

INSPECTION REPORT

St IVO SCHOOL

St Ives, Huntingdon

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: - 110874

Headteacher: Mr M Mahoney

Lead inspector: R Peter J McGregor

Dates of inspection: 15 -19 September, 2003

Inspection number: 259278

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1817
School address:	St Ivo School High Leys St Ives Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE27 6RR
Telephone number:	01480 375400
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Susan Campbell
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Ivo is a large, 11-18, co-educational, community comprehensive school, awarded 'Beacon' status in 2001 by the Department for Education and Skills in recognition of strengths in the education provided. The school achieved Sportsmark in 1996 and has several community awards. A close working partnership has been established with three local universities and staff have received Best Practice Research Scholarships for the past seven years. Community provision on site includes a private nursery, out of school hours care for children, and adult education classes. The school is much bigger than average and has been for a number of years, with 1817 pupils on roll including 336 in the sixth form. There are a few more girls than boys. Over 90 percent of the pupils are white with the main minority ethnic groups being Pakistani, Indian and Bangladeshi. About 3 per cent of pupils do not speak English as their mother tongue and no pupils are at an early stage of learning English. About 11 percent of pupils have special educational needs, a below average proportion compared with England as a whole. These pupils' needs are mainly moderate learning, or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. A very small number of pupils are visually impaired or autistic. A below average proportion of pupils, 1.4 per cent, has a Statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals, just under five percent, is below the national average figure. The numbers of pupils arriving at or leaving the school at times other than the usual time of transfer is a little below the national average. The area around the school is socially and economically mixed, but advantaged overall. Pupils of a full range of prior attainment enter the school in Year 7. The entry standard, overall, however, is above average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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32170	Michael Cundy	Team inspector	Art 6 th Form art
32590	Roger Fenwick	Team inspector	Design and technology 6 th Form design and technology
17808	Sue Orpin	Team inspector	Geography 6 th Form geography
10666	Pat Wheeler	Team inspector	History 6 th Form history
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32331	Peter Barnes	Team inspector	6 th Form law
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25352	Geraldine Taujanskas	Team inspector	Religious education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

A good school with a number of significant strengths. The school has a very important role in the local community, with the pupils, students and all members of the community gaining from this excellent association. The school is well managed and provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- GCSE results were well above average in 2002, representing good achievement
- The open access sixth form is very good and students do very well on their chosen courses
- Attendance and punctuality are very good in the main school
- Some underachievement in Years 7 to 9 resulting from the misbehaviour of a minority of pupils, mainly boys
- In Years 7 to 9, some pupils are insufficiently aware of their targets for improvement which slows their progress
- Good teaching overall, and very good in the sixth form, builds on the very good range of courses and excellent enrichment activities and visits, many to places abroad
- Care for pupils and promotion of their social development are very good
- Strong and effective leadership maintains standards, with a great commitment from the headteacher to valuing each pupil and student, and to placing the school at the centre of the community

St Ivo is a better school than it was at the time of the last inspection in 1998. Good progress has been made over the past five years. It is now a highly inclusive school, which values all its pupils. Standards have improved at GCSE. Attainment in the sixth form has remained at a broadly average level. Progress and achievement are higher, and the quality of teaching better. Behaviour in some lessons in Years 7 to 9 is not as good as that described five years ago. In the sixth form, the level of personal development and ethos are better and teaching has improved. Very good links with parents and a high quality of care have been maintained. Senior leadership and management are as good as in 1998 and middle management is more consistent and effective. Improvement has been made in most of the development points identified five years ago. Now, as then, statutory requirements concerning religious education and collective worship are not met.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement - which is a measure of pupils' success, taking account of their abilities - is good overall. Pupils' achievements in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory, good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in the sixth form. The standards pupils attain, relative to the national picture, are average or above average in Year 9, well above in Year 11 and broadly average in the sixth form. Pupils with special educational needs do well, some very well. Pupils with English as an additional language are making good progress and achieve well. In Years 7 to 9, achievement in English and science is satisfactory and in mathematics it is very good. In Year 9, attainment in English and science is above average and well above in maths. Attainment in other subjects is generally of an average standard in Year 9, representing satisfactory achievement overall considering entry standards into year 7. History and geography standards are above average and pupils are doing well. Achievement in citizenship is just satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, standards in most subjects are higher and achievement better than in Years 7 to 9. Above or well above average standards are attained in many areas, including English, maths and science. Achievement in English and science is good and

satisfactory in maths. In religious education standards are below average and achievement unsatisfactory because insufficient time is available. Achievement is very good in geography, and good in a range of other subjects. These include music and ICT where progress is substantial. **Overall, the attitudes, values and personal qualities which pupils develop in the main school are good.** Attendance and punctuality are very good. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.** The school has particular strengths in the promotion of social development. Behaviour is usually very good around the school and many pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons, but there is a disruptive minority, mainly of boys in Years 7 to 9. Behaviour is sound overall. Students' attitudes in the sixth form are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good overall: satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in Years 12 and 13. This effective teaching results in motivated learners who concentrate well, co-operating together and with staff. Areas of weakness in some teaching are behaviour management and not making targets for improvement clear to pupils in Years 7 to 9. The curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of the pupils and good overall. Staffing, accommodation and resources are very good, providing the pupils with a very good working environment. The care, welfare and safety of pupils are very good. Good support and guidance is provided, although shortage of tutor time means tutors have less chance to get to know their tutees and vice versa. Partnership with parents and the community is very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, **leadership and management are good.** In many areas of responsibility and work, the governors are very effective. All statutory requirements are met, with the exception of those concerning collective worship and religious education. As these statutory requirements are not met, governance overall is unsatisfactory. The leadership provided by the headteacher, supported by senior managers is very good. Management is good. The successful focus on attainment and achievement in Years 10 to 13 has not been applied to Years 7 to 9.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents state clearly that St Ivo is a good school, community aspects are very good and the head is a very good leader; his vision of an 'inclusive' school is known by all. Other strengths include the pupils' good progress, the encouragement they receive, and the quality of communication between parents and staff. Areas for improvement, expressed by a minority of parents, concern pupils' behaviour, including incidents of bullying, and being insufficiently informed about their children's progress. Pupils believe they are taught well, have to work hard, are trusted and that the school is well run. Their main concerns are about misbehaviour. Some also said their work was not always assessed helpfully. Inspectors agree with the strengths identified and also with their concerns.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise achievement in Years 7 to 9 by better management of the disruptive behaviour of a minority of pupils
- ensure that pupils in Years 7 to 9 are aware of their attainment levels and targets for improvement, and that their progress towards them is evaluated and in the sixth form
- tighten up registration procedures to ensure that attendance data reflects accurately the students who are on the school premises

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education are met in Years 10 and 11, and in the sixth form
- ensure that a daily act of collective worship takes place.

THE SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form is very effective, providing a very good range of courses that meet the needs of students from a wide range of backgrounds. Students enjoy their life in the sixth form, work hard and do very well. They see themselves as ambassadors for younger pupils, and very much as part of the whole school. The sixth form is cost effective.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good achievement by students of all abilities, enables standards similar to national averages to be attained overall
- Teaching is very good overall
- An extremely good ethos amongst all involved in the sixth form, leads to very good relationships between teachers and students which help students to learn and make progress
- Insufficient time is available for tutors and students to discuss general matters together
- Leadership and management of the sixth form is clear and very effective
- Not all students follow the school's registration procedures, but attendance at lessons is sound

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	<p>Good in English. Good teaching resulting in good achievement. Expert teachers build very good relationships with students. The pace of lessons fell away at times.</p> <p>Good in French. Consistently good teaching and achievement. Insufficient use of ICT.</p>
Mathematics	<p>Very good in maths. Very good teaching and student achievement resulting in well above average standards.</p>
Science	<p>Good in biology. Improving standards. Good teaching. Staff collaborate well together. Helpful marking of written work. Learning objectives are not always shared with pupils in lessons.</p>
Information and communication technology	<p>Good in ICT. Good achievement and good teaching. Thorough analysis of assessments to help improve standards. The highest attainers not always challenged.</p>
Humanities	<p>Good in geography. Excellent use of ICT to help learning. Improving standards. Very good department leadership. Good and very good teaching.</p> <p>Very good in history. A very popular subject. Very good achievement and average or higher standards for several years. Very good teaching.</p> <p>Good in law. Above average standards in exams. Satisfactory teaching and good student attitudes. Some over-directed teaching.</p> <p>Good in politics. Good teaching. Students achieve well. Very good staff knowledge and passion for the subject. Insufficient targeting of development points for students.</p>
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	<p>Good in technology. Above average standards in 2002. Very good practical work. Good teaching and achievement. Insufficient use of aspects of ICT.</p>
Visual and performing arts and media	<p>Very good in art. Very high standards in the vocational A-level course, lower in A-level. Very good teaching by knowledgeable experts. Good use of ICT.</p>

	Very good in theatre studies. Well above average standards and very good achievement. Very good and some excellent teaching.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Very good in physical education and dance. Above average standards in dance and average standards in physical education. Very good teaching and achievement. High expectations and hard work abound
Business	An area where lessons were sampled
Health and social care	An area where lessons were sampled
General education	An area where lessons were sampled

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'.

In other A-level and vocational courses including business studies, chemistry, economics, music, health and social care, German, leisure and tourism and religious education, a similar quality of teaching, learning and achievement was apparent. Almost all lessons were good or better with a few examples of excellence. In all lessons observed, students with special educational needs were very well catered for. Students from all backgrounds relate well to one another and to school staff.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Overall, the quality of help provided is good. Students benefit from very good relationships with staff, who have a very good knowledge of their achievements and attainment. Their personal development is less well known by tutors. The induction process into the sixth form is very effective. Students are very well prepared for sixth form courses which follow on directly from GCSE work. Students feel less well prepared for new courses. Not all students follow the school's registration procedures. The extremely positive ethos that surrounds the work of the sixth form is a key element in its continuing success.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Very good leadership and management. The sixth form senior team work very closely and effectively together. Tasks and responsibilities are clearly delegated. The development plan, prioritising improvements for Years 12 and 13, covers important areas and indicates how responsive the school is to student concerns. The priority for managers is to maximise students' achievements, and developments are planned to make this happen. The sixth-form student committee is an important element in the leadership and management provided.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

The school uses its own questionnaire to find the students' views. Inspection and school responses indicate several major strengths which are supported by the inspection findings: students enjoy being at St Ivo; teaching is challenging and demanding, staff have expert knowledge and are accessible, and they teach how to learn effectively; assessment of work is helpful; good courses are provided; and the school is well run. One constructive criticism voiced by a minority of students, which is also supported by inspection findings, concerns the shortage of tutor time, which means not all students believe they have an adult in school who knows them well.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

EXAMPLES OF OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

Year 9 Mathematics: Fractions - for low attaining pupils, last lesson on a Thursday afternoon.

Excellent teaching and learning.

As the pupils arrived, the teacher enthusiastically informed them that they would be working on fractions, focusing them immediately to record the title and date in their exercise books. This was carried out very quickly, with all the pupils engaged at once. The pupils seemed to know they were going to have a very enjoyable, and successful lesson. A quick-fire brainstorming followed – what did the pupils know already about fractions? They proffered suggestions eagerly and the whiteboard quickly filled up with them – there was lively debate about the spelling of “denominator”. A painless and busy refreshment and consolidation of pupils’ prior knowledge. Where did pupils see fractions in real life? – again the classroom buzzed with their suggestions. Learning was excellent. Carefully-drawn partially-shaded shapes appeared on the overhead projector; the teacher asked for oral contributions and expertly drew upon them to move the mathematics forwards into equivalence and simplification of fractions. Maintaining the rapid pace, the teacher next increased the demand, and linked in some literacy. What was the fraction of vowels in a selection of words such as parallelogram? What was the highest proportion of vowels the pupils could find in a word of their own choosing? The pupils found these challenges intriguing and fun! Before anyone’s attention had the chance to flag, yet another variation was presented. Pupils were asked to identify specific fractions of given words (such as the first two-thirds of “and”). As the fragments were recorded correctly in order, the pupils realised that they had cracked the code of a well-hidden message!

