor issues. They do not see it as having significant influence over the running of the school. They prefer to express their views through year councils or direct approaches to their head of year.
43. The learning support department gives exceptional support to students. Staff go out of their way to help students over problems, both personal and academic. Students with behavioural difficulties benefit from the attention they receive. For example, the time-out cards allow students the opportunity to leave class briefly if they feel distressed and spend some quiet time in the department.

Sixth form

Good attention is given to students' welfare. The quality of pastoral care and personal guidance is good. Provision for educational guidance is also good. There are good procedures for taking account of students' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students value the good academic guidance that they get from their teachers.
- The school monitors students' achievement and personal development effectively and provides appropriate personal support.

- Students get good guidance on opportunities for further study and on careers.
- The sixth form committee enables students to influence the running of the school.

Commentary

44. Approximately four out of ten sixth formers who completed the inspection's questionnaire said that they did not get helpful advice on what to study after Year 11. On the other hand, more than seven out of ten said that the courses that they had chosen suited their abilities and career plans. The evidence shows that the school gives students good guidance on the transfer from Year 11 to Year 12 and provides plenty of information on courses in the sixth form and in colleges of further education. However, some individuals decide not to follow the advice that they are offered. Many students find the work in the sixth form much harder than they expected, but the good support that they get from members of staff enables them to cope with it. They feel that marking gives them good feedback on their attainment and progress. They say that teachers use it well to advise them on how to improve their work. They also appreciate the help that the sixth form 'Core' programme gives them with developing their study skills.
45. Students have ready access to personal guidance from their tutors and the head of the sixth form, and can also seek advice from the school counsellor and the 'Bodyedge' team. There is also good provision for careers guidance in the sixth form and for advice on further and higher education. Members of Year 13 get good help with completing university applications, and students in general are well informed about careers and courses at colleges and universities.
46. The sixth form committee is an active and enterprising body. It is effective in sounding out the views of sixth form students and representing them to the management of the school, and plays a major role in organising fund-raising and social events. There are good systems for advice and guidance to students in the sixth form.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Main school

The school has a good partnership with parents. Links with other schools and with the local and wider community are very good. The very good contribution that parents and the community make to students' learning helps to raise standards of attainment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of their children's learning.
- Parents get good information about their children's achievement.
- The visual arts college has created a very good network of local links that benefits both students and the community.
- End-of-year reports on progress do not report on students' progress in citizenship.

Commentary

47. Parents are very interested in students' learning and are keen for them to do well. They understand the importance of homework and good attendance for their children's education and therefore are very supportive of the school over these matters. Their high aspirations influence their children, who come to school expecting to learn and to work hard.
48. The school knows that an effective partnership with parents enhances students' learning and therefore works to maintain good home-school links. In general, parents are satisfied with information on progress, and for the most part inspectors agree with their views. Procedures for reporting on progress are good overall. The school makes good provision for consultation evenings and for interim reports. End-of-year reports have some good features, such as the inclusion of students' self-assessments and targets for improvement. However, the quality of subject reports is variable. Those on science are good, but those on information and ICT are very brief and lack evaluative comments. There are no reports on students' progress in citizenship, which is a breach of the statutory requirements on reporting.
49. Parents receive good information on the curriculum, school routines and students' day-to-day learning. Arrangements for sounding out parents' opinions are satisfactory. Members of staff are approachable and ready to listen to parents' concerns, and there are some formal consultations through questionnaires. The majority of parents say that the school seeks their views. However, a sizeable minority are not satisfied with this aspect of the school's work.
50. The learning support department fosters very good links with primary schools and with parents. Staff keep in touch frequently by letter and telephone, and parents appreciate what the school provides. Parents give very good support to annual reviews for students with statements and take an interest in their offsprings' education.
51. The school's very good partnership with the community enriches students' learning. It has well-established links with local sports clubs, and with a wide range of individuals and organisations concerned with the visual arts. Local artists work with students, clubs such as the Banbury Photographic Society meet on site, and local people visit the art gallery. The school has good contacts with employers in the local community and further afield. These links enhance the curriculum of visual arts and careers education. They provide good support for disaffected students in the form of external mentoring.
52. The school has a good partnership with local primary schools, and this results in effective co-operation over the transfer of Year 6 pupils to secondary education. It also has good curricular links with both primary and secondary schools in the area. They are very strong in sport and art and design. In its role as a visual arts college, Chenderit works closely with schools in Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire.

Sixth form

Partnership with parents of sixth form students is good. Links with local organisations and with universities are good and help to prepare students for life after school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive good information on their children's progress.
- The curriculum for sixth form students is enhanced by the school's links with the local community and wider world.

- Students receive good guidance on careers and courses in higher education through the school's contacts with the careers service and with universities.
53. A cycle of reports and consultation evenings keeps parents well informed of students' progress. Written reporting is generally good. It is informative and helpful in many subjects, such as music, where the reports give very good accounts of students' strengths and weaknesses. Overall, parents receive accurate assessments of their children's attainment and realistic forecasts of their examination grades.
 54. Sixth formers gain from links with the community in much the same way as students in the main school. For those who are studying art and design, the curriculum is significantly enriched by the school's status as a visual arts college and the extra opportunities for learning that this provides. There are exchange links with a school in Germany, and these enable students on the A-level German course to obtain work experience placements in Germany.
 55. Currently, the school receives good support from the careers service, Connexions, and sixth formers who feel in need of advice can obtain it from well-qualified careers advisers. The school has good links with universities, and as a result students receive good information and guidance on courses in higher education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and effectiveness of management are satisfactory. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting headteacher, together with the leadership team, have steered the school admirably in the absence of the headteacher.
- In physical education, very effective leadership is moving the department forward rapidly.
- The quality of leadership of the learning support department is excellent.
- The school has not addressed fully the issues identified in the previous inspection report.
- The school has been successful in gaining specialist visual arts college status although the impact of specialist status is still to be felt throughout the school.
- The main school subsidises the sixth form.

Commentary

56. The school is going through a period of transition. The previous headteacher was unable to continue in her post because of ill health. The acting headteacher has been in post for sixth months and has steered the school admirably. A new headteacher has been appointed but will not take up post until January 2004.
57. The quality of leadership is satisfactory. Roles of responsibility of the senior leadership team have been redefined and there are clear lines of responsibility. The school monitors its performance and has tackled weaknesses. For example, examination results in business studies have been poor and students underachieved. Strong action has been taken, resulting in a new head of business studies being appointed whose role it is to move the department forward from a position of weakness. Results in the national tests for students at the end of Year 9 are rising at a faster rate than the national trend. Results in the sixth form are much improved since the previous inspection report. However, there is still work to be done to improve examination results at GCSE.

58. There are many examples of effective teamwork among staff. For example, in physical education, very effective leadership, supported by a strong committed team, is moving the department forward with clear direction. Innovative developments support the thrust to raise standards and student achievement. Relationships amongst staff are cordial and there is a good deal of emphasis placed on working together. Since the previous inspection, the attainment of boys has improved; the gap between boys' and girls' attainment has narrowed. Better assessment systems have been introduced. However, not all the issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed; concerns with ICT and religious education remain.
59. Much hard work by the director of the specialist college enabled the school to be successful in its bid to become a specialist visual arts college. The new art gallery provides an exceptional resource for the school. However, the impact of specialist status is still to be felt throughout the school; more could be done to involve other areas of the arts such as English and dance.
60. Management of the school is satisfactory. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Procedures are clear although policies are not always followed consistently. For example, inconsistent use is made of the school's policy of correcting students' written work. The school improvement plan provides a sound basis for moving the school forward. The latest auditor's report noted secure financial systems. However, funding earmarked for the main school heavily subsidises the sixth form; the sixth form is not cost-effective. Because of its rural nature, the school feels that it needs to provide a wide range of courses for sixth form students, even if some courses attract only a relatively small number of students.
61. The quality of leadership of the learning support department is excellent. Documentation is very good and students achieve very well within the department.
62. Governance of the school is unsatisfactory. The school fails to meet its statutory curriculum responsibilities of providing ICT and religious education, written reports for citizenship and a daily act of collective worship. Governors are supportive of the school and help to formulate policies. The governing body reviews examination performance and is aware that in some areas the school has underachieved, for example in business studies. The governing body is well organised and the committee structure works well in informing governors about the work of the school.

Sixth form

The quality of leadership and management is good. Governance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The sixth form is well led and managed.
- Governors do not fulfil their statutory responsibilities.
- The monitoring of students' performance is good.
- Examination results have risen significantly since the previous inspection.

Commentary

63. The sixth form is well led and managed. Examination results at A-level have risen from below average to above average since the previous inspection report. The head of sixth form provides good support for students and leads a good team of tutors. Many extra-curricular activities are arranged and students benefit greatly from these. The monitoring of students' performance is good; each student has a number of interviews with the head of sixth form throughout the year; remedial action is taken if thought necessary. Governors do not fulfil their statutory duties in providing sufficient religious education for all students.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	3221778
Total expenditure	3214501
Expenditure per student	3241

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	26560
Balance carried forward to the next	33837

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH and MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' standards in speaking and listening are very high.
- Students of average attainment have relatively weak skills in writing.