School entomology and natural history society

An excellent club from which many pupils have benefited over the past 47 years

This society meets every break and lunchtime attracting large numbers of pupils. It is exciting and dynamic. Pupils are taught how to care for a wonderful range of animals, including fish, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, spiders and insects. Exotic species abound and the eleven snakes are a major attraction. A pupil committee organises and runs the society very, very well, with a minimum of staff oversight. Pupils develop responsibility for both the animals and the younger pupils, who need to be trained in animal care.

Pupils take particular pride in showing and talking about the animals to the general public through exhibitions. They experience recognition within school and the wider community and appreciate the praise they receive. This is especially valuable to some pupils with special educational needs as the society helps them socialise and cope more effectively in school. The society provides a quiet and very supportive environment in which any pupil can develop her or his interest in animals. The pupils’ sense of responsibility extends into the holidays, ensuring that the animals are always well cared for.

The pupils, who are extremely pleased to show you round, are knowledgeable, confident and articulate and some aspire to the elected positions of president and vice-president, so that they can lead the society in the future. Many pupils over many years have gained an enormous amount from this society.

Excellent opportunities for teachers’ research are helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Several teachers are carrying out exciting research projects, following up interesting issues which they have identified. Staff at all levels are involved, from deputy head to main scale teachers. The research provides excellent opportunities for worthwhile professional development, often covering areas identified through performance management.

‘Best Practice Research Scholarships’ have provided the framework and funding for many of the projects, but now the school is financing more itself. The nine projects in progress currently range from developments in assessment, looking for the reasons why pupils drop courses in the sixth form, practical strategies for left handed pupils, and helping to improve Year 7 pupils’ thinking skills so they find recall easier. Everyone involved is benefiting from the work and important messages learnt are shared across the school, enabling improvements to be put into practice quickly.

Academic staff from a local university provide support and advice. This connection provides St Ivo staff with access to the resources available in the excellent university library. The school has had a long-standing link with the university and has developed a number of other research themes. One of the most successful is that concerning 'pupil voice'. This involves taking note of pupils' views and making changes which improve their school life. Year 7 pupils have talked about their induction and ICT curriculum, for example, and now work is better matched to their needs. Following discussions with students in the sixth form, counsellors now help with the pastoral programme and the careers programme has been improved.

The school has developed significantly by being part of this research network and pupils are benefiting from the excellent work going on. Teachers are enjoying their tasks and roles, learning is improving, and pupils are getting a better education.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good overall: satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in the sixth form. There are variations between subjects but overall girls outperform boys at GCSE. The standards pupils attain, relative to the national picture, are average or above in Year 9, well above in Year 11 and broadly average in the sixth form. Pupils with special educational needs do well, some very well. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are higher now at GCSE than at the time of the last report five years ago, with 69.5 percent of pupils attaining five or more A*-C passes in 2002 and all but a handful gaining five or more A*-G passes
- Pupils did very well at GCSE in English literature, geography, history and business studies and were least successful in mathematics, art, physical education and design and technology
- Very good achievement has been maintained in the sixth form over several years
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, achieving very well when supported by expert helpers
- Standards are not as high as they should be in the national tests taken by Year 9 pupils, particularly the proportion attaining the upper levels in English
- In most subjects, pupils of all abilities achieve as well as each other but in some lessons in Years 7 to 9, high attainers are not challenged enough
- Insufficient curriculum time leads to lower achievement and standards in the core religious education course in Years 10 and 11
- Achievements in citizenship and PSHE, although satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, are not as high as in other areas

Commentary

Main school

1. In Year 9, five years ago, standards were above average, and higher in mathematics and science than in English. In 2002, Year 9 national test results were higher and well above average with a similar hierarchy of achievement in the three core subjects, though mathematics results at the higher levels were much better than in English and science. Boys' and girls' results were similar in mathematics and science but in English boys did less well, reflecting the national pattern of achievement for boys. Mathematics results have been maintained at a high level for many years, being consistently well above average. Science results have gradually improved over the years. English results have always been above average but have fluctuated over the years. The overall trend of

improvement has been broadly in line with the national trend of improvement in these national tests. There is no comparable data for the tests in 2003, when the pupils' results were broadly similar to those of 2002.

2. When the school results are compared with those of schools with a similar socio-economic background, as indicated by the number of free school meals, they are broadly the same. When account is taken of the above average entry attainment of pupils into Year 7, results indicate that pupils have done well in mathematics, showing good achievement, and they have made satisfactory progress in English and science but the achievement of high attainers is not as good as for middle and low attainers. In English particularly, high attainers underachieve.
3. At the time of the last report in 1998, the proportion of pupils attaining five GCSE A*-C passes was above average, whereas in 2002 this was well above average. In 2002, girls' results were better than boys', the difference reflecting the national pattern of girls attaining higher standards. School results are much better compared with those in other schools attaining similar Year 9 test outcomes, which are relatively low at St Ivo. Compared with other schools with a similar proportion of free school meals, attainment was average. Overall, the well above average 2002 GCSE results indicate good achievement considering the entry standard of the pupils. Results in 2002 were well above national figures in most subjects. The trend in improvement in results over the past five years is sound. The proportion of five A*-C GCSE results was a little lower in 2003, with 64 percent, and a similar proportion of five A*-G passes as in 2002. There are no comparable GCSE data for 2003 at this time, but the picture at St Ivo in both years is broadly the same.
4. The school, through its own evaluation of performance, is aware of the underachievement in Year 9, particularly in English, and of the success in mathematics up to the age of fourteen, and in history and geography at GCSE.
5. The school met its targets for GCSE and Year 9 national tests, with the exception of just missing the challenging target the school set itself in mathematics for fourteen-year-olds.
6. Parents stated that they were pleased with the academic progress their children were making. Pupils were also pleased, but less so than their parents.
7. The school monitors GCSE results by ethnic grouping. In 2002, the small number of pupils from minority groups achieving five GCSE A* - C passes was below the overall school average. In 2003, however, the number was just above the school average – a significant improvement. Analysis of results shows that pupils do much better in English than in mathematics and science: this has led to a co-ordinated response from the support team, focusing more explicitly on specialist language which pupils will need to access the mathematics and science curricula. In lessons seen during the inspection, pupils achieved well with the help of sympathetic teaching which anticipated difficulties, provided them with specialist language and ensured that they had the support of written material to back up what was said.
8. Currently in Years 7 to 9, achievement in English and science is satisfactory and in mathematics it is very good. Year 9 attainment in English and science is above average and well above in mathematics. Attainment in other subjects in Year 9 is generally of an average standard, with some above average work. These standards represent satisfactory achievement overall considering their entry standards into Year 7. History and geography standards are above average and pupils are doing well in both, and in physical education, religious education and ICT although standards are average, current achievement is good. In modern languages, achievement is satisfactory and standards average, but both are improving rapidly as a result of the current good quality of teaching. In design and technology, girls' standards and achievements are better than those of

boys. Achievement in citizenship is just satisfactory at this stage in the implementation of the course, because the scheme of work is not yet consistently implemented across all subjects. PSHE achievement is best in Year 7 and satisfactory overall because of the range of quality in teaching experienced by different classes.

9. Achievement is good in English and science in Years 10 and 11, and satisfactory in mathematics. Standards are well above national expectations in English and above expectations in science and mathematics. In Years 10 and 11, standards in most subjects are higher and achievement better than in Years 7 to 9, because teaching is more effective, particularly management of pupils' behaviour. Above or well above average standards are attained in geography, history, design and technology, music, religious education GCSE work and physical education 'core' lessons. In other areas, with the exception of the 'core' course for religious education, standards are average or better. Achievement is very good in geography and ICT, and good in a range of other subjects. In the 'core' religious education course achievement is unsatisfactory and standards below average because insufficient time is available. PSHE work is satisfactory overall but there is great variation in individual lessons, depending upon the quality of teaching.
10. A minority of boys mainly in Years 7 to 9, and to a much smaller extent in Years 10 and 11, are immature and misbehave. Their conduct and associated attitudes are contributory causes of the overall picture of underachievement by boys compared with girls.
11. A strength of the school is the achievement of pupils with special educational needs, as a result of the encouragement and learning support provided by the team of specialist teachers and support assistants. The good support for physically impaired pupils, and others with special educational needs includes their involvement in a range of out-of-school activities to raise their levels of confidence and self-esteem, most notably through a social inclusion project. At times, pupils with special educational needs struggle in subjects where they are consistently withdrawn from lessons in that subject. In Years 10 and 11, the challenges set and high expectations of staff enable high attaining pupils to do well and succeed. In Years 7 to 9, some high attainers underachieved where, although expectations were high, the work was not always sufficiently well matched to prior learning. This was most apparent in some particularly large classes where the range of prior attainment in the class was wide.
12. There is a good and effective focus on the use of English and ICT across subjects of the curriculum which results in good and very good achievement for all pupils in both of these key skill areas. Pupils have above average computer skills, speak very well and write and read accurately. The emphasis on mathematics is less apparent; nevertheless standards are above average and pupils use numbers confidently and accurately.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.1 (37.1)	33.3 (33.0)
Mathematics	38.4 (37.1)	34.7 (34.4)
Science	35.9 (35.1)	33.3 (33.1)

There were 301 pupils in the 2002 year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	69.5 (60.2)	49.9 (48.4)

Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	96.6 (95.8)	90.9 (90.9)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	99 (97)	95 (94)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	41.1 (n/a)	n/a (n/a)

There were 284 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Sixth form

13. Students of a wide range of ability and prior attainment are accepted into the sixth form to follow the courses available. A number of students with GCSE C grade passes are accepted onto AS and A2 courses where staff and the students believe the course will be of benefit to the individuals concerned. Pupils attaining C grades can be at or around average, whereas AS and A2 passes are only attained by the top third of the population nationally. At St Ivo the overall standard attained in 2002 was broadly average, with females outperforming males to a similar extent to that found nationally.
14. Performance data for several subjects fluctuates greatly from year to year, where numbers are small and as the prior learning and capabilities of the students opting for them change. For example, in mathematics over the past five years, the results have ranged from very high, in the top five per cent, to below average. The highest standards in 2002, were in vocational A-level art, where the results were in the top five per cent of those attained nationwide, in mathematics and social studies. Physical education was the only subject where attainment was below average. In 2001, the highest standards had been in history, French and business studies, as well as art. When account is taken of the relative performance of students in their other subjects, the highest achieving subject in 2002 was mathematics, and the lowest achievement was in A-level art, chemistry, physics, and physical education.
15. Current standards in the sixth form are broadly similar to those seen in examination results in 2002 and in the similar 2003 results, which do not yet have national comparable data. Overall standards are average, with several above average subjects, indicating very good achievement for the students' capabilities. Students' results at AVCE and A-level and their very good achievement have been maintained at their current level for a number of years. The school has made good progress since the last inspection by ensuring that students continue to do as well as they are.
16. The highest standards and best achievement seen at the time of the inspection were in A-level mathematics and theatre studies, and AVCE art. Standards were average and achievement satisfactory in law where staffing issues have affected provision. In nearly all other subjects, students' achievements were good or better as a result of the high proportion of very good teaching and the very positive attitudes of sixth formers. Standards in the statutorily required religious education in the sixth form are not as high as they should be, according to the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, because insufficient time is allocated to this work.
17. Sixth formers have good ICT skills, are articulate and listen well. They use number confidently and have good independent learning skills. Their skills show progress when compared with those of younger pupils
18. The small number of students with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers. This is because teaching and support are so effective and relationships between students and teachers are very good, which facilitates good communication. Differences in achievements between boys and girls were not distinguishable.

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	98.4	94.8
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	35.4	39.4
Average point score per pupil	81.2	78.6

There were 144 pupils in the year group.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, the attitudes, values and personal qualities which pupils develop in the main school are good and attendance and punctuality are very good. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Staff make good provision for pupils' moral, social, cultural and spiritual development and, as a result, pupils develop very well socially and morally and have good spiritual and cultural understanding. Students' attitudes, values and personal development are very well promoted in the sixth form, leading to very good attitudes and conduct. Attendance in the sixth form is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attend school regularly and punctually and have a strong sense of community, particularly in the sixth form
- Behaviour in Years 10 and 11 is good and pupils have positive attitudes to their work. Attitudes and behaviour in and around the school are very good
- The behaviour of a minority of pupils in some classes in Years 7 to 9 is challenging and interrupts the learning of others
- Pupils participate fully in school life; sixth-form students accept and carry out responsibilities, providing good role models for younger pupils in their very positive approach
- Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils are very good
- Sixth-form students' attendance is satisfactory, but not all follow registration procedures

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.0
National data	7.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	1.2

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

Exclusions in the latest complete reporting year

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish

No of pupils on roll
1645
5

Exclusions in the last school year

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

White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	9	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	10	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	25	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	16	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	23	0	0

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

Main school

19. Pupils like their school and the vast majority have very good attendance. They arrive on time to school and to lessons. Parents and pupils understand the importance the school attaches to regular and timely arrival. The school has very efficient arrangements to follow up on problems of attendance and this helps to maintain attendance levels, which are well above the national average. The fact that the school has not excluded any pupils in the past year is an extremely positive reflection of its inclusive ethos.

20. Overall, the behaviour of pupils is sound and their attitudes to work are good. In Years 10 and 11 pupils settle into their GCSE studies and show interest and enthusiasm for their work. They are able to work well both independently and in small groups, enjoy whole-class discussions and show respect for their teachers. However, younger pupils, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9, do not always show the same willingness to settle down to their work. A small minority of pupils can be very challenging, testing the behaviour management skills of teachers and diverting them from full involvement with the rest of the class. Learning for all is reduced in such circumstances. Around the school, especially at break times and during the lunch period there is a very good community atmosphere. Pupils mix in a friendly and relaxed way and enjoy each other's company. Relationships between pupils and staff are also very good. Pupils accept responsibilities well and carry them out sensibly, for example in the very effective Year Council system in the school to which all forms elect representatives.

21. Pupils are helped to develop a clear understanding of themselves and their place within the school community and the world outside. The majority of pupils understand and show clear respect for the rules that apply in school, valuing their time in a happy and well-ordered community which offers so many rich opportunities for their development. The pupils know about different cultures and faiths in the world and have respect for the racial mix within the school. A number of subjects in the curriculum have a special emphasis on other cultures. For example in French, pupils learn a great deal about French life and customs and this is extended by a very good display in the department. In the majority of lessons there is good respect for the views and opinions of others and warm celebration of successes. The good social, moral and cultural development of pupils has continued

since the last inspection. There is no formal act of worship on a regular basis in the school. Nevertheless, pupils do have meaningful chances to share in moments of deep feeling and they explore complex issues and find wonder in their studies, for example in a science class considering the complexity and efficiency of the human digestive system. The community ethos which exists within the school is clear and permeates all aspects of school life. It is at the centre of what the school stands for and the way day-to-day life is conducted so that it forms both a practical and spiritual heart to the school.

22. Pupils for whom English is an additional language, observed in lessons and shadowed for a day, had positive attitudes and responded well to support from both teachers and their peers.

Sixth form

23. Students of all abilities show interest and commitment to their studies and appreciate the close partnership for learning which they develop with their teachers. In the very positive atmosphere of the sixth form they develop good confidence and participate fully in their lessons. Students conduct themselves very well in the sixth form and around the school and have very positive attitudes to their work and to the school, which they value and feel part of. Students work very well independently and also enjoy class discussions and debates where they often put forward some very deep and meaningful ideas, for example in an A-level religious education class considering aspects of creation and the power of God. Sixth-form students provide very good role models by their calm and confident behaviour and the committed lead they take in many aspects of school life. A notable example of their commitment to younger pupils is the help they give them with their studies as part of a community contribution to the school. The 'listening service' is a role for sixth formers and some Year 10 and 11 pupils, who provide support and a listening ear for younger pupils with a range of problems. These young people are carefully trained for this task, including the issue of child protection. Sixth formers also run a coffee shop for Year 10 and 11 pupils twice a week.
24. Although attendance data indicates an unsatisfactory picture in the sixth form, this does not reflect the true picture. Figures fall well below 90 per cent and sometimes below 85 per cent. In practice, teachers' registers show a much higher attendance figure of over 90 per cent. Students arriving at school go direct to lessons rather than registration sessions when slightly late, which results in the low attendance data. Managers are aware of the issue and are planning to introduce monitoring systems to ensure that the school is aware of which students are in school at any one time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall. The curriculum is very broad and relevant to the needs of the pupils and good overall. Staffing, accommodation and resources are very good, providing the pupils with a working environment and facilities that help them learn. The care, welfare and safety of pupils have a high priority and provision is very good. Partnership with parents and the community is very good overall.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in Years 12 and 13. Assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall in the main school and good in the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some very effective teaching results in well-motivated, successful learners throughout the school
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge in all subject areas
- Behaviour management is good in Years 10 and 11; unsatisfactory aspects in Years 7 to 9 restrict learning
- Well-structured lessons make learning easier
- Pupils of all capabilities are usually effectively taught, including pupils with special educational needs; high attainers are well taught and learn well in some lessons but not all
- Very good use of ICT helps learning in many lessons
- Many teachers mark pupils' work carefully and helpfully; some do not provide sufficient constructive criticism to help pupils improve further
- Pupils' progress through Years 10 and 11 is tracked to ensure appropriate progress is made; careful tracking takes place in the sixth form; systems and practice for Years 7 to 9 are not as thorough or consistently implemented.

Commentary

Main school

25. In Years 7 to 9 in physical education, and in Years 10 and 11 in ICT, geography, history and religious education, a high proportion of the teaching observed was very effective. Teaching was satisfactory or good overall in all other subjects. The quality was significantly better in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9, the main difference being the behaviour of the pupils and how this was managed. Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally very good but in Years 7 to 9 in some lessons, pupils, usually boys, misbehaved and not all staff managed their silliness well. Where behaviour management was not effective, learning was interrupted and pupils' achievements were lower than they could have been.
26. Where teaching was most effective, teachers had very good subject knowledge, which they used to very good effect to explain, interpret and demonstrate. Expert teachers showed their own enjoyment in their subjects, which helped to inspire pupils who concentrated well and gained much from the sessions. Teachers' subject expertise was satisfactory or better in all curriculum areas making this a significant strength in teaching and learning. For example, in a gymnastics lesson for a Year 8 class, all groups moved from stilted action to flowing movements over the course of the session. This very good achievement was the outcome of the teacher most effectively explaining and demonstrating skills such as tension, points of balance and sequencing. A similar quality was apparent in a Year 11 history lesson on the Yalta Conference. Pupils were questioned rigorously to test their knowledge, and very good explanations were provided with great enthusiasm. Pupils acquired new knowledge and were engrossed in their learning.
27. Another strength in much of the teaching was the quality of planning and the way lessons were structured. For example, in a Year 11 geography lesson on the consequences of high birth rates, the session started with reflection on what had been learnt in the previous lesson, moved on to case studies work which involved all of the pupils individually and finished with a summarising session where what had been studied was discussed. The careful planning for this lesson and others like it, with clear 'beginnings', 'middles' and 'ends' was very effective. Learning intentions for the lesson were shared with the class and expectations were high. The outcome was highly motivated pupils, interested in the subject and achieving well. Pupils were much more knowledgeable at the end of the lesson than they were at the beginning about the high birth rate issue. The national strategies for improving teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are used well, particularly so in mathematics, where the recommended structure is used to very good effect. Not all

teachers use this, however, when its implementation could be helpful, for example in discussing the learning objectives with pupils at the start.

28. Departments are well resourced, most with good access to ICT, and these facilities are used effectively for the benefit of the pupils. Where interactive whiteboards and digital projectors are available, they add an extra positive dimension to both teaching and learning. The use of computers is planned for and integrated into learning sequences in the best practice and pupils see this as a further aid to their learning.
29. Literacy skills are promoted well. Teachers are aware of the importance of developing pupils' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills and this takes place in all subjects. In the best practice, for example in a number of science lessons, all new technical language is carefully defined and reinforced, both orally and in writing. Pupils are expected to write accurately and appropriately, and these skills are reinforced very effectively, for example, in French and history.
30. High attainers are challenged by confident secure staff who question them rigorously, and this is usually the case in Years 10 and 11 and in a number of lessons in Years 7 to 9. Teaching of this form includes setting work the pupils find difficult at times and then responding to the pupils' own questions. This poses a problem sometimes, even in ability sets, where the numbers in the class are well over thirty, because the teacher has so little time available for each pupil. Where a class has a very wide range of prior learning a similar situation arises when work has to be set that is demanding for all. The teachers' time is at a premium and only the very best practitioners succeed in maximising achievement for all. The school is currently working on trying to improve provision and outcomes for the highest attainers.
31. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by a team of specialist teachers and learning support assistants; the quality of teaching and learning for these pupils is good and much better than at the time of the last inspection. Usually, a variety of learning activities is well matched to the needs identified in students' individual education plans. For example, a lower ability group learned well in a science lesson as they responded to a variety of challenging tasks investigating the complex working of the digestive system. Explanations were careful and pertinent with an appropriate use of vocabulary. The number of technical terms used was sufficient for the pupils to recall easily and to give the pupils access to the subject matter.
32. The quality of support teaching for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. Teachers work closely with their targeted pupils and have good strategies to enable them to access learning and make progress. Their recording of pupils' progress over time against their assessed language needs is less systematic.
33. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning, because of the quality of teaching and the school ethos that values and respects all. Consequently, they usually settle quickly to work, complete the homework set to a good standard, co-operate with one another and concentrate well. When the pace of work is low and teachers have too low expectations, which happened very infrequently, pupils did not react well resulting in unsatisfactory learning.
34. Marking of pupils' work is rigorous and helpful in many cases. Grades, marks and comments praise individual effort and standards and teachers mark books provide a good record of achievements. In several subjects including some of the most successful, such as history and geography, marking was inconsistent. As a result, some pupils receive well-written, easily readable constructive criticism of their work, while others receive more cursory comments.

35. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a clear understanding of the standard of their work and their likely GCSE grades. Targets are clear, realistic and helpful and staff track pupils' progress. Due to relationships being as good as they are, pupils confidently ask about what they need to do to improve and they are invariably given appropriate help. In Years 7 to 9, although teachers have records of pupils' achievements, these are not always communicated to pupils in terms of national standards and not all pupils are aware of targets for improvement. Data on achievement and standards is usually there but it is not yet communicated to pupils as effectively as in Years 10 and 11. The school is aware of this weakness and has plans in hand to make improvements. The rate of progress of pupils with special educational needs is measured carefully within the department; good records are kept of reading standards. Targets, however, within individual education plans are not always as specific as they could be in helping pupils to develop learning skills in specific subjects.
36. Improvement since the last report has been good with a higher proportion of better teaching. Very good improvements have been made in the quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs and in the use of ICT. Strengths in teachers' knowledge and planning have been maintained. Work is no longer over directed and lacking in pace. High attainers are now usually challenged, but some further work is needed. Target setting remains an issue in Years 7 to 9, to help pupils improve their standards further.