Commentary

Examination results

64. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9, results are well above average. The 2003 results were significantly better than those for 2002 and continued the marked upward trend since the previous inspection.
65. In 2002, GCSE results obtained in English and English literature were average. In 2003 they improved.

Standards and achievement

66. Students' skills in speaking and listening are well above average and are a strength throughout Years 7 to 11. By Year 9, virtually all students are willing to take part in group or whole-class discussions. They are confident, use a full vocabulary, can speak at length when this is appropriate and can draw upon their own experiences to illustrate what they have to say. However, students do not attain the same consistently high standards in their written work. Most significantly, the work of many middle and lower attaining students contains many errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. In some instances, particularly amongst boys, handwriting is poor. Whilst higher attainers are able to adapt what they write for a wide range of audiences, lower attainers are restricted to simple sentences and have no clear idea of how to shape paragraphs. Standards in reading are generally good. Students understand what they read and have a good recall of literature they have studied. However, many students find difficulty in explaining their responses in writing.
67. In Years 10 and 11, students improve their skills at a rate that means their standards remain above average and their achievement is satisfactory. Most of the features found in students' work in the three earlier years are also found in Years 10 and 11. The majority of students are

articulate, speak in turn, listen alertly and are capable of challenging the views of others in a considered and respectful manner. Higher attaining students produce written work of very high quality, being full, well organised and imaginative. However, a significant proportion of middle attaining students do not improve their basic skills as might be expected. There is a variation from class to class as to the amount of attention that students give to redrafting work to improve its quality. Standards in reading remain good, with many students being willing to offer a balanced opinion on the quality of what they have studied.

Teaching and learning

68. Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, examples of good and very good teaching were also seen. A small proportion of teaching is unsatisfactory. When teaching is most effective, the lesson is thoroughly prepared, very good resources are used, there is plenty of variety and students are required to be active in their own learning; on these occasions, achievement is good. One such lesson was seen in Year 7, when students were required to conduct research using the Internet and other reference materials available in the library. They worked with great concentration, learning how to co-operate closely with others and notably improving their skills of scanning, skipping and search reading. Brief 'starter' sessions are effectively used in many lessons to introduce a new topic or to revise an old one. Most teachers maintain good discipline, though when the pace of the lesson is too slow students become restless and sometimes behave inappropriately, resulting in slower progress.
69. There is significant variation in the quality of marking. At best, it is thorough and students are given clear guidance on what they need to do to improve. Yet more effective practice also requires students to attend closely to marking by, for example, writing out wrongly spelt words correctly. When marking is less effective, errors are overlooked and students have only vague ideas about what they must do to raise their standards. When teachers mark early drafts of writing, students appreciate this and are all the keener to produce more polished writing. Learning is usually rapid when teachers demonstrate to students what they should do but is often slow when teachers simply tell them what they should do, without adequate illustration. There is only limited use of ICT and this restricts the variety of learning activities that students experience. Students' attitudes are generally good and sometimes excellent. This makes an important contribution to learning.

Leadership and management

70. At the time of the inspection, the head of department and the second in department were on long-term absence and an acting deputy headteacher and another temporarily promoted teacher were overseeing the work of the department. Generally, teachers worked co-operatively, and leadership and management were satisfactory. However, the monitoring and support of teachers, particularly those who were inexperienced or temporary, were not as effective as might normally be expected and there had been some delay in implementing the department's development plans.

Literacy across the curriculum

71. Standards of literacy are above average. Most students are articulate and confident speakers and there are ample opportunities for them to further develop these skills in most subjects. Students also learn and use subject-specific vocabulary. Most students read with good understanding and are able to find information using the Internet and other reference materials. Higher attaining students produce high quality extended writing on a variety of topics. However, the work of many middle and low attaining students is marred by errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The school does not have procedures in place to systematically and comprehensively address these basic shortcomings.

English as an additional language

72. The school admits very few students who are at the early stages of learning English. However, those students who need it are provided with a very good quality of support in both learning the language and adapting socially, and consequently achieve well.

Modern foreign languages

Spanish has recently been introduced as a second language for high attaining students in Year 8, and for others in Year 10. One Year 8 lesson was observed; teaching, learning and achievement were very good and standards were above average.

French and German

Provision in French and German is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and has led to above average standards.
- Leadership and management are good and have created a strong team.
- Departmental planning contributes very well to teaching and learning.
- Provision for students with special needs is good.
- Book resources remain insufficient, limiting students' opportunities to work on their own.
- There is still insufficient access to ICT.
- Assessment, though satisfactory, is still to be adapted to overall school assessment procedures.

Commentary

Examination results

73. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were well above average in French and above average in German, after five years of year-on-year improvement. However, they fell back a little in 2003. The gap between boys' attainment and that of girls has narrowed.

Standards and achievement

74. Half the students take French and half take German for the first three years, and higher attaining students, a quarter of all students, add the other language on a one period a week basis in Year 8. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average in the first language and average in the second. Students' listening and speaking skills develop well but students get too few opportunities for reading for interest, and writing skills do not develop as well as they could do because the school does not provide personal workbooks in Years 7 to 9. Students with special needs are well taught. For example, in one lesson by the French assistant, they achieved well and made progress comparable to that of others. Achievement overall is good by

the end of Year 9 but only satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 because there are insufficient book and computer resources for students to work to best advantage on their own.

Teaching and learning

75. Teachers have good language skills and are competent with modern teaching methods. Both in the first three years and in Years 10 and 11, teachers structure lessons well. Lesson planning is securely based in planning done on a teamwork basis across the department. A good range of activities captures the interest and involvement of all students and helps them to achieve well in Years 7 to 9. However, students' work out of school is less productive than it might be because they do not have their own textbooks. There is little opportunity for students to access the Internet and this limits opportunities for research.

Leadership and management

76. The head of department has made a strong impact on teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9, notably in curriculum development, in lesson planning and in closer oversight of teaching and learning. The school's long-standing and thriving annual exchange link with a partner school in Fallersleben, Germany, makes a strong contribution to the life of the local community.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of department provides good leadership. The teachers work hard as a team to raise standards.
- The implementation of the three-part lesson in Years 7 to 9 ensures a good structure and pace to lessons. The students respond to this and make gains in their learning.
- Teachers plan their lessons well and have a good knowledge and understanding in mathematics.
- Schemes of work are not developed sufficiently in Years 10 and 11 to raise the quality of teaching.
- Performance data is not sufficiently developed to identify and monitor the students' achievement.

Commentary

Examination results

77. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9, results are well above average. The 2003 results were significantly better than those for 2002 and continued the marked upward trend. There was a significant improvement in the results in 2003, particularly in the proportion reaching level 5 or above.

78. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were average. Results in 2003 were similar overall to those of the previous year, although there was a significant improvement in the proportion of students who attained A*-C grades.

Standards and achievement

79. By the end of Year 9, students' numerical skills are well above average. Lower attaining students answer mental mathematics questions and explain how they arrived at their answers. Middle attaining students attempt to construct triangles using basic geometry. However, in measuring the angles for their triangles, not all add up to 180 degrees. Higher attaining students complete complex number sequences using algebraic formulae, including quadratic sequences.
80. In Year 10, higher attaining students work out mutually exclusive probability events. Some of the higher attainers are capable of more challenging work. However, on other occasions, some of the higher attainers were unable to carry out short division with much success and were unfamiliar with the concept of remainders. In Year 11, lower attaining students analyse timetables correctly to work out journey times. The middle attainers evaluate complex sequences of numbers using algebraic equations to find the sequence rule. The higher attainers convert fractions such as $\frac{5}{16}$ into a decimal and then into a percentage, as well as drawing graphs of quadratic equations. Overall, numeracy skills are above average. The system of student self-evaluation, used in one Year 9 revision class, provides an effective method whereby students can identify gaps in their learning.

Teaching and learning

81. Teachers generally plan their lessons well and have a good mathematical knowledge and understanding. They work hard to improve achievement in lessons, with rarely a minute being wasted, especially in Years 7 to 9. The teachers share overall lesson objectives with the students in order that students understand what is expected of them. However, the students do not always know the actual learning activities and the time allocated in the lesson. This leads to a lack of understanding in the relevance of completing their tasks. In the majority of lessons, teachers plan a balance between different types of activities to maintain the interest of students. This is better in lessons in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11, where the three-part lesson ensures a brisk business-like pace. The use of starter activities is effective in raising students' achievement; the students respond well and make gains in their learning.
82. The good quality of planning in Years 7 to 9 has yet to be followed through into Years 10 and 11. Schemes of work for Years 10 and 11 are not developed sufficiently to give teachers guidelines on teaching methods and resources, especially to aid the achievement of higher attainers. In the best lessons, teachers ask students to explain how they worked out the answers. This encourages students to explain what they are doing and also promotes learning and achievement. Homework is set regularly and generally supports the work that students carry out in class; it consolidates the new learning that takes place in the lessons. Marking and assessment are generally good; however, there are some errors in spelling that are not corrected.