Sixth form

37. Much of the teaching seen in the sixth form was very effective and led to very good learning and achievement in a wide range of subjects. Of the subjects focused on during the inspection, the most effective teaching was in mathematics, history, art, theatre studies, and physical education and dance. In the courses sampled, very effective teaching was also seen. A lesson in music was excellent and very good work was observed in chemistry, economics, business, health and social care and leisure and tourism. In all sixth-form subjects, teaching and learning were satisfactory or better. Students of all capabilities and backgrounds are valued and treated as individuals, and work is usually matched to their needs.
38. The two most common characteristics of this very good quality of teaching were teachers' expert subject knowledge and the thoroughness of their planning. In mathematics, teachers looked for students' misconceptions in order to provide alternative explanations and to clarify meaning. This excellent practice relied on the teachers' very good understanding of the work in hand and is one of the reasons for the high standards students attain. The planning and organisation of many lessons resulted in a good variety of activities, such as the use of video clips, ICT, practical activities and group discussions, as well as individual problem-solving tasks. These activities helped to retain interest, motivation and co-operation and therefore the pace of the lessons. Expectations of most teachers were high and this was apparent in their rigorous questioning.
39. Technical language was reinforced most effectively in geography and physical education. Teachers' focus on these areas enabled students to learn important new work relatively easily, with good reinforcement. Such techniques ensured that students understood work and could apply it. In some subjects, such as art and theatre studies, teachers' expertise beyond the classroom added an extra, very useful dimension to what was taught. In history and theatre studies the passion and enthusiasm of teachers for their subjects was appreciated by the students.
40. In several subjects, teachers attend carefully to examination requirements and, by so doing, maximise their students' chances of high grades. This was not universally the case and in some subjects, for example physical education, highlighting board requirements could be helpful. Where teaching and learning were not quite as good as in

the majority of lessons, a variety of causes were apparent. These minor weaknesses were teacher specific and included issues such as a fall off in pace in a lesson because work was not sufficiently challenging for the highest attainers, insufficient use of ICT and too few opportunities for collaborative work and discussions. Marking was often effective and helpful but students were critical of some inconsistencies both within and between departments that they find unhelpful.

41. The work of sixth formers is tracked carefully using a new computer system. Ongoing test results and the information on the effort of each student held by individual teachers, along with the new scheme where predicted grades and assessments are recorded centrally, will enable teachers and students to follow and monitor individuals' achievements.
42. The quality of teaching observed is much better than that reported at the time of the last inspection.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 201 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Un-satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
14 (7%)	53 (27%)	76 (38%)	52 (26%)	6 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The curriculum provides a broad range of worthwhile activities, courses and subjects which suit the needs of the pupils. The quality of the curriculum provided is greatly enhanced by the community aspects, including a very good range of arts and sporting activities. Accommodation and resources are very good throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good curriculum supports teaching and learning
- Staff are well qualified, very well matched to the curriculum, and keep up to date with important curriculum initiatives
- Opportunities for enrichment are very good, particularly through participation in the arts and in sporting activities, and all pupils have good and equal access to the curriculum
- Preparation and advice for both on-going education and employment are very good
- The very good quality accommodation and facilities provide very good learning opportunities
- Time allocated for religious education in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form is too little

Commentary

Main school

43. For years 7 to 9, the full range of National Curriculum subjects and religious education is planned for and taught, including the offer of two modern foreign languages. This opportunity to start studying two modern languages is appreciated by parents, who see the courses as providing very good challenge for high attainers. The time available for all areas is appropriate and generally well planned, although the ways of working suggested

in the national strategies for pupils of these ages are not always followed. Planning for the required citizenship course is good, through PSHE work and subject lessons such as geography, history and science, but not yet fully implemented in practice.

44. In Years 10 and 11, in addition to the core areas of English, mathematics, science, physical education and PSHE, a good range of options is available which meets the capabilities and aspirations of the pupils. The breadth of choices is apparent in courses that include: electronics, pottery, dance, literacy skills and business studies. High attaining modern linguists can take both French and German, although few make use of this opportunity. The time allocated for courses is generally appropriate, with the exception of the required core programme of religious education. The lack of time for this work results in the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus not being fully met.
45. The school provides a very good range of study support, including: several computer clubs; 'Books over Breakfast' on two mornings before school to assist with improving pupils' literacy skills; an Urdu class after school to help pupils who speak Urdu maintain their linguistic level; and contemporary dance sessions on a Saturday morning. High attainers in mathematics can attend a GCSE statistics course during the lunch break. The excellent facilities provided by the recreation centre for the town on the school site add a further dimension to the sports activities available.
46. The school promotes curriculum links with local primary schools very well. A pyramid of schools, where senior managers and curriculum leaders of the schools meet regularly, helps to establish close working relationships, from which the pupils benefit. Links to post-school institutions, including colleges for students aged sixteen and seventeen, are positive and pupils believe they are provided with useful information on choice of institution at these ages.
47. The school timetable is well structured and constructed, ensuring that subjects are taught by staff with appropriate expertise. Pupils are taught for fifty thirty-minute lessons, which are mainly arranged in double periods of an hour. The one-hour periods provide sufficient time for pupils to experience a good range of activities and to learn effectively. Some curriculum time is lost each week because assemblies are timetabled. This means that in Years 10 and 11, pupils have less subject lesson time than is usual.
48. Good or very good quality schemes of work are available in departments. These are reviewed regularly and are important in providing good continuity and progression in learning. The review of the English documents has resulted in changes that are addressing the issue of underachievement by some groups. Year 10 and 11 schemes have a good focus on examination requirements. Schemes guide teachers' planning and help to promote equality of opportunity. Their good focus on literacy is helping to improve teaching and learning across all departments. This is less apparent for numeracy; planning is nevertheless sound. ICT planning is a strength in several subjects, including English, mathematics and humanities, but underdeveloped in art, modern foreign languages and science. The scheme for PSHE includes several excellent documents but in practice is not yet consistent across all participating departments. Sex, drugs and health education are planned well. Inconsistencies in planning are also apparent in documentation prepared for citizenship. Several departments arrange visits of very good quality, in this country and abroad, and invite interesting visitors to speak with the pupils. Pupils referred to particularly enjoyable and worthwhile visits and visitors, extending their horizons, for example in English, religious education and geography. These well-planned events are very helpful curriculum innovations.
49. The school is strongly committed to providing a curriculum that meets the needs of all, and the development of community education is an aspect of this. Pupils have equality of opportunity to benefit from both the timetabled curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The school has a number of research projects in hand and has been involved in

curriculum innovation projects for many years. Two such innovations currently having an impact concern the improved use of ICT in science, and the effects of left-handedness.

50. The support team for pupils with English as an additional language, working with the inclusion team, has carried out a very good “race and culture” audit of the curriculum. This has led to a development target to raise the profile of the team’s work. Subject strategies for bilingual pupils have been disseminated through professional development days and the school’s list of bilingual pupils, which all teachers have, includes an appendix on general teaching strategies to improve pupils’ access to the curriculum.
51. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. The strong support of the school for visually impaired students is reinforced by a range of local education authority services. A very good example of this was seen in physical education when a non-sighted pupil was assisted by a sighted helper to take full part in a badminton lesson. Pupils with special educational needs are involved in a range of out-of-school activities which boost their learning opportunities and raise their levels of confidence and self-esteem, most notably through the social inclusion project. Some students are consistently withdrawn from lessons in the same subject, which limits their access to the whole curriculum.
52. Pupils learn in a high quality, stimulating and safe environment which meets all the demands of the curriculum. Specialist facilities enhance the quality of learning and are well suited to the courses provided. The physical education department has excellent outdoor and indoor facilities and benefits greatly from dual use of the adjacent leisure centre. Recent building and refurbishment programmes mean that the music and English departments now have high quality accommodation. The dining facilities in the school canteen are being increased considerably to a good level. Accommodation is less satisfactory but acceptable for drama and religious education. A few lessons have to take place in rooms that are small or with limited specialist equipment and resources. The school has a very good learning resource centre which enables individual pupils and groups to access a wide range of information from printed and electronically based sources. The centre is very well managed and maintains strong links with all departments. ICT resources are very good. Pupils have access to computers when they need them.
53. Staff are well qualified and suited to the subjects they teach. Learning support staff, both specialist teachers and support assistants, are very effective in providing support for pupils with special educational needs. When teachers join the school, the very good induction processes help them settle and maintain continuity. Continuing professional development is a strength of the school and very good. Teachers are supported in attending courses of relevance and interest, and in-school developments are substantial, for example in ICT. The success of in-service work is evaluated and the programme reflects what is found to be successful or not. The teacher research initiatives, already referred to, provide excellent opportunities for individuals to improve their own performance and for successful ideas to be discussed.
54. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in improving the curriculum. Strengths in the breadth and balance and extra-curricular activities available have been maintained, although core religious education remains an issue. Very good progress has been made in improving the accommodation, particularly in music and English, and in planning for the use of ICT.

Sixth Form

55. A good range of courses is available in the sixth form, twenty-four AS and A-level, five AVCE, four GNVQ intermediate and an English GCSE resit. The students and parents

are mainly interested in academic courses and the school responds to this demand, not competing with local colleges offering a broader range of vocational work. Most pupils take the equivalent of four AS courses, and reduce to three A2 courses or the equivalent in Year 13. The large sixth form enables more than one timetable slot to be available for all the large and popular courses, and students are generally pleased with their sixth-form study options. Good curriculum continuity is achieved from fourteen to nineteen as most subjects are common for GCSE and in the sixth form and they are taught by the same staff. Where new subjects are introduced, students do find the change harder to deal with, but the school provides introductory documentation and opportunities for discussion.

56. In addition to examined courses, all in Year 12 carry out a period of community service and/or a work placement, giving a balance to students' study. The community action programme is extended for one term in Year 13. Much of the organisation of the work placement is in the hands of individual students but with advice and support, when needed, from school staff. One period of physical education is timetabled each week when specialist staff are available as well as the very good recreation centre facilities. A very good range of general fitness activities is on offer, from aerobics to weight training. The students themselves organise some sports fixtures in rugby and football, and it is intended to extend the list to include netball. A sixth-form ICT course is available to enhance students' core skills.
57. A PSHE and assembly programme is arranged for all students in Year 12, where they learn, for example, about the world of work and university applications, and about relationship management. Some time is planned for religious education, but insufficient to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus.
58. In discussions with sixth-form students, they pointed out that the breadth of curriculum provision reduces significantly on transfer from Year 12 to Year 13 and further opportunities for sport and recreation would be appreciated. As part of the school's educational research programme, a review is being carried out in order to identify why students leave St Ivo at the end of Year 12. As part of this exercise the curriculum offered is under review. This is excellent practice, from which the students will benefit.
59. Students in the sixth form enjoy the use of a good quality centre, which includes their own common room, a small network of computers, and a room for private study. These well-equipped facilities are now too small for the size of the sixth form. The centre benefits from being in the same building as the learning resource centre, which provides additional facilities for students for study and research. There are other good quality specialist facilities in other areas of the school including a designated sixth-form room in the art department. Staff are well qualified and resources meet all the needs of the post-sixteen curriculum. Community links are excellent and students enjoy a wide range of diverse and stimulating extra-curricular visits, which are of benefit to their social and academic development
60. Strengths reported in the curriculum reported five years ago are equally strong today and improvements have been made in the range of courses offered. Good progress has been made since 1998.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is very good. Advice and guidance is good overall. The school works very hard at involving the pupils in all aspects of school life.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good procedures are in place for child protection

- Targets and priorities for action/improvement are unclear to some pupils in Years 7 to 9
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language, although well supported in many ways, do not have clear targets to assist with their acquisition of language
- Insufficient tutor time is available in the sixth form to enable tutors to get to know their tutees well
- Staff and pupils share very good relationships, and staff have a strong commitment to their care
- Induction for new pupils and for sixth form students is very good
- The 'listening service' provided by older pupils for younger ones is judged by pupils to give very good support
- Pupils are very involved in the work of the school, particularly sixth formers, and their views are warmly welcomed, valued and acted upon