Leadership and management

83. The leadership of the department is good and the management is satisfactory. The enthusiastic leadership by the head of department, since her appointment 18 months ago, has enabled the department to make good progress in recent months. A strong team, with a clear direction and positive ethos, has been established by the head of department who provides a good role model.

Mathematics across the curriculum

84. The strategy for teaching mathematics as a basic skill in subjects is good. There is a good numeracy strategy in place that supports other subjects well. In Year 7 history, students used mathematics in their visit to Warwick Castle to answer questions in their tour booklet. In English, following the mathematics investigation into the proportions of coloured chocolate beans in a tube, the students have been provided with the opportunity to write a letter to the manufacturer to inform them of their findings.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have improved significantly over the last few years and are now well above the national average.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 because teachers plan carefully, provide a variety of interesting activities and make good use of techniques from the national Key Stage 3 Strategy.
- GCSE results in 2003 were not as good as expected or as they had been in previous years.
- Many higher attaining students in Year 10 and 11 are over-confident and rather lazy. Their achievement is satisfactory but they should do better.

Commentary

Examination results

85. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9, results were well above average. The 2003 results were significantly better than those for 2002 and continued the marked upward trend.
86. Results in the 2002 GCSE science examinations were above the national average and those in 2003 were also above the 2002 average. However, the proportion of students gaining the higher grades, A*-C, was lower in 2003 than 2002.

Standards and achievement

87. Students' knowledge of the topics they are currently studying is satisfactory and, in higher attaining groups, students' understanding and skills are often very good. For example, in Year 9 some students successfully balanced quite demanding equations. In Year 11, students' books show detailed work on the transfer of energy through an ecosystem. Lower attainers often give good explanations when they are speaking in class but their written answers are rather brief and lack precision. Students have good numeracy skills but do not always set down calculations correctly and sometimes do not get enough practice in particular types of problems to become fully confident in solving them.
88. Students' practical and investigative skills broadly match their standards in other aspects of science. Last year's GCSE investigative coursework marks were not as good as expected and

the department has recognised the need to make the tasks provided for higher attainers more demanding and to provide more support for lower attainers in writing up their investigation reports.

89. Students enter Year 7 with test results that are above the national average. In Year 9, they now reach standards that are well above average. Hence, they do better in science in Years 7 to 9 than might be expected. The current Year 11 students gained test results in Year 9 that were above average and their standards now are similarly above average, so they are doing as well as might be expected and their achievement is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

90. Teachers have good, secure subject knowledge. They usually question well and target their questions appropriately to check that everyone has understood. They provide regular and interesting homework tasks to extend students' learning and achievement. In Years 7 to 9, teachers make particularly good use of the initiatives of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. For example, in a very good lesson for Year 9 lower attainers, students enjoyed a starter activity, writing on boards to show that they remembered the main facts about breathing. They worked through various activities, learning about gas exchange in the lungs and the dangers of smoking. At the end of the lesson they had to answer questions about what they had learnt in order to get their 'ticket to escape' from the laboratory. It was clear that their learning had been swift and secure and that students had gained confidence from being able to demonstrate their achievement.
91. Occasionally teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. This happens because the teacher does not entirely succeed in managing students' behaviour; students do not all concentrate on what they should be doing and do not learn enough during the lesson.
92. Some higher attaining students in Years 10 and 11 do not make as much effort as they might. They are rather reluctant to listen and concentrate in lessons and teachers work hard to hold their attention. They do not always complete homework as conscientiously as they should. Their achievement is generally satisfactory but they should do better. By contrast, in a lesson where they were required to learn independently, using interesting materials to work things out for themselves, such students did very well.

Leadership and management

93. The department was disappointed with the 2003 GCSE results and has conducted a thorough investigation into why the results were not as good as expected. Several sensible initiatives have been introduced, though they have yet to have a significant impact on quality and standards. The monitoring of teaching and learning is satisfactory but the demands for monitoring and support are increased by the need, both last year and this term, to employ temporary teachers and there are some problems in maintaining consistency in the quality of teaching in these circumstances. However, teachers, technicians and the learning support assistant work well together as a team and share a determination to raise standards and improve examination results in the future.
94. GCSE results remain similar to those at the time of the previous inspection but there has been an improvement in the test results at the end of Year 9. Hence the department has made satisfactory progress overall.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **poor**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	Well below average
Achievement	Poor	Poor
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Poor

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievement is poor as a result of unsatisfactory teaching and a poor curriculum.
- Senior managers have failed to deal with problems identified in the previous inspection.
- The head of department leads by example, but never has the same team of teachers to lead for any length of time.
- Students' attitudes to work are unsatisfactory in Year 11 because students see little value in the course.

Commentary

Examination results

95. Students do not follow a course of study that leads to accreditation.

Standards and achievement

96. Students arrive at the school with well above average skills, particularly in presenting their work using ICT; by the time they leave Year 11 standards are well below average and students are achieving standards that are well below the level of which they are capable. Throughout Years 7 to 9, students receive too few lessons. As a result, coverage of the National Curriculum is only at a basic level and higher attainers in particular suffer because it is impossible for them to get any further than a level 5 in any aspect of the work. In addition, they are not taught to use computers to measure events. In Years 10 and 11, students continue to receive too few lessons to be able to study for an examination. Students in Year 11, in particular, see little point in studying the subject and, as a result, their attitudes are unsatisfactory. A startling comparison is obvious in the ability of students to analyse and evaluate; in Year 7 standards are well above average, but little or no work is covered on these areas in Years 10 and 11 so standards are very low by the end of Year 11. Even the lessons that students do receive are taught in modules, with too great a time between them so students forget much of the work that has gone before. Almost all students are very good at using the Internet, often because they use it a lot outside school hours.

Teaching and learning

97. There is only one specialist teacher of the subject, with other lessons taught by a team of teachers who are specialists in other subject areas. Last year, there were ten different teachers in the team; this year there are five. Teaching is unsatisfactory for a number of reasons that result in poor achievement. Some teachers do not have sufficient specialist knowledge, even to teach in the lower school, while others cannot overcome the unsatisfactory attitudes of students in Year 11, so some students in each class are not made to work. In other

lessons, teachers do not put enough effort into planning to ensure that enough work is completed or that middle and higher attainers do work that is hard enough for them. These lessons contrast sharply with the teaching of the specialist teacher, who makes very good use of resources to provide stimulating and challenging work, even for the highest attainers; on these occasions, achievement is good.

Leadership and management

98. The school has made some improvements since the previous inspection, but nowhere near enough to provide a satisfactory education in the subject. The head of department has pointed out the problems and has a very clear idea of how to improve the department, but the school's senior managers have largely ignored his efforts. There are not enough specialist teachers, not enough lessons and it is impossible for the head of department to develop a team spirit, because the team changes every year. Where the head of department has been able to take action, clear impacts are seen, such as the action to improve teaching through extensive monitoring of individuals.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

99. The use of computers in other areas of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Some departments, such as physical education and art and design, make good use of ICT, but many subjects are only just starting. Teachers cite problems with access to rooms but, although this is partly justified, as some rooms are too small, the biggest problem is the failure to place sufficient emphasis on the development of ICT across the school. The result is that students do not get enough opportunities to practise their skills in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are rising rapidly as a result of good teaching.
- Year 11 boys achieved very well in 2003 GCSE because of the support and guidance received.
- The curriculum is enhanced by opportunities for fieldwork experience in all years.
- Higher attainers, in Years 7 to 9, do not achieve consistently as highly as they might because they do not develop answers enough.

Commentary

Examination results

100. Results in the 2002 GCSE examination were average but those in 2003 show a significant improvement. This was due to staffing issues that had improved in 2003. Boys' results in 2003 were an improvement on earlier years, with almost half of a large group achieving the higher A*/A grades. This was due to the programme of support and guidance provided by teachers.

Standards and achievement

101. By the end of Year 9, students develop a good foundation of geographical skills. They have technical vocabulary and are knowledgeable on topics, except for a weakness in understanding about UK weather systems. Higher attaining students can locate places but lower attaining students find difficulty in remembering areas and cities in the UK. Students with special educational needs achieve very well because their learning needs are identified and they are helped by additional adult support, but higher attainers do not consistently achieve as highly as they might because they do not develop answers enough. In Years 10 and 11, students are able to apply theoretical studies of coasts and settlements through visits to Swanage and Stratford-upon-Avon. They show interest, take care in presentation and as a result achieve high standards in coursework. Students have good communication skills but do not give enough emphasis to explanations in written accounts. Higher attaining students, particularly boys, illustrate answers well and make good use of computers to present work.

Teaching and learning

102. In Years 7 to 9, teachers make good use of resources to help students learn and they choose particular resources to meet individual students' needs. Students in Year 9, for example, achieved very well in a lesson about soils because the practical materials caught their interest; written work was supported and helped them make rapid progress. Lessons are structured but give insufficient opportunity for students to show initiative for research study.
103. In Years 10 and 11, students benefit from knowledgeable teachers. Students achieve well in lessons because much is expected through challenging tasks that encourage research and self-reliance. Students improve their question answering skills because teachers give careful guidance and emphasise this in lessons. Work is well marked and targets for improvement are given, but learning is not well consolidated through lesson summaries.