Commentary

Main school

61. Comprehensive arrangements for child protection are in place, and training in awareness of these issues is part of the induction procedures for new staff. Older pupils who provide a listening service for younger pupils are also trained in child protection issues. Effective liaison exists between the school and external agencies. Pupils are carefully supervised and staff are committed to ensuring that pupils are safe, with very good support provided for those who have special needs. The school is a healthy and secure environment, with statutory requirements for health and safety being met. Staff and pupils are aware of the dangers posed by the Internet and much is done to minimise the risks involved. The school promotes healthy living, and the very good canteen arrangements offer pupils healthy options in the choice of food. All accidents are documented clearly in the accident book, and this is monitored by the school nurse. The care, welfare and safety of pupils are very well promoted.
62. Provision for the support, advice and guidance offered to pupils is good. Pupils made clear in discussions that they feel they have very good and trusting relationships with staff and know who to turn to when the need arises. This strongly voiced view from discussions was at odds with that expressed in the questionnaire returns. The successful listening service, which is operated by some Year 10 and 11 pupils as well as sixth form students, gives very good support to younger pupils who need someone to talk to. Pupils move sensibly and safely around the school buildings. Pupils and parents receive helpful advice and guidance as they progress through the school, for example when option choices are made. Pupils' achievements are acknowledged in various ways, such as in assemblies, through a regular newsletter, with a merit system, and letters home when targets are reached or exceeded in the senior part of the school.
63. Very good induction arrangements are in place for new pupils. The visits of the headteacher and other senior staff to primary schools to meet and speak to the pupils transferring to St Ivo, visits by Year 6 pupils to St Ivo, and good welcoming documentation – all are appreciated by pupils and parents.
64. The processes for accessing the views of pupils are very good. During the inspection, pupils were electing their form representatives for pupil councils, and they say that their views are listened to and, on many occasions, put into action.
65. Questionnaires, returned by about 1100 pupils to the inspectors indicated that they considered the school to have a number of important strengths, including
 - ◆ St Ivo is a good school to be at
 - ◆ they are well taught
 - ◆ they are expected to work hard and do their best
 - ◆ the school is well run

Between about a quarter and a half of the respondents referred to a number of weaknesses, including

- ◆ some misbehaviour
- ◆ work not always assessed helpfully
- ◆ not all could find an adult to talk to if they needed to

66. Evidence was found on the inspection that supported the pupils' positive views and, to a certain extent, their critical ones as well. The strengths were all confirmed with strong evidence. Misbehaviour in some lessons, particularly in Years 7 to 9, but not around the school, is an issue. Inconsistencies in the helpfulness of assessment were apparent, but are not a major concern. The issue of finding an adult to talk to stems from the lack of time at registration and just two occasions each week when time can be found for pastoral discussions. The school's rationale for removing the daily tutor time some years ago was its lack of success in achieving a positive relationship between tutors and their tutees. The current pupil response and the school's strong views on listening to pupils' voices suggests that a compromise may be found, increasing tutor time without a return to what had been found to be unhelpful.
67. Pupils are involved in setting personal targets in discussion with subject and pastoral staff and this is very helpful and supportive in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9, not all pupils are aware of their targets, and priorities are not all as clear and helpful as they could be. Tracking of progress is not as secure for these pupils as it is in the other sections of the school.
68. Useful, broad outline information about pupils for whom English is an additional language is shared with all staff. Helpful bilingual support is available for pupils from the Urdu and Punjabi-speaking communities. Analysis of GCSE results has enabled teachers to identify possible barriers to pupils' achievements. A study support group has been established for pupils whose first language is not English and is very successful. Pupils' English competence is assessed annually and support allocated accordingly and appropriately. Pupils do not, however, have individual programmes with specific targets against which their progress can be checked and to help them improve further.

Sixth Form

69. The overall quality of support, advice and guidance in the sixth form is good.
70. The processes for accessing the views of students are very good in the sixth form. The school uses its own questionnaire to elicit the students' views. The positive and constructively critical outcomes have been noted to ensure they are maintained, and the criticisms have led to priorities for action included in the sixth-form development plan.
71. The questionnaires returned to inspectors by more than two-thirds of the sixth formers indicated the following significant strengths:
- ◆ they enjoy being a student at St Ivo
 - ◆ teaching is challenging and demanding
 - ◆ assessment of work is carried out helpfully
 - ◆ staff have expert knowledge of their subjects
 - ◆ students are helped to learn how to research and study independently
 - ◆ teachers are accessible and helpful
 - ◆ the courses suit their abilities and career plans
 - ◆ the school is well run

Constructive criticism voiced by between a quarter and a third of students were as follows:

- ◆ they do not have an adult in school who knows them well

- ◆ they were insufficiently informed about future careers
- ◆ the range of enrichment activities in Year 13 was insufficient
- ◆ they had insufficient helpful advice on their new post-16 subject choices

72. Inspection evidence supports the many strong positive messages students stated about their sixth form. In follow-up discussions with students they referred to the shortage of tutor time in the sixth form as the cause of their view that their tutors did not know them well personally, although they were very pleased with subject teachers' knowledge of them as they met them much more frequently. The issue of increased activities for the upper sixth is a priority in the development plan, although currently there are sports fixtures for boys and girls, trips abroad are planned and social events are organised. Sixth formers would like more information about new sixth-form subjects, which they have not studied pre-16, but are happy with other areas. The evidence available shows that career guidance is good, with appropriate use of the Connexions service. Sixth formers are supported in gaining work experience.
73. Induction into the sixth form is generally very good.
74. The sixth-form students are involved in the school's work and development, through helping with various clubs, such as the breakfast reading club and by providing a 'listening ear' to younger pupils. It is indicative of the success of the school in promoting the importance of 'student voice' that one of its students is the elected county representative on the United Kingdom Youth Parliament.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

75. The school has continued to share a good partnership with parents with effective lines of communication developed between home and school. Excellent links are made with the community, with extensive partnerships and educational initiatives providing an extra dimension to the support and care it provides for all pupils. Links with schools and colleges are very well developed and used very effectively, especially in the planned transfer of pupils at different phases of their education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links with parents, especially in the range of information sent home
- Concerns and complaints are handled very well by the school
- A number of educational and welfare initiatives are extremely well used to support pupils not only in this school but other local schools also.
- Excellent links with the community support and extend the work of the school
- Links with other schools and colleges are very well developed and used with great effect

Commentary

Main School

76. Parents are kept well informed about what is happening by regular newsletters and information from school, year groups and departments. Parents are pleased with many aspects of the school including the way the school is led and managed, the strong encouragement by good teachers for pupils to work hard and gain in maturity. They are also pleased that their children make good progress. A few parents did feel that they were less well informed about the progress their child is making. The inspection found that the

range and quality of information on pupil progress was satisfactory with annual parents' meetings and a regular annual report. The record of achievement sent home annually to parents is clear and informative. Although there is some variation between departments as to how information is presented, it is nevertheless clear and provides guidance for parents and pupils on attainment and the progress being made.

77. Procedures for dealing with complaints are efficient and queries and concerns are very well handled by the school. The parents' association provides good support to the school through social and fund raising activities. The views of parents are sought on a range of issues, largely informally at social and school gatherings or through working parties of the parents' association. The involvement of parents is satisfactory, overall. but since not all parents attend events and gatherings at school or may not be members of the parents' association such canvassing of views may well be limited.
78. The school is at the heart of the St Ives community. Excellent links are fostered and maintained by the headteacher and the community education manager who have an intimate knowledge of the town. Community education combines adult and youth education; resources available are shared with the school. The community education manager, who is based at the school, shares all available resources with the school, for example providing a base for the inspectors in the recreation centre during their time in the school. Some funding comes from the local education authority but community education generates far more income itself, which is used to the benefit of both the school and the community. It helps finance several study support groups including 'Books over Breakfast' (with a free breakfast), and an after-school computer club where Year 8 and 9 pupils can research on the internet and produce PowerPoint presentations.
79. Some of the town's excellent sport and leisure facilities are on the school site and attract visitors throughout the day and evenings but are also used extensively by the school population. As the school empties at the end of day, adults arrive for their evening classes some of which are also enjoyed by pupils. Such classes have enriched the school's curriculum, for example in art, where some sixth-form students take evening classes in photography.
80. The school runs an external centre, the Information Shop, which provides individual support such as counselling and health and careers advice. A Duke of Edinburgh Award centre is based at the school and is an activity shared by both school students and outsiders. The school makes good use of local businesses to enhance its work through such things as work experience placements. The English as an additional language team have employed teachers of Asian background with a community liaison brief. These liaison teachers have made a very good contribution to the integration of pupils and have increased parents' interest, understanding and involvement in their children's education. The school campus has been made more welcoming by signs in community languages. Outreach work by the liaison teachers has addressed cultural differences which could have impacted on pupils' progress.
81. The school participates in an extensive range of local and national educational and pastoral initiatives which benefit staff and pupils, not only in the school but in other local schools as well. For example the school has taken a major role in a 'social inclusion project', linked with the Children's Trust, working with vulnerable children and their parents through a collaborative working approach linking schools and support services. Similar and equally valuable projects are running or planned by the school.
82. Liaison with other schools, particularly local primary schools, is very good. Well-established and very supportive links with local primary feeder schools are used to promote a smooth transfer of pupils from primary to secondary education. Similarly at the end Year 11, although access to the sixth form is open to all pupils, good advice and support is available to link pupils to other sixth-form options in the area to ensure they can

take the courses and subjects most appropriate for them. Overall, this provision is very good.

83. Since the last report in 1998, strengths in care have been retained, and further improvements made in community involvement in school life. Improvement has been good.

Sixth form

84. A range of very good links have been established with colleges and universities so that students have access to good information to help them make choices about their future careers and training. Staff give generously of their time to ensure that students have very good chances to find out about and visit a large range of further education and training establishments. Extra opportunities can be planned for students with 'out of school' classes, and the community classes that are available on the school site. These extend their subject choices and their opportunities to develop. For example at the Year 12 assembly, weekend visits to universities were announced for those students interested in medical careers. In addition to a range of academic information, students are also provided with very good guidance, often by guest speakers from universities, on planning for and coping sensibly with university life and getting the best from their further education. Such extended life skills provision is very much in-keeping with the school philosophy of educating and caring for the whole person. Facilities available in the recreation centre enable the students to eat lunch there and mix with adults who use the centre throughout the day.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are good. In many areas of responsibility and work, the governors are very effective. All statutory requirements are met, with the exception of those concerning collective worship and religious education. As these statutory requirements are not met, governance overall is unsatisfactory. The leadership provided by the headteacher, supported by senior managers is very good. Management is effective with a number of significant strengths. The school provides good value for money.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership provided by the headteacher is highly principled, well established and promotes an inclusive school
- Leadership and management of the sixth form are very effective
- The governing body makes a major contribution to leadership and influences the work of the school and its policies
- Governors do not ensure that the statutory responsibility for a daily act of collective worship and for the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus in religious education are met in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form.
- The quality of pupils' experiences in Years 7 to 9 needs greater emphasis to promote higher standards
- Relationships and communication are very good and are characterised by mutual respect and support.
- Systems for identification, appointment, support and development of staff are very good.

Main school

Commentary

85. Governors support and challenge the headteacher and other managers, providing constructive criticism as well as praise. Senior governors are open and frank, set high

standards, liaise closely with the school and ensure that there is clear understanding of the extent of delegation. Draft development plans are scrutinised by governors ensuring that priorities reflect the vision and aims of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have responded to the findings of the last inspection report. The relevant governor committees debate financial issues, curriculum, personnel and community matters and other information. Minutes are concise and clear, including, for example, a record of the main questions and answers concerning a staff presentation on ICT. Governors have been very closely involved in the discussion and decision to set a deficit budget for the financial year 2003-4. This decision is in line with the governors' policy to maintain the quality of provision in the school, irrespective of any changes in the level of funding from the county and Learning Skills Council. Pupils' standards and achievements are discussed, and data is presented to governors to keep them informed. Standard comparisons with national data, however, are used insufficiently and so governors are not aware of the school's relative success in a national rather than a local context. The governing body is prepared to take difficult decisions where necessary. Consultation within the community is strong and fed back regularly to the school.