Leadership and management

104. The department is well led and managed. Planning shows appropriate areas for development have been identified. Assessment is good and students are well informed about the standards attained but current practices to track progress need to be stronger. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection, particularly in GCSE results.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9 because teachers provide interesting and challenging lessons.
- Good assessment in Years 7 to 9 ensures that students know how well they are doing and what to do to improve further.
- Boys' achievement has improved so that they now achieve throughout as well as the girls.
- Assessment in Years 10 and 11 is not as good as that found in the lower school.

Commentary

Examination results

105. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were above average and this meant that students' achievement was satisfactory. Results in 2003 were lower but they still represented satisfactory achievement for that group. There was no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys.

Standards and achievement

106. In Year 9, students develop good skills in using sources of evidence to interpret events and a higher than average number write well-developed answers. All students gain good knowledge of topics such as how the right to vote was extended, over time, to all adults in Britain. Lower attaining students achieve as well as others because their specific needs are met in lessons. By the end of Year 11, students' achievement is satisfactory. They produce well-developed coursework assignments but their performance in one of the GCSE examination papers in 2003 was worse than expected. Higher attaining students write particularly well and most students have a clear understanding of, for instance, how weaknesses in the structure of the League of Nations made it less than effective in maintaining international peace in the 1930s. The achievement of boys is significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection.

Teaching and learning

107. In Year 9, all students benefit from being taught by enthusiastic teachers who expect high standards of work and behaviour. Teachers explain clearly the aims of lessons and provide interesting and challenging learning tasks. There are examples of lessons in which the teaching is excellent. Students' work is assessed accurately and they know, because of informative marking, how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. Homework is well used to extend learning beyond the lesson. Because of good teaching, students' achievement is good.

108. By the end of Year 11, students have achieved well in developing skills in organising and presenting assignments because teachers have emphasised this in lessons. Students' good knowledge was not reflected in the most recent GCSE examinations but a critical analysis of 2003 results has resulted in improved lesson planning and the adoption of better assessment practices. **Work is not assessed as well in Years 10 and 11 as that found in lower years.** Learning is enhanced by teachers organising visits to places such as the Imperial War Museum and the Cabinet War Rooms in Whitehall and this enables students to link theoretical study to events and places.

Leadership and management

109. The subject is well led and managed. Development plans are clearly focused on further raising students' achievement, although they do not yet state explicitly enough the strategies that teachers must use to improve students' literacy skills. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, particularly in the raising of boys' achievement.

OUTSTANDING PRACTICE IN A HISTORY LESSON

This was a Year 7 lesson in a mixed ability group. The students had visited Warwick Castle in the previous week and their teacher planned an excellent range of activities to challenge their thinking and develop their skills in working together in groups. Initially the teacher, with highly focused questions, tested students' recall of the progression from wooden to stone castles and expertly drew from them a highly detailed and accurate use of historical terminology concerning castle structure. Students were excitedly keen to show their knowledge and very quick to settle to the next closely timed task in which they further demonstrated their grasp of terms such as curtain wall, merlon, crenel and machicolation. Excellent pace and challenge were sustained when, in groups of six carefully chosen by the teacher to consist of students of different talents, students had to themselves decide how to organise the way they gathered information from a series of sources. The room buzzed with their ideas about how best to complete "Roger de Oddville's Manual on How to Attack a Castle". Their enthusiasm in the subsequent summary session was infectious but expertly managed by the requirement that each group appoint one spokesperson. Students animatedly left the room discussing their plans for 'building' an even better castle than Warwick.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers treat students' responses with respect, encouraging their confidence and involvement.
- Teachers are good role models for students, supporting the school's expectations regarding behaviour.
- Students in Years 7 to 9 undertake extended research projects that encourage them to work on their own.
- There is insufficient assessment of students' work to enable teachers to monitor students' progress.
- Day-to-day marking lacks rigour and provides little advice about how students can improve their work.

- There is insufficient time to enable students to develop their understanding of religious beliefs and the effects on their lives.
- The lack of continuity in lessons for all year groups hinders the development of students' understanding and limits their achievement.
- The school is failing to provide students with their statutory entitlement to a religious education.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

110. Standards are severely affected by the lack of curriculum time, and the discontinuity that further limits opportunity to develop skills and understanding. Students in Year 9 demonstrate their ability to research and present relevant information in extended writing projects, and take pride in their investigations. They have insufficient recall of work from earlier years however, and only a basic understanding of the key concepts of the faiths studied due to lack of time for consolidation and reflection.
111. Standards of students in Year 11 following the non-examination course are well below average. Scrutiny of books indicates students are capable of reasoning and explanation, but they have too little opportunity to do so. As there is insufficient coverage of the agreed syllabus, the incomplete body of information from earlier years provides an inadequate foundation to support the development of their understanding of the impact of belief on life choices. Good opportunities are provided to discuss moral and social issues, but there is little reference to the religious beliefs that underpin such concepts as the sanctity of life.
112. Standards of students following the GCSE course in Year 11 are below average. They have had changes in teachers in Year 10, and some have become disenchanted with the course. They have no textbook for private home use, so personal study is limited. End of Year 10 examinations suggest a lack of effort over revision and insufficient recall of facts. In class, the responses of some students demonstrate good understanding and reflection.
113. Achievement in some lessons is affected by the attitudes of a significant number of students who talk, ignore the teacher and fail to complete their work. This was despite the fact that the teacher was making it clear that such behaviour was unacceptable. Where students are well motivated and involved in lessons they achieve well. Achievement of students supported by learning support assistants is satisfactory because of the support for their concentration and understanding of the task.
114. Achievement over time, however, is unsatisfactory due to the lack of continuity of staff for Year 11 GCSE, and lack of time and continuity of study in the rest of the school.

Teaching and learning

115. Where teachers sought to involve students actively in their lessons and their good knowledge enabled them to provide clear explanations and interesting detail, good teaching was seen. Teachers are good role models, treating students' responses with respect. As a result students develop their confidence and are encouraged to take part in discussion. The inadequate time for religious education, however, results in teachers attempting to deliver the required syllabus content, but without the opportunity for students to develop their understanding of the concepts that underpin the faiths studied. The use of six-week blocks of time with 12-week gaps results in a lack of continuity and by the time students and staff have developed effective methods of working together it is time to move on elsewhere. Achievement is severely affected by the lack of depth that results. Marking does not provide sufficient information about students' progress or how to improve their work. There is insufficient demand on students to improve the standard of their written work or to complete work left

unfinished. This in turn affects the students' own expectations. When teaching is good, clear planning enables students to move quickly from task to task, increasing the depth of their understanding. Where the teacher spends too long leading the lesson, students become disengaged and the pace of lessons fall and concentration lapses.

Leadership and management

116. The school is not providing teachers with the time to meet the agreed syllabus or for students to have the continuity of study that would enable them to develop understanding of the concepts that underpin religious belief. Students following the statutory course in Years 10 and 11 receive no accreditation for their work. Good, end-of-module assessment tasks have been developed in Years 7 to 9; however, as it is another term before students return to the study of religious education, the assessment of these modules has little impact on their achievement. There is no continuity of assessment and as a consequence there is no method of monitoring the achievement of groups or individuals, and little incentive for students to do more than simply complete tasks.
117. There is insufficient use of visits to places of worship or visitors reflecting the rich variety of cultures in Britain in order to provide first-hand experience for students. The resources of the department have improved and the full GCSE course has been introduced; however, the school has not yet addressed the lack of time and continuity that was affecting achievement at the time of the last report. As a consequence progress since the last report is unsatisfactory.

TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in design and technology because of the good teaching they receive.
- The management of the department is very good.
- Students' skills of analysis and evaluation are very good, particularly in food technology.
- Students' work lacks creativity, and presentation and ICT skills are limited.

Commentary

Examination results

118. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2002 were above average. Girls performed better than boys overall. Results in the 2003 examinations improved.

Standards and achievement

119. By the end of Year 9, students' making skills are well above average. They use a variety of tools and equipment accurately and with confidence in all material areas. Students' designing skills are average. By the end of Year 11, standards of designing and making are above average. This represents good achievement given students' standards in design and technology upon entry to the school. Students' work is consistently thorough with detailed analysis and evaluations, particularly within food technology; however, designing skills are less well developed and students' coursework generally lacks creativity and flair.

Teaching and learning

120. In Years 7 to 9, students benefit from knowledgeable and committed teachers. Teaching is well paced and there are clear learning objectives. Students enjoy their lessons because teachers have planned activities carefully that capture the interest of students. Students with special educational needs learn at a faster rate than other students because of the good use made of learning support assistants and the additional learning materials supplied by the teachers. Assessment is used well to motivate students and to set targets for improvement. In Years 10 and 11, teachers use their knowledge and experience to challenge and extend the students. Students benefit from the high expectations of their teachers and respond positively to the challenging activities. Students are articulate and explain their ideas and understanding very effectively. However, whilst teaching is good overall, teachers often dominate lessons and miss opportunities to involve students actively in the lessons.