86. Statutory duties concerning communication, personnel, the curriculum, teaching and learning, health and safety and other matters are met. School assemblies do not involve all pupils each day but are worthwhile occasions from which pupils benefit socially and morally. The brief registration sessions each morning and afternoon do not provide an opportunity for a daily act of collective worship in tutor groups on non-assembly days. The time available for core work in religious education in Years 10 and 11 is insufficient to fulfil the statutory requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
87. Leadership shows very clear vision, aspirations and purpose. The school has a very good reputation and is over subscribed. Emphasis is placed on attaining high standards at GCSE and the outcomes of this are seen in well above average results in 2002, and good pupil achievement. Insufficient emphasis has been placed on managing a minority of pupils' behaviour in Years 7 to 9 and this has resulted in satisfactory rather than good achievement overall across these years. Strategic planning is very good, as seen in the detailed and very useful school development plan, and reflects and promotes the school's high ambitions and goals. The inspiration that leaders give is very good in motivating and influencing staff and pupils. Teamwork is very effective in several departments, particularly modern languages, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, physical education and theatre studies.
88. Leadership of teaching and the curriculum is good with a strong review structure and use of external and internal sources for support. Most senior managers are good or very good teaching role models. The school has separate performance review and departmental review systems, which contribute systematically to the effectiveness of teaching, providing feedback and support. Staff performance is managed with commitment and integrity. Leaders are very good at running an equitable and inclusive school where each individual matters. The communications structure, with briefings and a daily bulletin and effective use of ICT, leads to efficient and effective procedures. The range of clubs, visits and extra-curricular activities provided by staff contributes to the very strong inclusive ethos. The lack of pupil exclusions is a strength; the policy is supported by local pupil support units. Leaders provide very good role models for staff and pupils through their expectations and caring attitude. Key managers complement each other's leadership styles. School documentation is very good and supports its development very well.
89. The leadership of heads of subject departments is good overall, notably in their vision for their departments. This is a particular strength in history, geography, ICT, physical education, religious education, drama and theatre studies. Heads of department are good role models, with some examples of excellence. Their general level of awareness of curricular issues and their desire to innovate are good.

90. The management of departments is also good overall, though there is less consistency across subjects. Management has very good features in ICT, design and technology, geography, physical education and religious education, where self-evaluation is a key strength. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is also well managed, a significant factor in the good progress these pupils make. All departmental budgets and resources are well managed. Management is satisfactory in English and art, but there is scope for improvement in managing citizenship and PSHE.
91. School self-evaluation is generally developing well. The system is rigorous with findings shared and resources targeted. The first round is complete and is rolling out effectively. The monitoring of performance data is developing but currently less useful than it could be because not all data is reviewed against the national picture. The system of performance management of staff is thorough and effective. The staff induction programme is very good in supporting all new staff and building consistent and coherent policies and practice. Staff development is matched to whole school, department and personal development needs. In-school teacher training is mutually supportive to students and the school and leads to very good research and curriculum development opportunities. Very effective recruitment, retention and deployment of staff support key developments. Essential functions are covered well and procedures are not bureaucratic. Financial procedures are very good and the headteacher and governors have managed difficult budgets very carefully and successfully over many years, leading to targeted allocation of the limited financial resources for the benefit of pupils. Most of the principles of best value are applied very well and are central to the school's development. Delegated management and leadership tasks are reviewed for 'best fit'; excellent community and good parents' links indicate the extent to which the school consults; value for money judgements are made with great care when resources are acquired; and school data is compared with local information, if not national data, in many areas such as GCSE results and attendance information.
92. The department supporting pupils for whom English is an additional language is well managed. Links with mainstream departments through regular contact with equal opportunities representatives and the management overview of the inclusion team have proved very positive in providing the department with an agenda for development and have raised its profile in the school. Appropriate development targets have been identified, including tracking and the use of data. Since the last inspection, the organisation and structure of support for pupils whose first language is not English has improved greatly.

Sixth Form

93. The strengths in leadership and management in the main school are similarly apparent in the sixth form. The school is seen as a 'whole', for young people aged 11-18, with sixth formers key players in the main school as well as the sixth form. The sixth-form committee, with one elected representative from each of the twenty tutor groups is important for staff and students. The group is aware that it has a leadership and management function delegated to it, which it takes very seriously.
94. The very large sixth form means that most staff are involved as tutors or/and as teachers of students in Years 12 and 13, which is helpful in maintaining close links between the sections of the school. The vision for the students in Years 12 and 13 is the same as that of pupils in Years 7 to 11. The sixth-form leadership and management group, although not represented on the senior management team, work closely with them, and provide a very good base point for communication about all aspects of 16 to 18 provision. Tasks are clearly delegated and changes are made in the light of any new circumstances. Recently, a change was made to form separate Year 12 and 13 tutor groups, to enable work to be carried out more efficiently. Communication between all involved is very good.

95. The school's own analysis of sixth-form student views, via a questionnaire, has resulted in clear actions such as the move to appoint a student counsellor and to enhance the general curriculum for Year 13 students. Each Year 13 student signs a contract to state that (s)he will take part in one physical education or community action period each week. This responsive approach by managers is much appreciated by the students. The good sixth-form development plan for the current year focuses on staff and student areas of concern, including tracking progress.
96. Emphasis is placed on attaining high standards in all courses in the sixth form and maximising students' achievements. The outcomes are seen in average standards in the open access sixth form in 2002, representing very good achievement by the students. Monitoring of teaching and learning takes place within departments, but if sixth-form managers are made aware of any issues they also become involved, ensuring that problems are resolved.
97. Overall, considering the money available per pupil, the quality of education provided, the outcomes for the students in terms of their achievements and standards, and the governance, leadership and management of the school, the sixth form provides good value for money and is cost effective.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	5992548
Total expenditure	6032580
Expenditure per pupil	3342

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	290392
Balance carried forward to the next	250351

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION in SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in **English** is **good**

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards in tests and examinations at the ages of fourteen and sixteen are well above average with pupils showing very good writing and speaking and listening skills
- Staff relate well to pupils and expect them to work hard and achieve their potential
- Some pupils underachieve in Years 7 to 9, particularly the higher attaining pupils
- Some good and very good teaching takes place across all years
- Where teaching is less effective, low-level disruption from pupils interrupts the learning of some members of the class.
- Very good accommodation and resources provide a stimulating learning environment

Commentary

98. Results in Year 9 national tests were well above average. English results are generally not as high at the higher levels as in mathematics and science. In GCSE, English language results were well above the national average and English literature results even higher. Value added data highlights English literature as one of the highest attaining subjects in the school.
99. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' reading skills are good, showing understanding of a range of texts and the ability to respond well to the books they study. Higher-attaining pupils in their first few weeks in Year 7 are demonstrating that they can present lively, thoughtful writing. By the end of Year 9, high attaining pupils engage and sustain the reader's interest, sometimes adapting the style effectively. In class, written work is often of a high standard but there is variation in the standard of written work in exercise books. Some pupils' spelling, punctuation, handwriting and presentation are much lower than the expected standard. Speaking and listening skills are well developed; all pupils can talk and listen with confidence in a range of contexts.
100. In Years 10 and 11, many pupils are achieving a good level in reading, and can comment critically, showing awareness of language and themes in the text. When teaching is good and pupils are challenged, they write confidently and coherently. Higher attainers use a range of styles to maintain the reader's interest. Many show a clear grasp of the use of punctuation and paragraphing. Where levels of understanding are challenged and tested

by the teacher, pupils understand key concepts and complex language well. Pupils generally listen well and many can talk purposefully in a range of contexts.

101. In Years 7 to 9, most teachers have good subject knowledge, understand the curriculum well and establish positive relationships with their pupils. Some staff use teaching approaches effectively to meet pupils' learning needs, utilising the approaches recommended in the national strategy. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils' progress was supported when the teacher successfully linked the routine calling of the register to the setting of personal spelling targets. Where the teaching lacked pace, with ragged beginnings and no clear focus at the end, pupils were not reaching their potential, particularly higher-attaining pupils. Marking policy is not consistently applied across the department, and as a result, there is a slow rate of improvement for some, both in the quality of the content and of their writing techniques. In Years 10 and 11, some very interactive teaching results in good learning and achievement. Teachers relate well to the pupils, using praise to encourage learning, demonstrating positive role models and, at times, an infectious passion for the subject. In a lesson focusing on "Of Mice and Men", pupils' individual needs were met well and their thinking skills stimulated to develop understanding of concepts and themes in the novel. When teachers set lower expectations for achievement and behaviour, both in oral and written work, the learning of all pupils was affected.
102. The department has a clear vision for the way forward, focusing on objectives and targets in the context of wider school aims. Individual members of the team are effectively supported. A curriculum review has begun, and schemes of work recently altered to address the underachievement of some pupils in Years 7 to 9. Performance management and the monitoring of teaching has not yet been effective in bringing all staff performance to the high level of the strongest teachers in the team. The very good accommodation, housed in a new building, a range of stimulating resources and attractive displays provide a very effective environment which both pupils and staff appreciate. The department provides a very good range of visits which enrich and support the learning of pupils. Since the last inspection the department has made satisfactory progress, with a broadly similar picture to that seen in 1998.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

103. Pupils' competence in English language and literacy is good throughout Years 7 to 11 and it is promoted well. Literacy skills enable boys and girls to access the curriculum appropriately throughout the school. Some written work reveals inaccuracies in spelling and punctuation, sometimes overlooked in marking. The school perceives English and literacy to be whole-school issues and a senior manager has responsibility for this development. This is good practice. Many departments are positively supporting literacy skills in their subject areas, through the highlighting and use of key words, as in design and technology, science and mathematics and the development of confidence in technical vocabulary, seen in physical education, music and ICT. The development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is supported well in modern languages, where grammatical conventions are recognised, and religious education, where story-writing is enhanced through the use of writing frames. English and literacy across the school are also promoted through some good enrichment activities, such as 'Books over Breakfast' and visiting writers.

Modern foreign languages

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

	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong new teaching team is providing consistently good teaching and promoting good learning
- Pupils have positive attitudes and learn willingly
- Provision for the use of ICT is very good and languages make a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development
- Curriculum planning does not take sufficient account of literacy and numeracy
- There are still issues with the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9

Commentary

104. Results of teachers' assessments of pupils' performance in French or German at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were above the average reported nationally. Results improved further in 2003, with boys performing particularly well. GCSE results in French and German have fluctuated. In 2002, all pupils gained a pass at grades A* to G and the proportion gaining grades A* to C in French was above the national average, but this fell to a much lower proportion in 2003. Higher-grade passes in German were below the national average in 2002, but higher in 2003. Overall, pupils have attained lower standards in languages than in many other subjects.
105. Standards of pupils in the current Year 9 are recovering from the effects of staffing difficulties which inhibited their progress. Standards now are broadly average and improving because teaching is effective across all years. Progress over time has been unsatisfactory but achievement now is sound. High attainers, pupils with special educational needs and others are making good progress. The same picture is apparent in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' best-developed skills are listening and speaking. Although some written work is of a well above average standard showing good and very good achievement for the pupils' abilities, this skill is less well developed overall, as is their ability to read for information and pleasure because of shortfalls in work learnt in earlier years. Pupils in the current Year 11 are achieving satisfactorily, and there is evidence of improvement.
106. Teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons observed. It was good in most. The quality of teaching was reflected in a similarly good quality of learning. The improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection has been significant and the improved consistency reflects the quality of the teaching team. The best features of teaching observed were a lively, challenging approach with plenty of opportunities for pupils to communicate in French and German, good pace in lessons and a variety of activities. Pupils learned effectively through active strategies such as paired work and language games, which enabled them to consolidate their knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English make good progress, helped by teaching which is sensitive to their particular needs. Pupils have positive attitudes to language study and learn willingly. They relate well to each other and to their teachers. Their motivation is improving in response to good teaching. A minority of

younger pupils still show immature behaviour which teachers manage effectively, but sometimes at the expense of time for the majority.

107. The new head of department has a clear vision for a successful department. This is based on the principles of building a collaborative team and a drive for greater consistency in teaching and learning to raise standards. Evidence of the inspection showed that this approach is working. The department has a shared vision, evaluates its work effectively and uses its resources well. This is notably the case in the department's provision for the use of ICT. Language study makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development through its programme of exchanges and visits, its emphasis on cultural knowledge in schemes of work and the culturally-rich displays which enhance both classrooms and public areas in the department. The curriculum is well planned, but takes insufficient account of the subject's role in developing pupils' numeracy skills.
108. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Pupils learn more independently and are better informed of their progress through the National Curriculum. Teaching has improved significantly. This is a department which is improving and has the capacity to sustain its improvement.