Leadership and management

121. The department is well led. The strong team ethos and commitment to improvement have enabled the subject to sustain good standards. The management of the department is very good. Highly effective policies have been developed that ensure efficient and effective teaching and learning. The assessment and monitoring of teaching and learning are particularly good in Years 7 to 9. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection; standards of making in resistant materials have improved and students' overall achievement is now good. In addition, new product design and food technology courses have been introduced successfully into Years 12 and 13.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good	
Management	Very good	
Progress since previous inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is very good because of the wide range of courses and experiences open to students.
- The quality of leadership is very good and generates vision and enthusiasm.

- There is a good range of specialist provision in teaching.
- A very high proportion of students take the subject GCSE.
- Three-dimensional work needs to be promoted further.

Commentary

Examination results

122. In 2002, results in GCSE were above average and continue a rising trend. Girls performed better than boys but the difference was less than that found nationally.

Standards and achievement

123. Students have broadly average skills on entry to the school. By the end of Year 9, they have very good skills in drawing, especially in using a wide range of techniques for shading; students achieve well. They have a good knowledge of the theory of colour and can mix and apply colour subtly or dramatically as they choose. Students understand the key elements of good composition. By Year 11, students research and develop their topics in good depth and use and improve on the skills learned earlier; they achieve well. In textiles, students produce a lively range of silk-screen prints based on their observational drawings of cross-sections of fruit. Work in ceramics is of a high quality but is limited in scope. In GCSE, students' written notes do not adequately describe their research and development of work.

Teaching and learning

124. In Years 7 to 11, students benefit from the good specialist expertise of their teachers. These include fine art, textiles, ceramics and light sculpture. Teachers plan their lessons well; they structure in detailed stages so that students build up their skills in a logical manner through observation and research into the work of relevant artists and art movements. Assessment is very good and students are involved in self-assessment in most lessons so that they know how to improve their work. Students' work is monitored closely and good records are kept. There is a need to mark written work more closely to raise students' skills in literacy.

Leadership and management

125. There is very good vision for the subject that has resulted in the school gaining visual arts college status last year. The head of department has been very successful in making links with a wide range of institutions, including professional, business and arts groups. These links make a very significant contribution to students' experiences and achievement in art and design. The artist in residence also makes a very good contribution to students' learning, being actively involved in the subject. There is good improvement since the previous inspection. The range of teaching and learning has improved, as has the overall provision.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	N/A	N/A
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results at GCSE are above average, as is the number of students involved currently.
- Students show good attitudes to learning through music.
- Staffing problems affect development of provision and achievement of some students.

Commentary

Examination results

126. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were above average and have been so for the last three years. Results in 2003 maintain this good standard, but with boys doing better than girls.

Standards and achievement

127. Musical performance is a strength in all years. The developed skill and personal involvement of a high proportion of students through instrumental learning in extra time also support learning in composition and listening. At the end of Year 9, teacher assessment places most students at or above the national average. From work seen during the inspection this general standard is being maintained. In each of the first three years, students respond very well, volunteering points, asking intelligent questions, showing serious intent in activities they clearly enjoy. In a Year 9 class, all understand the concepts of 'refinement' and 'bridge' in working on their group compositions and all fulfil the brief – to provide contrast in these – including those with special educational needs. Standards differ according to their efficient use of rehearsal time. There is no evidence of computer-aided learning.
128. Standards seen in Years 10 and 11 are equal to those in previous years. **Students attain well above average levels of composition derived from performance pieces and in response to listening.** Attitudes remain good in spite of a 'let down' feeling about the staffing difficulties affecting teaching and extra-curricular work. Boys and girls do equally well overall. Achievement over time cannot be securely judged. Since very little work from previous years is available and no teacher remains who knows the students or what they were taught in previous years, it is not possible to judge achievement.

Teaching and learning

129. The inspection occurred in a term with no head of music in post. Teaching is by a newly qualified teacher and temporary staff. In Years 7 to 9 teachers engage students, tapping previous learning and thinking skills well through good quality questioning. Strategies to keep all on task and involved are used effectively. In Years 10 and 11 the main limitation is the lack of experience or of specialist knowledge of those seen teaching. Learning needs more specific targets and lessons a tighter structure for the potential of students to be realised.

Leadership and management

130. A new head of music has been appointed to start in January 2004. The teaching hours of the newly qualified teacher have been protected. The school's management team has made emergency arrangements to ensure that all classes in all years receive planned lessons during this term. Experienced specialist teachers teach some GCSE lessons and provide plans and materials for others to use. Instrumental teaching continues, managed by a senior teacher. Extra-curricular provision, normally very active, has been curtailed. These temporary arrangements mean there is currently no development work in music, no updating of schemes and no full-time specialist support for the newly qualified teacher.
131. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory with standards maintained and the number choosing music at GCSE increased. Accommodation remains cramped, limiting achievement because of too few separated spaces. While the use of ICT for music is no longer a serious weakness, it needs further development, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is very good because of the wide range of courses and experiences open to students.
- Very good leadership and management have a significant impact on raising standards.
- Students achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- A very good extra-curricular sports programme offers opportunities for all students, particularly the gifted and talented, to excel.
- Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are too generous.

Commentary

Examination results

132. Results in the 2002 GCSE examination were above average, but dipped a little in 2003. Boys did better than girls overall.

Standards and achievement

133. By Year 9, students' practical skills are average. This represents good achievement, considering their unusually low practical standards on entering the school. Students are competent in a variety of games, and good achievement was seen by girls in hockey and boys in rugby. Both girls and boys achieve very well in badminton, demonstrating a high level of analytical skill, as well as improving their tactical play and decision making. Independent learning skills are well developed, because students are given many opportunities to take responsibility.
134. By Year 11, students of all levels of attainment achieve well in the GCSE course. Practical coursework is above average, as seen in rounders and badminton. Students show a good grasp of theoretical aspects in their written coursework. In the core curriculum course, Year 11 boys perform well and gain a sense of achievement by organising their own football tournament. Play is of a creditable standard, as is that of girls who achieve very well in their introductory rugby course. Students with special educational needs are well integrated and supported, and they make good progress alongside their classmates.

Teaching and learning

135. Enthusiastic, knowledgeable teachers, who have high expectations of what students can achieve, benefit students in all years. A feature of all lessons is the good relationship between staff and students, and the very high levels of students' active participation, standards of dress and behaviour. Students are well motivated and have very good attitudes, reflected in the effort they put into their work and support for extra-curricular sport. Opportunities for students to develop literacy, numeracy and citizenship skills are strengths of most lessons. Such was the high standard of group co-operation and team work achieved in a Year 7 rugby lesson, the boys were able to organise themselves and participate in six-a-side games of touch rugby harmoniously. The very best learning takes place when exemplary planning and clear learning objectives enable students to take a high level of responsibility for their own learning, and thereby gain independence. In a Year 9 badminton lesson, students of all abilities played an active, demanding role in evaluating each other's performance against clear criteria, successfully. High attainers were challenged particularly well by the need for analytical reflection. The most talented students were equally challenged, as they applied their technical skills to innovative conditioned games, which tested their numerical, as well as physical, competence. Well-timed interventions by the teacher ensured that all students made very good progress. Marking of GCSE coursework is good, but teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are over-generous.

Leadership and management

136. Very effective leadership, supported by a strong committed team, is moving the department forward with clear direction. Innovative developments in assessment, the creative use of ICT and the School Sports Co-ordinator Programme support the thrust to raise standards further. No less important is the emphasis on creating good citizens through the students' physical education experience. Tangible active citizenship prevails throughout the work of the department. The curriculum is constrained by the lack of indoor accommodation. Health and safety risk assessments in physical activities are not yet complete. Very good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Standards are higher, and the standard of teaching is now good and often very good.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

137. The school has recently introduced design and technology: Engineering, in Year 10 for a small group of students. One, very good, lesson was observed. The teacher demonstrated a very good knowledge of this new course and this contributed to a brisk and challenging experience for students. One of the best features of the teaching was the way that the teacher challenged students to think before answering; this led to students giving much more detailed explanations about how to construct a tangent. Students achieved very well and displayed very good attitudes.
138. The school operates the ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) course for small groups of students in Years 10 and 11. Two lessons were observed. In both lessons, students' achievement was at least good because of the good quality teaching they received. Lessons begin with five minutes of hand/leg movements; this helps students to focus and listen to instructions. Students achieve well in relation to organisation of folders, development of ideas and learning to discuss in pairs.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Poor
Management	Poor
Progress since previous inspection	N/A

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The history department provides a very good module that supports Year 9 students' understanding of the development of the British democratic system.
- Days set aside from the normal timetable provide extended opportunities for students to work with specialists and to develop their understanding of aspects of citizenship.
- Through their work with the prison service, students gain a memorable insight into prison life and the contribution of drugs to the development of a life of crime.
- Physical education places great emphasis on responsible attitudes and so students are able to become confident, supportive and independent learners.
- There is no leadership or management of citizenship within the school.
- Students' achievement in citizenship is not identified, assessed or celebrated.
- There are insufficient opportunities for students to demonstrate active citizenship.
- Achievement in citizenship is not reported to parents.
- Delivery of elements of citizenship across the curriculum is not monitored to ensure consistency and quality.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

139. By the end of Year 9, students demonstrate that they are confident and work well in groups when they have the opportunity to do so. They undertake individual research for projects and can present their work logically and clearly. They take part in the election process through their work in history and have a good grasp of the development of the democratic process. When they have the opportunity to take responsibility they respond well. In moral and social lessons they consider their own responsibilities to themselves and others, and are able to prepare leaflets identifying examples of this. Through their work with the prison service, students gain a memorable insight into prison life and the contribution of drugs to the development of a life of crime.
140. By the end of Year 11, students have investigated such topics as racism and demonstrate an understanding of the effects of discrimination. Teachers encourage students to share opinions and to reflect on the views of others, for example in social and moral education when they consider topics such as abortion. In physical education, students demonstrate good leadership skills and work together co-operatively and responsibly. Elsewhere in the school there are insufficient opportunities for students to take leadership roles or to support the work of younger students in order to understand the benefits and responsibilities attached to active citizenship.

Students have been consulted in the past over school issues and have taken part in discussion forums outside school, but most students have little experience of the process and no contact with local politicians.

Teaching and learning

141. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In history, geography, physical education, religious and social and moral education, teachers are clearly committed to encouraging students to become responsible, confident and aware of their duties to the community. Opportunities for students to discuss opinions and form judgements are created and in the best lessons students are encouraged to take the lead in their work and collaborate with their peers. This enables them to develop their own beliefs and values. Students benefit from the use of days when the normal timetable does not take place. This provides time for external specialists to work with students, enabling them to receive instruction from experts in a variety of fields. Students have few opportunities to put the skills of citizenship into practice through posts of responsibility or leadership. When opportunities are presented they seize them, and undertake them well. Citizenship is not identified to students so they are not able to recognise the skills they may be developing across a variety of teaching areas. There is no system of monitoring or assessing students' progress towards their understanding of citizenship or of celebrating their success. As a result, students are unable to identify their progress or to understand how they may become more effective citizens.

Leadership and management

142. There is no leadership or management of the subject. An audit of opportunities for delivery of the subject across Years 7 to 9 was taken some time ago, in order to build upon existing strengths, but no progress has been made in developing these opportunities into a coherent course. There is no monitoring of delivery to ensure its quality and content, and no form of assessment in order to identify gaps in provision or to celebrate success. There are too few opportunities for students to demonstrate an understanding of active citizenship, and they do not record or evaluate their experiences. The school has not informed parents of their child's progress in this area.

OUTSTANDING PRACTICE – CITIZENSHIP WITHIN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Active citizenship in physical education. An account of a Year 7 rugby lesson. Students worked in four mixed ability groups of six or seven boys chosen by the teacher.

Citizenship skills were central to this lesson, focusing on co-operation, sensitivity to others, good sporting behaviour and leadership through group work. Arriving on the field before the teacher, each group marked out its own working space, and began their warm-up, independently. They knew exactly what to do, and were puffing when the teacher called them together to evaluate the quality of their work. Skilful questioning really made the boys think, enabling students of all abilities to contribute to analysing the success of their warm-up. Students' recognition of their own and others' strengths and weaknesses was impressive, being articulate, analytical and sensitively expressed. This was typical of the whole lesson. Given real responsibility throughout, the boys' mature response fully justified the teacher's high expectations. A demanding skill development session challenged students' teamwork, as well as their rugby prowess. Highly motivated, the boys worked hard to achieve a successful dummy pass to outwit their opponents, making excellent progress. Finally came the game. Such was the high standard of self-discipline, group co-operation and teamwork achieved, the boys organised and played two six-a-side games of touch rugby without any dissent or need for intervention. Remarkable, because this was only these boys' sixth week in the school.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2002 with national comparison.

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
Art and design	7	100	90	42.9	42.7	37.1	39.0
Biology	13	38.5	81.6	7.7	33.2	10.8	33.2
Business studies	8	100	89.1	12.5	31.7	35.0	35.4
Chemistry	6	83.3	84.8	16.7	36.9	30.0	35.2
Communication studies	7	85.7	94.2	14.3	36.1	28.6	38.5
Economics	8	25.0	86.2	0	41.5	5.0	37.0
English/English language	10	100	92.0	0	29.9	31.0	35.7
Geography	5	100	88.3	60.0	36.4	48.0	36.3
Mathematics	9	77.8	74.2	44.4	34.3	34.4	31.3
Other social studies	18	61.1	83.2	16.7	32.5	21.1	33.6
Physics	7	85.7	82.0	14.3	36.2	27.1	34.3

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
Mathematics	15	100	93.3	93.3	52.2	97.3	84.7
Biology	15	100	91.6	20.0	36.3	68.0	74.1
Chemistry	10	100	94.0	30.0	45.9	80.0	81.1
Physics	6	100	92.8	50.0	42.8	83.3	78.6
Art and design	23	100	96.1	60.9	48.7	95.7	85.1
Business studies	6	100	96.4	33.3	32.8	83.3	76.5
Economics	6	100	96.2	16.7	45.8	76.7	83.1
History	10	100	97.1	60.0	41.0	94.0	81.2
Geography	6	100	97.1	33.3	40.5	76.7	80.9
Other social sciences	21	100	94.3	33.3	38.9	79.0	77.7
English literature	6	100	98.5	83.3	43.7	110.0	84.3
English language	11	100	98.3	36.4	36.5	80.0	80.1
Communication studies	11	100	98.3	9.1	36.8	74.5	81.1
Sports/PE studies	8	100	95.4	25.0	29.5	80.0	73.2

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus for the inspection was English literature but English language and literature was also sampled. The subject is a popular choice with males and females at AS and A-level. Teaching is good; teachers have high expectations and encourage students to learn on their own and through sharing ideas. The support given to lower attaining students is good, and students achieve well.

English

Provision in English literature is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are highly motivated learners and work well, independently and collaboratively.
- Teaching is good; lessons are well structured and teachers possess a good knowledge of the subject.
- Some of the teaching causes students to become too passive.
- Some students in Year 12 display a lack of confidence in reading.

Commentary

Examination results

143. In 2002, results at A-level were above average and have improved in 2003. This is in line with results over the last four years with the exception of 2001 when they were well below average. At AS-level, results were above average in 2002. Results in 2003 were lower, with fewer students attaining higher grades. The subject is a popular choice for AS-level; however, the number of students continuing to A-level is smaller than usual this year.

Standards and achievement

144. By Year 13, students demonstrate good skills of critical analysis and higher level questioning, and are able to discuss challenging texts with confidence. The highest attaining students prefer to respond in writing and teachers have to work hard to promote small group or whole-class discussions. However, once stimulated, all students contribute, are articulate and possess a sound technical vocabulary. In Year 12, whilst students engage more readily in discussion, some display a lack of confidence when reading aloud. By Year 13, high attainers produce well-structured, well-illustrated essays. Middle and lower attaining students occasionally use colloquial language but show sound knowledge and understanding of the texts studied and an awareness of appropriate technical terminology. Students take an interest in social and historical issues related to the literature studied. Thus, some of the most thorough and thoughtful written work seen was on whether Jane Austen was arguing for change through her portrayal of Jane Fairfax in *Emma* as a revelation of social pressures on women at the time. Students work independently and make sound use of their research in discussion and in written work.

Teaching and learning

145. Teachers know their subject well, as was seen by the way in which the teacher stimulated a Year 13 class to discuss caricature as a literary device through contrasting the themes and characterisation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* with those of E. M. Forster in *Howard's End*. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject specifications and objectives and students are aware of what they need to do to achieve a specific grade. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 13 lesson on *Howard's End* where the teacher modelled how students should simplify the objectives for themselves, forming questions as prompts. Students were then able to relate these to the essay that they were planning and were much more confident about the work as a result. Less effective teaching was seen when students assumed an essentially passive role as the teacher led them through the work, providing them with ideas and interpretations. The quality of teachers' feedback on written work is thorough and provides clear guidance to students on how to improve. Students value the oral feedback and discussion that follow the written assessment of their work.

Leadership and management

146. The head of department has created a team that is collaborative and supportive of each other in her absence. Assessment data is used effectively to monitor progress. Standards have risen and teaching is now good; progress is good since the previous inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

147. Standards of literacy are above average. Most students are articulate and contribute well to classroom discussion when they are required to do so. Students have a good range of skills in reading and writing which enables them to produce full, well-reasoned work based upon their own research.

MATHEMATICS

The focus for the inspection was on mathematics.

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The knowledge and understanding of the teachers are good. This leads to clear explanations of concepts.
- Good diagnostic comments are made when marking students' work.
- There are not enough opportunities for students to develop their study of mathematics.
- Schemes of work are not developed sufficiently to give teachers guidelines on teaching methods and resources so that the quality of teaching can be further improved.
- The notes taken in class by students sometimes lack structure and do not always lend themselves easily to future revision and learning.