MATHEMATICS

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

	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11
Standards	Well above average	Above average
Achievement	Very good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Very good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The proportion of A*-C GCSE passes does not reflect the capabilities of pupils
- Very effective implementation of the national strategy for Years 7 to 9 resulting in well above average standards
- Very good teaching and learning, with thorough lesson planning for pupils in Years 7 to 9
- A confident and enthusiastic team of mathematicians involves pupils in their learning
- Inconsistencies relating to assessment

Commentary

109. In 2002, results of the national tests at the end of Year 9 were better than in English or in science. Girls and boys performed similarly. GCSE results at the end of Year 11 were above average with a high percentage of A* - C grades. However these results were not as good as they should have been in relation to pupils' other subjects, particularly for boys. The GCSE results for 2003 show a drop in the percentage of A* - C grades.
110. Standards in work seen during lessons and in the scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection were consistent with the 2002 results in Year 9 and at GCSE. Most pupils achieved very well in lessons observed in Years 7 to 9 and much better than in Years 10 and 11. During Year 7, high attaining pupils progressed their algebra from collecting like

terms to solving equations. Low attaining pupils in Year 9 achieved very well in using and simplifying fractions. Where achievement was less good it tended to be the result of pupils' inattentiveness or lack of confidence, resulting in behaviour such as off-task chatter. Well-motivated high attaining Year 11 pupils progressed quickly from solving quadratic equations by the usual formula to solution by completing the square. The work generally in Years 10 and 11 is not planned to maximise examination outcomes, for example in coursework, as well as it is for the younger pupils.

111. Planning is thorough and thoughtful, with good matching of work to pupils' prior learning. Some excellent practice was observed in Years 7 to 9. Investigative approaches are used confidently and well. Committed and enthusiastic implementation of the national Key Stage 3 strategy for mathematics has had a beneficial effect which is beginning to extend beyond Year 9. Pupils learn well as a result of the quality of teaching and because of the very good working relationships they have with their teachers. For example, in an excellently taught Year 8 lesson the pupils' enthusiasm and ease in discussion with their teacher facilitated their learning. This led to the point where pupils could confidently describe the n^{th} term in a demanding range of number patterns. Pupils with special needs are given good support. The uses of ICT within mathematics have been carefully mapped and computers are used very effectively. The learning of some pupils is inhibited because they are taught in very large classes, which restricts the personal attention that pupils need in order to attain the highest standards.
112. The department is generally well led and well managed. Many developments have been initiated in a short time although other improvements and policies remain to be made. Vision is good, with a clear focus on achievement. In spite of some staffing problems last year, a strong and confident team of enthusiastic mathematicians has been built and overall standards are improving at GCSE as the focus on high standards in coursework and rigorous assessment bears fruit. Leaders provide good role models able to inspire and motivate. Staff development is encouraged and facilitated. When monitoring teaching in the department, written advice on improvement is not routinely provided although development points are discussed. The recently instituted marking policy is not yet consistently implemented. Targets exist for the attainment of individual pupils, but some pupils are unaware of them and are given insufficient advice on how to achieve them. Resources are good. A very useful mathematics evening is provided at the start of each year to help parents understand setting and the curriculum. A very successful statistics GCSE course has recently been provided, outside of lesson times, for some high attaining pupils.
113. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection. Previous shortcomings in terms of using and applying maths have been rectified, with frequent opportunities for practice and development in this area. Investigative approaches are widely used, although they need to be translated into greater success with GCSE coursework.

Mathematics across the curriculum

114. In subjects including history, science, ICT and geography, pupils were observed making effective use of mathematics to enhance their learning. In a few others, little or no use of mathematics was seen either in lessons or in exercise books. Year 9 pupils were confident in their use of large numbers and correlation in history. In geography, Year 11 pupils were competent in their interpretation of a range of graphs and in their use of proportion. In ICT, pupils in Year 8 analysed databases and successfully produced related graphs, and Year 10 pupils used spreadsheets effectively in constructing a currency converter. Some lower-attaining pupils in Year 9 were hindered in constructing graphs in science because of their poor understanding of graph scales. The mathematics

department has made efforts to promote and support the development of numeracy across the curriculum. Uses of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum have been mapped. Discussions have taken place with staff in other departments to try to ensure standardisation of the mathematical methods used. During mathematics lessons, teachers remind pupils of where they will be applying their knowledge and understanding in their other subjects. These connections are well reinforced in wall displays in classrooms and on the corridor. Overall, mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory.

SCIENCE

Provision in **science** is **good**

	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 - 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment at GCSE was well above average, showing good achievement in Years 10 and 11 in 2002
- In Years 7, 8 and 9, unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour of some pupils in lessons are slowing down the progress made by the whole class, restricting what is achieved
- Some work in younger classes is not sufficiently challenging to meet the needs of the more able
- Teachers' planning is good and they use methods and resources that enable pupils to learn effectively
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and their teachers are good

Commentary

115. In tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002, results were well above the national level, but below those of pupils in similar schools. Average and lower attaining pupils did relatively better than high attainers. The number of pupils obtaining a GCSE grade A* - C is well above the national level. The number of A* - C in science examinations was 67.9 percent compared to the national figure of 50.2 percent. Overall, boys' attainment is above that of girls, whereas nationally girls do better. Girls attain more A* and A grades than boys, reflecting the national picture.
116. The above average standards seen at the end of Year 9 represent satisfactory progress, as the school's data indicate that pupils join the school in Year 7 with above average standards. In an effective Year 9 lesson on metal reactivity with acid, accurate teaching and a lesson structured in three parts allowed pupils to make very good progress and built on their earlier learning. A plenary, in which pupils were both lively and enthusiastic, consolidated their learning of the names of chemical compounds and promoted high achievement. Teaching does not always employ strategies to challenge the more capable pupils, however. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are achieving well and the good progress that they make is due to the positive attitudes of pupils and good teaching. In an inspiring Year 10 lesson on the digestion of starch, excellent teaching and high expectations supported high gains in achievement by all pupils in a low attaining group.

Pupils acquired knowledge at a fast pace and sensitive support was provided to ensure all pupils worked at their capacity.

117. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good overall. In Years 7 and 8 teaching was satisfactory and in Year 9 it was good. Some very good and excellent teaching was seen in Years 10 and 11. Scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that teaching over time has been at least satisfactory overall. In the best lessons seen, the learning was well structured, pupils' interest was maintained through the use of a range of appropriate activities and there was good classroom control. Where there is good class control linked to well-structured learning pupils behave very well and work hard, but this is not always the case and hence the disruption of learning in some lessons, mainly in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils of all abilities work in a safe manner, however, when carrying out practical work. The national strategy approach is being effectively carried out in lessons in Years 7 to 9. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well. Staff are aware of their needs and make effective use of the other adults. Lower-attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 are in smaller classes and do well because teachers provide greater support. Pupils have good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in written work and class discussions.
118. Pupils are aware of their progress from the assessments made in end-of-module tests. Assessment is satisfactory overall but does not indicate to pupils how they could improve. The department's ICT room has recently been refurbished and ICT opportunities have been identified for Years 7, 8 and 9. The curriculum is good and it allows pupils to achieve well. The accommodation for the science department is very good. The department has sufficient resources and support staff who are efficient and well organised. Improvement since the last inspection has been sound with progress made in monitoring and evaluation, with a similar standard attained in Years 9 and 11, and a similar quality of teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in **information and communication technology (ICT)** is **good**

	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 – 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and better quality teaching is effectively raising standards in all years
- The department has new impetus and direction that are driving up standards
- The use of ICT in several subjects is very good and it is facilitating learning and achievement, though in other subjects use is only satisfactory
- The most knowledgeable pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons
- Pupils respond very well in lessons, enjoying learning, developing good independent learning skills
- Resources are of high quality and contribute to the improving standards and achievement

Commentary

119. Pupils did not take external examinations in ICT in 2002. The pupils' 2003 'half GCSE' results suggested that pupils' standards were similar to national expectations, which indicated room for improvement against school standards which were generally above or well above average.
120. Current achievement is improving and is at least good in the areas studied. Pupils work independently at computers from early in Year 7. Many achieve well with good concentration in lessons. At times, however, there are insufficient challenges in lessons to stretch significantly the very able and talented, who have high order ICT knowledge and understanding. Pupils' examination techniques have been known to be weak in the past but changes in procedures have been introduced so pupils can show their skills effectively when being assessed. The courses in Years 10 and 11 contribute well to a range of key skills, knowledge and understanding that are very helpful to pupils in their studies of other subjects. Pupils confidently use a range of computer programmes to solve problems and draft and re-draft presentations. They achieve very well applying work in control technology, spreadsheet design and analysis, desktop publishing and word processing. In other areas - graphics, painting and physical control of external events - standards are acceptable and achievement sound or better.
121. All pupils engage very well in lessons and behaviour is nearly always very good, although attitudes and teaching are better in Years 10 and 11 than in the younger classes. Lessons are well prepared and delivered at a very fast pace that keeps concentration levels high. They are split into motivating sections with clear targets. A good variety of learning styles is used. Learning in many lessons is well balanced between teacher-directed work and individual exploration. Teachers help pupils understand abstract ideas in very practical ways. Good quality teaching is matched with high quality resources for presentations. Teachers and pupils enjoy applying learning to new situations. This quality of teaching is having an impact on pupils' standards and achievement, which are improving rapidly.
122. Teacher assessment has not been rigorous enough in the past, which has led to inaccurate data on pupils' attainment and achievement. New procedures are now in place. These involve setting achievable and challenging targets, which are helping pupils to make progress. The leadership and management of the department are being successful, although it is still early days in the drive for improved standards. The new direction for the department is seen in the good and very good teaching observed. Major changes have been made recently in the curriculum, and this, with the current quality of teaching and other improvements, is resulting in significantly raised standards. Department development planning is good with a clearly stated direction. There have been very good improvements in provision, planning and attainment since the previous inspection and further positive change is in hand.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

123. Pupils throughout the school apply and use computers confidently to support their learning in a good number of areas.
124. Cross-curricular teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate a higher grade than was seen in practice. Pupils reinforce their standards in ICT work, and a few excel, due in part to home use of computers. Very good examples were seen of extended writing in history and English. Some autobiographies are of the highest standard, integrating text, pictures and data in a variety of ways to very good effect. The requirements of the National Curriculum in the use of ICT are fully met, and in some cases exceeded, in geography, design and technology, English, mathematics, history and religious education.

In art and science, although requirements are generally met, there is insufficient depth and breadth of use of ICT in some aspects. In music, not all areas required are fully covered. There are well advanced plans to provide more facilities for humanities subjects, where demand for the use of computers exceeds their supply. Teachers in several subjects use ICT to help present lessons, including the use of interactive white boards and digital projectors, which adds value to teaching and its impact. Teacher demonstrations using these very good facilities are clearer and at a faster pace, and pupils concentrate more to make higher gains in learning. Additional technician support for lessons is already having a positive impact on teaching and learning.

125. The quality of work and pupils' achievements have improved greatly since the previous inspection in almost all areas of the curriculum. The performance and provision in ICT, including technical backup, are very good. Very good investments have been made with more departments and staff making better use of equipment. The challenge for the school concerns finding the funding to respond to the demand for further ICT resources, staffing hardware and software.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in **geography** is **very good**

	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 – 11
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Geography is a popular and very successful subject where pupils achieve very well at GCSE
- Very effective teaching means pupils learn very well and have positive attitudes towards the subject
- Leadership and management are very good, pushing for high standards and maximum achievement
- The curriculum is very good, providing a broad range of opportunities and experiences which interest and motivate the pupils; the use of ICT is particularly effective
- The very good accommodation and range of resources promote effective learning
- Extra-curricular activities provide a very good range of opportunities for pupils to extend their learning
- Some pupils in years 7 to 9 do not always receive guidance on how they can improve their work

Commentary

126. The standards achieved in the 2002 GCSE examinations were very high and represent very good achievement. Results in 2003 were similarly good. GCSE results indicate that

geography is one of the highest achieving subjects in the school at age sixteen, for both boys and girls. Results at the end of Year 9 have been significantly above average.