Commentary

Examination results

148. In 2002, the results at A-level were well above average. In 2003 the results declined, but achievement was still satisfactory.

Standards and achievement

149. Students have a good understanding of mathematics and make effective use of past work when introduced to a new topic. The students quickly learn to identify different types of functions, using their understanding of combined functions. In Year 13, in statistics, students accurately work out variance and standard deviation. In pure mathematics, they answer compound and double angle formulae questions and, in mechanics, use vector quantities competently in calculating impulses.

Teaching and learning

150. The knowledge and understanding of the teachers are good; this supports the students well. This good understanding leads to clear explanations of concepts, which students appreciate. When teaching is good, students are encouraged to participate in discussions. They respond well to questions and volunteer suggestions in articulate ways. Teachers plan well and lessons are well structured. They proceed with a brisk pace and allow students to consolidate each stage of new learning before progressing to the next stage. However, in a minority of lessons, there are missed opportunities to involve students more actively. Homework is set regularly; it is used effectively both to consolidate and to extend new work introduced in the lesson. However, further opportunities are needed for students to develop their study skills by encouraging them to prepare for topics in advance. Good diagnostic comments are made when marking students' work; these show the students where they have made mistakes and what they need to do to improve. The notes taken in class by students sometimes lack structure and do not always lend themselves easily to future revision, especially for lower attainers. Students making the transition between Years 11 and 12 sometimes find the styles of learning difficult to adjust to; as a consequence, learning suffers.

Leadership and management

151. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. There is a clear vision for improvement. Teachers work well together, resulting in good practice being shared and teachers' skills enhanced. A comprehensive post-16 programme of study is required to guide teachers on the appropriate teaching methods and the best use of resources to raise the standards of teaching and learning even further. There are good procedures for assessing the students' performance as they progress through the sixth form. Teachers support students well by providing tuition at lunchtimes and after school when required.

Mathematics across the curriculum

152. Standards of mathematics are above average. Good use is made of mathematics across the curriculum. There is extensive use of graphs in science and geography. Students use calculators competently and can transpose formulae with ease.

SCIENCE

The focus for the inspection was chemistry.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **satisfactory**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Average	Very high
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' very high standards in the current Year 13 are the result of good teaching and students' high levels of motivation.
- Teachers provide good, clear explanations, backed up by probing questions to ensure that new concepts have been understood.
- Students in Year 12 are not being tested often enough to give them a clear idea of the demands of the course and how hard they need to work.
- There is only limited use of ICT in chemistry and this restricts the variety of learning activities that students experience.

Commentary

Examination results

153. Results in the 2002 A-level examination were average. Students did not do as well in chemistry as they did in their other subjects. Results improved significantly in 2003 and were well above the 2002 national average.

Standards and achievement

154. Standards vary significantly from year to year depending on the standards on entry to the course of the students who choose to study chemistry. Over the last few years, students have generally gained the A-level results that might be expected from their GCSE results at the end of Year 11. Hence, their achievement has been satisfactory.
155. In the current Year 13, the three very able students are doing even better than expected and their standards are very high. All three students gained grade A in the AS-level examination. Their practical and investigative skills are well above average for this stage in the course and they work meticulously on, for example, an investigation into the decomposition of hydrogen peroxide using the enzyme catalase. Their files are immaculate and contain detailed notes, successful numerical calculations and carefully completed homework.
156. In Year 12, students began the course with broadly average GCSE grades for students embarking on an AS-level chemistry course. Their standards are as expected at this early stage in the course. They coped satisfactorily with the concept of enthalpy and were able to

interpret enthalpy profile diagrams. However, there are weaknesses in their recall of ideas from earlier lessons and they needed some prompting when calculating the mass of moles.

Teaching and learning

157. Teaching and learning are better in Year 13 than Year 12. The teacher provides well for the particularly talented group in Year 13, giving them what they need in terms of challenge and level of detail. These students take an active part in their own learning, and their individual contributions and questions are of benefit to the whole class. The situation in Year 12 is different and there is a wide range of prior attainment within the small group. The teacher ensures that all students learn and achieve satisfactorily in each part of the lesson but the necessity to provide for a variety of different needs means that learning is not as quick as in Year 13.
158. For both year groups, the strengths of the teaching are the clear explanations accompanied by skilled questioning to ensure that students have fully understood new ideas. The marking of students' homework is thorough and detailed. Students have positive attitudes towards the subject, though they find it demanding. Students in Year 13 particularly enjoy the substantial practical element of the course.
159. Students in Year 12 are keen and try hard in class; this is not yet matched by equal effort beyond the classroom. Some do not present work, particularly calculations, as carefully as they should. These students are not yet experiencing the regular tests that would give them a clearer idea of what is needed in terms of keeping up with reviewing and revising topics as they go along.
160. The department does not currently have easy access to ICT equipment. Hence, although students make use of computers for drawing graphs, they have little experience of data-logging or computer simulations.

Leadership and management

161. The teacher currently teaching all the chemistry in Years 12 and 13 has taken over responsibility for the subject in the absence of the teacher normally in charge. He is providing secure and consistent teaching for students and everything is carefully organised. A-level chemistry results in 2003 were better than those at the time of the previous inspection, so there has been satisfactory progress in the subject since that time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The focus for the inspection was information and communication technology.

Information and communication technology

Provision in ICT is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The assessment of students' work on the GNVQ course is very good.
- Student achievement is good because of the good teaching.
- Teachers and students are supported very well by the very good resources.
- Lessons taught by non-specialists are not of the same good quality as other lessons.

Commentary

Examination results

162. Examination results were well above average in 2002 and improved in 2003. Students did not do as well as they did in the other subjects that they studied, but achieved well compared to their standards on joining the sixth form.

Standards and achievement

163. Standards in Years 12 and 13 are already above average at this early stage in the year. This represents good achievement for the students, almost all of whom had not studied the subject to examination level before joining the sixth form. Students are very confident users of a wide range of software applications and have an above average understanding of how computer systems can be used in industry.

Teaching and learning

164. There are two aspects that stand out in the teaching that explain why students achieve well. Firstly, the quality of assessment, particularly on the GNVQ course, is very good. Teachers provide detailed lists of what students need to do in order to improve their work and put aside time for students to take the necessary actions. During the inspection, students were working on such improvements and achieving well in their lessons. They were very appreciative of the written comments, as were other teachers who were able to use them as the foundation for their own lessons. The second element is the very good resources that are produced by the head of department and placed on the school's network so that all students and teachers can use them. This means that students do not have to spend time taking notes in lessons as all notes are available for them to copy and edit in their own time. However, some lessons are taken by non-specialist teachers and in these cases the pace of lessons is much slower and students' achievement is only satisfactory rather than good.

Leadership and management

165. The introduction of new courses has improved the school's provision considerably. Staff are supported well and the planning of the new courses has been innovative; they meet the needs of students particularly well.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

166. Students have good access to computers to support their study. Many students regularly use computers outside of lessons.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus for the inspection was physical education.

Physical education

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

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership provides a clear vision of the standards required.
- Good teaching leads to above average examination results and good achievement.
- Assessment data is used well to predict grades and set individual targets.
- Marking of coursework does not always let students know what progress they are making against targets set.

Commentary

Examination results

167. Results in the 2002 A-level examinations were above average, but slightly lower in 2003. Males perform better than females.

Standards and achievement

168. Although only a few weeks into their AS-level courses, Year 12 students are achieving well. They demonstrated good research skills, and an impressive mastery of ICT, in making presentations to their group on the teaching of movement skills. In Year 13, standards are above average. Students are confident in using the specialist language of the subject; they achieve well in the sport psychology course, showing a good understanding of learning theories.

Teaching and learning

169. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and the examination syllabus. High expectations and a demanding pace of learning keep students alert and well motivated. A range of teaching strategies is used, effectively, to involve students in reflection, decision making and discussing their work. Very good questioning initiates stimulating discussions, well illustrated in a sport psychology lesson, which led to an interesting debate about motivation. Learning outcomes are not as strong when students become passive learners, copying notes from the whiteboard. Creative use of ICT adds a further dimension to students' learning opportunities, such as high quality video editing to analyse individual practical performance. The analysis and use of assessment data to set individual targets and estimate progress are good, but there is little indication in coursework of how students are performing against targets set.

Leadership and management

170. Strong leadership and management ensure that raising standards is central to the department's development plan. The quality of support and guidance given to students is very good. Many students take advantage of opportunities to gain wider experience by assisting with extra-curricular activities, and coaching younger students. Sixth formers run sports clubs for the Year 7 students, and help in primary schools, as part of the Community Sports Leader award. Standards and the quality of teaching have risen dramatically since the previous inspection, and progress has been very good.

HUMANITIES

The focus subjects for the inspection were geography and history.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at A-level are rising as a result of consistently good teaching.
- Students receive good support and this ensures achievement is good.
- The demands teachers make on students in discussion sessions are not high enough.

Commentary

Examination results

171. Results in the 2002 A-level examination were average but improved significantly in 2003. This was due to staffing issues that were resolved by 2003. The results show an improving trend over recent years.

Standards and achievement

172. By the end of Year 13 most students have a wide range of knowledge of topics and complement this through study of specific areas, but many do not use information fully in discussion and written work so that standards are not consistently high enough. Higher attainers understand the reasons for global migrations and are aware of the impact on countries, but lower attainers are weak in the depth and range of knowledge, and answers are superficial. Students achieve well in studies about urban change and improve understanding through visits to major cities like Manchester, whilst in Year 12; they broaden knowledge of other cultures such as the Kikuyu in Kenya. Students who are at an early stage of learning English achieve well in lessons because they are supported well in the written aspects of work.

Teaching and learning

173. Students achieve well because teaching is good. Teachers are appropriately qualified; explanations are clear so students achieve well in understanding themes. The planning of topics is very good since it incorporates opportunities for visits and fieldwork. It helps students build a sound foundation of knowledge, particularly in the application of theoretical study. Very good lessons are varied and well structured with high expectations of effort and engagement, but on other occasions students are not challenged enough to develop answers or to engage with other students; this results in over-reliance on the teacher. Similarly, students are not engaged enough to show how effective learning has been through lesson summary sessions.

Leadership and management

174. The subject is well led and managed. Teachers are supported through detailed schemes of work and through regular consultation. The morale of teachers is high and this has a positive impact on the attitudes of students. Arrangements to assess achievement are well established except for developing students' skills in self-assessment so as to improve performance. Links with centres for continuing education are not well developed. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection in terms of standards achieved and A-level results.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching produces challenging lessons that move at pace and lead to the good achievement of students.
- Students work well independently and relish the frequent opportunities to bounce their ideas off each other in group discussions and class presentations.
- Good leadership produces a shared commitment to critical self-evaluation by a team of teachers constantly striving for high standards of teaching and learning.
- Analyses of students' previous examination performance data and the setting of realistic targets for students' achievements are rigorous.
- Teaching of basic literacy skills is not consistent enough.

Commentary

Examination results

175. Results in the 2002 examinations were well above average for both AS and A-level and students' achievement was good. Results were similar in 2003.

Standards and achievement

176. Students in Year 12 quickly adjust to the greater demands of AS-level work. The great majority produce writing that critically analyses source evidence, evaluates different views and reaches well-supported conclusions. This very good standard of work is consistently achieved in such varied topics as how the Whig/Peelite coalition of 1846-52 benefited from the repeal of the Corn Laws, and what the positive and negative effects on Italy were of World War I. The history skills developed stand up well in examinations.
177. Almost all students continue the subject to A-level standard and, at the end of Year 13, most students demonstrate well above average investigative skills. They become confident independent learners who achieve well above average examination results. Students are well prepared for the university courses, often in history, that most of them go on to study.

Teaching and learning

178. Students benefit from knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching. Teachers plan their lessons well, including in them a range of individual and interactive activities that challenge and stimulate their students. As a result, students learn well and achieve well. For example, in a Year 12 class, students worked animatedly in small and progressively larger groups to pool their ideas, before presenting to the whole class their contrasting views on the importance of Lord Palmerston to the emerging Liberal Party. Similarly, a private study lesson to prepare students for a very challenging unit of individual coursework in Year 13 was of high quality. Far from being left merely to private reading and note making, students were faced with a range of guided activities that were very closely matched to the development of analytical planning and thinking that they need to apply if their final assignments are to gain high grades. As a result, students learned well, taking ownership of the knowledge and understanding. Teachers are well versed in the requirements of examinations and their assessment of written assignments is accurate and the marking is detailed and thorough. The monitoring of students' achievement and progress, through frequent assessment and student target setting, is rigorous. Students' attitudes towards the subject are very positive and they enjoy the lessons.

Leadership and management

179. The subject is managed well, and clear vision and direction are provided. A well-structured handbook that contains thorough schemes of work and guidance for staff is in place. An annual evaluation of students' performance in examinations is carried out and this feeds directly into teaching and learning plans. The policy for further strengthening students' literacy skills is not sufficiently clear about the specific strategies that teachers must employ in their lessons and marking of work. The maintenance of good standards through the period of changes to A-level examinations means that good progress has been made since the previous inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The focus for the inspection was art and design.

Art and design

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

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The enthusiastic leadership generates enthusiasm for the subject.
- There is a good range of specialist examinations offered.
- Very good teaching contributes significantly to the very high standards attained.
- Students do not make enough use of ICT in the development of their work.

Commentary

Examination results

180. Results in the 2002 A-level examinations were well above average and continue a rising trend, especially at the highest grades.

Standards and achievement

181. Students have very good skills in drawing and painting from observation. They research and develop ideas for their topics in very good depth. They know how to use the work of other artists for inspiration. They experiment with unusual painting tools and methods to get expression into their work. Students studying textiles are very successful in finding ideas for their designs from their own observational drawings. Their silk-screen prints are of a high quality, in both design and finish. Students studying photography understand the technical aspects required and research ideas well. The most impressive aspect of post-16 work is students' confidence in attempting new ideas and methods of work.

Teaching and learning

182. The students benefit from a wide range of examinations offered at AS, A-level and GNVQ Intermediate. The teachers impart their very good specialist knowledge and expertise to their students and this generates enthusiasm. Students work to a brief, sometimes set by people in the commercial world, so they gain a practical knowledge of the world of work. They are made aware of the criteria for assessment in the examinations and follow the requirements closely.

Leadership and management

183. The recent award of visual arts college status makes a strong contribution to students' achievement. They benefit from their contacts and discussions with the artists who are exhibiting in the newly opened art gallery within the school. Students are able to link their own work to aspects that feature in the exhibitions. They also benefit from contact with the artist in residence who engages with them in lessons as appropriate, especially in critical analyses of their ongoing work. There has been good progress since the previous inspection. Standards and provision have improved. The subject is very popular. Approximately half of the students in the sixth form study art and design.

BUSINESS

The focus for the inspection was business studies.

Business studies

Provision in business studies is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 12	Year 13
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Good

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new head of department is committed to improving standards within the department.
- There is some excellent teaching now taking place, which is challenging and inspiring students.
- There have been inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in recent years.
- Teachers have not paid sufficient attention to students' individual needs.
- Teachers have failed to monitor performance, set individual targets and support students adequately.

Commentary

Examination results

184. Results in 2002 were above average; results in 2003 followed a similar pattern. Whilst all students are attaining an A-level grade, there is a pattern of decline in terms of attainment at the higher grades of A and B. Males generally outperform females. Numbers of students taking business studies have fallen in recent years.

Standards and achievement

185. In Year 12, many students new to this course begin to demonstrate an understanding of key business terms and concepts. However, there are also a significant number of students who are struggling to interpret and evaluate information from various sources and cannot understand basic principles such as profit and loss accounts. Many of these students cannot apply concepts and theories to case studies and problems in real organisations. They do not understand how different topics integrate with one another or show an understanding of the values involved in business and economic decision-making. Achievement is therefore very patchy. Not all students are sufficiently challenged. There are signs of underachievement among students.
186. In Year 13, students are able to demonstrate a clear understanding of key business concepts. They apply what they have learned to case studies, actual organisations and the real economy, analyse the information that they collect, draw conclusions and make predictions. They confidently and accurately use a wide range of business terminology. Students have a sound knowledge of topical issues and make use of real vocational contexts in their assignment work.

Teaching and learning

187. In many lessons in Year 12, students are not made aware of what the lesson is about. The activities are not suitable for all students and there is a complete lack of awareness of differing individual needs. Lessons are poorly planned and organised; time is wasted. Students do not know what they are doing and as a result of this they underachieve.
188. However, there are instances of excellent teaching within the department in Year 13. The new head of department plans effectively. He encourages and engages students skilfully, challenges students well and has appropriate expectations. He uses effective teaching methods and makes efficient use of time and resources. There is an insistence on high standards of behaviour; homework is used well to reinforce and extend learning and ensures that students apply themselves suitably in lessons.
189. There is inconsistency of assessment practices within the department. Many students do not have a clear understanding of the criteria teachers use to assess work; in many instances work has not been assessed. The new head of department, however, is assessing work rigorously and taking appropriate measures to help students to overcome any problems.

Leadership and management

190. This is a subject where there has been unsatisfactory leadership and management in recent years. The absence of a head of department has resulted in a lack of systematic approaches that has inhibited progress, and standards have suffered accordingly. Business studies has lagged behind other subjects in the school. The recent appointment of a head of department has brought new life to the subject. He is committed to inclusion and the promotion of equality, and has concern for the needs of individuals. He is introducing the monitoring of performance data and has started to review patterns of achievement and to take action. He has clarity of vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations for the subject.
191. At the time of the previous inspection, business studies was a popular subject. Numbers of students have declined in recent years. GNVQ courses are no longer offered. Whilst access to ICT has greatly improved and a business base has been established, concerns that were expressed at the time of the previous inspection – and the preceding inspection – still exist. Business links still need to be developed to improve the vocational relevance of the courses; blocks of time still need to be timetabled to allow for necessary visits; and textbooks are still insufficient for all courses offered.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

poor (6); very poor (7).