127. By the end of Year 9 pupils have achieved well, and standards are above average with a number of pupils attaining high standards, building strongly on average standards on entry. Pupils in Year 9 for example, are aware of the factors that influence rainfall and can apply their knowledge of the climate zones of the world. Generally pupils, including those with special educational needs and the higher attainers are achieving well or very well, particularly in Years 10 and 11. In Year 11, an analysis of population graphs showed a very good understanding and accurate use of technical terms. Pupils' explanations were lucid and detailed showing very high standards of literacy.
128. Teachers make very good use of questioning to extend pupils' thinking, for example when asking pupils to compare the population graphs of India and the United Kingdom in order to reach some conclusions. Open questions resulted in extended discussion and very effective learning. By the end of the lesson, the pupils had a good understanding of the different population characteristics and were able to see some of the implications for economic planning. Teachers structure and plan their lessons well and, in Years 10 and 11, the activities are particularly well matched to the prior knowledge of the pupils. In one or two lessons in Years 7 to 9, activities were not always sufficiently challenging for the highest attaining pupils and were too difficult for pupils with special educational needs. In such circumstances a few pupils' behaviour became rather lively, although this was always well managed. Generally, expectations of teachers are very high, pupils enjoy the subject and are highly motivated, wanting to achieve the highest standards.
129. The leadership and management of the subject are very good, providing clear vision and opportunities for all members of the team to contribute to the development of the subject. All aspects of the department's work are carefully monitored. Assessment is generally regular and informative for the pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, and helps to raise standards. In Years 7 to 9, there are some instances when pupils do not have sufficient information about their work to know how to improve. The curriculum is very good, providing a broad range of activities including field work, discussion and enquiry activities, and extra-curricular activities such as a visit to Kenya. The range of ICT provision is excellent and makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning.
130. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Pupils' standards, teaching, leadership and management have all improved.

History

Provision in **history** is **good**

	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 – 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in 2002 were well above national averages and boys achieved particularly well
- Teaching and learning are good overall and most effective in Years 10 and 11
- Leadership is inspirational and promotes enthusiasm for the subject
- Extra-curricular activities give pupils good opportunities for enhanced learning
- Pupils in mixed ability classes are not always challenged according to their individual needs and some higher-attaining pupils are not stretched sufficiently
- There are inconsistencies in marking practices; pupils receive too little guidance on how they can improve their work

Commentary

131. The results at GCSE in 2002, were well above national average and at a similarly high level to those attained at the time of the last inspection. Although girls did better than boys in 2002, boys did better in history than in several other subjects. Results in 2003 were a little lower. The results vary with the ability profile of the option intake and represent good achievement.
132. By the end of Year 9 most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a good knowledge and understanding of topics they have studied and are developing enquiry and debating skills. In the current Year 11, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of twentieth century European history and skills in evidence evaluation are now well developed by all but the lowest attainers, who have difficulty with the higher order skill of analysis. Higher-attaining pupils can make justified conclusions and supported judgements, as was seen in samples of written analysis of the usefulness of cartoons as historical evidence. Writing skills are generally good.
133. The quality of teaching showed a number of very good features and few areas for improvement. Teachers have good specialist knowledge and use it to very good effect, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Confident lesson management and very good relationships promote a positive interest in pupils and a purposeful learning environment. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and are structured to ensure a starter activity and a plenary that reinforces learning. Skilful questioning involves pupils in their own learning and teachers encourage their contributions, as was seen in a Year 11 lesson on Tsarist Russia. In some lessons in Years 7 to 9, pupils in mixed ability classes are not always challenged according to their individual needs and some higher-attaining pupils are not stretched sufficiently.
134. Leadership is very effective indeed and provides a good role model for the hardworking and experienced staff and for pupils who take up the history GCSE option in large numbers. History trips enhance pupils' learning, for example a Year 7 trip to two castles on the same day effectively illustrated how castles developed. There is a shared commitment to raise standards and regular departmental meetings where the history team work together on the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum. However, monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous and there are inconsistencies in marking practices within the department. Progress since the last very positive inspection report has been good, with many strengths maintained.

Religious education

Provision in **religious education** is **satisfactory**

	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 - 11
Standards	Average	Below average
		GCSE above average

Achievement	Good	Unsatisfactory
		GCSE good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good
Leadership	Very good	
Management	Good	
Progress since the last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results improved greatly in 2003
- Teaching is very good and pupils learn very well in lessons
- The quality of leadership and management is resulting in good improvements
- The lack of core curriculum time in Years 10 and 11 leads to unsatisfactory achievement in the Locally Agreed Syllabus
- A minority of pupils have negative attitudes to the subject
- The good and broad range of resources, visits and visitors enhance the curriculum effectively

Commentary

135. GCSE A*-C results in 2003 were much better than those of 2002, which were below average. Attainment in examination work is now much higher.
136. Standards in the GCSE courses are above average and pupils are making good progress, achieving well. In the core curriculum, standards are in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 9. Standards in the core by the end of Year 11 are below average. Pupils arrive in Year 7 with very different levels of understanding and are below average, overall. Pupils' achievement in Years 7 to 9 overall is good. Very good teaching enhances learning and helps pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve well. In some classes achievement is lower, where significant staff absences in the last year have resulted in disruption to pupils' learning. Pupils who have experienced this show little interest in the lessons and overtly do not like the subject. Achievement in core religious education in Years 10 and 11 is good in individual lessons, but unsatisfactory overall because there is not enough time to develop required knowledge and understanding. A small number of pupils with special educational needs miss lessons in religious education for other teaching. While this helps meet pupils' needs they miss out on basic learning and are at a disadvantage when they rejoin classes.
137. During the inspection teaching ranged widely, from satisfactory to excellent. In the very good and excellent lessons, teachers inspire and engage pupils with interesting activities, such as sharing a bar of chocolate leading to a discussion on craving and happiness, prior to a lesson on Buddhism in Year 9. An interesting variety of resources is used to stimulate learning, and opportunities for independent work are built into lessons. Occasionally, chances were not taken for pupils to discuss their views to try to engage pupils who were disenchanted as a result of previous experiences in the subject. Some marking of pupils' work is not rigorous enough. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are very good and used effectively to help pupils learn.
138. There is a clear sense of purpose and focus on improvement. This is backed up by very good curriculum knowledge which leads to innovation and improvement. The department evaluates its performance carefully and plans for improvements, monitoring teaching and learning through sampling books and homework. The curriculum is enhanced by a stimulating range of visits and visitors. Innovations such as 'The Learning Zone' enable

pupils to research their work independently using ICT. The development of the examination courses has raised the profile of the department and interest in the subject. With only one specialist teacher in the department, however, reliance on that individual is very great. Since the previous inspection good improvements have been made, overall. Examination courses have been successfully introduced and a broader range of resources now supports the curriculum well. Although the time allocated in Years 9 and 10 has improved, more is needed to enable pupils to cover the full curriculum in the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

TECHNOLOGY

Provision in **technology areas** is **good**

	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving in GCSE examinations and pupils with special educational needs achieve well
- Ineffective pupil management in Years 7 to 9 restricts some pupils' achievements, particularly boys, who do less well than girls
- Accommodation, resources and curriculum opportunities are very good and have a good effect on learning
- The monitoring and assessment systems are very good, but not all parents' reports state an attainment level

Commentary

139. Year 9 teachers' assessments indicate a steadily improving trend in standards. The girls are doing better than the boys; this is typical of the national pattern but the gap between the girls' results and the boys' is wider than usual. At GCSE, the overall trend is of rising standards. In 2002, results in technology overall were not as high as in other subjects in the school, with fewer of the highest grades. The gap between the results of girls and boys is significant, compared to the national results. Over the last three years, the GCSE results have improved in resistant materials, technology and food technology. The slight drop in the results of electronic products and graphics products has been due to some problems with staffing.
140. In Years 7 to 9, the standards currently attained by pupils are slightly above average overall and, considering their knowledge and understanding on entry to the school, achievement is satisfactory. Variation in achievement resulted from less effective teaching. Girls' drawing and product analysis skills are better developed than those of boys in Year 9. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress due to the supportive work of teachers who have a clear idea of their needs. Pupils' good achievement in Years 10 and 11 is due to the structured learning materials available for

each subject area, effective teaching, and the regular review of progress. Some areas of the subject however, miss the opportunities to work in a commercial context.

141. Teaching strengths include good relationships with the pupils, good subject knowledge and very good planning. Lively presentations interested pupils in a number of lessons. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils combined and made their own quality food products and appreciated how to test them. Teachers make effective use of the good resources available and questioning techniques are used effectively to reinforce English language and literacy in lessons. The most significant weakness was in the management of a small number of boys' behaviour, mainly in Years 7 to 9. The pace in some lessons was not always sufficiently high but, even where teaching was good, the attitudes of the pupils sometimes reduced their achievements. The department is aware of the underperformance of boys and is working to improve teaching so as to improve boys' achievements.
142. Effective teamwork has contributed to the very good use of the high quality resources, which is raising standards. The department is organised effectively and the curriculum well planned. Pupil assessment and monitoring systems are very useful and work well. Some reports to parents do not contain pupils' current levels of attainment or targets linked to the National Curriculum. Additional funding for this area, resulting from the school's Beacon status has been used very well and pupils are benefiting. Since the last report. the department has made good improvement, particularly in improving standards and the quality of available resources.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High standards of achievement were seen in textiles
- Year 10 and 11 sketchbooks show the development of good independent thinking with a high quality of presentation
- Boys' achievement is lower than that of girls
- Teachers have good subject knowledge
- The learning objectives in schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 do not provide sufficient challenge
- Leadership is good with a commitment to improvement
- Accommodation and resources are very good

Commentary

143. Overall in Year 9, teacher assessed standards were average. GCSE examination results in 2002 were in line with national expectations. Results in 2003 were similar. As in previous years, however, there was considerable variation between different option groups. Pupils taking the painting and textiles options achieved above, and well above, national expectations, respectively. There was very low attainment in three-dimensional studies. Girls did significantly better than boys in all areas.
144. By the end of Year 9 the standard of pupils' work, as observed, is in line with national expectations and girls do better than boys. Throughout all years, pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils. There are some good examples of drawing and colour work in Year 7 sketchbooks but standards do not improve enough over time. Pupils make better progress in Year 9 when they have more opportunity to make personal choices in their work. They make good progress in the upper school when teaching methods are more imaginative and projects more challenging, particularly in textiles. Sketchbooks in all Year 10 and 11 groups show a more independent approach to work and a high quality of presentation, indicating that the pupils are in line to attain above average standards in their GCSE examinations.
145. Teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 but improves in Years 10 and 11 where it is good. In the lower school, mainly, there are some instances of disruptive behaviour by a minority of boys, which affects the learning of others and is a cause of boys' underachievement. Projects in Years 7 and 8 do not always set challenging enough learning objectives and teachers do not make enough use of assessment criteria to inform progress. In Years 10 and 11, assessment is used more effectively and students are clear about what they have to do to improve. Classroom organisation and management is good and teachers have good subject knowledge. A particular strength is the ability to provide contextual information when looking at artists' work. A Year 9 group learned how the development of photography had a profound influence on the cubists. However, opportunities for pupils to explore broader personal and social issues, when learning about the work of different ethnic groups and cultures, need developing.
146. There is a new, strong sense of direction in the department, committed to improving standards of achievement. Relationships between staff are good and there is a supportive and professional atmosphere. The department reviews its performance at regular meetings and responsibilities are delegated effectively. Between them the staff have a good range of experience which they share, but they have insufficient opportunities to benefit from other forms of externally provided continuing professional development.
147. Accommodation has been improved greatly over the past year and the art department is now located in a very good suite of rooms. An imaginative range of first- and second-hand resources is on display, which are used as stimulus materials. The department has a broad range of specialist art books and pupils benefit greatly from being able to use the school learning resource centre. Resources are very good but pupils do not have enough opportunity to use ICT equipment as a creative medium in their lessons. There has been good improvement since the last inspection with better management and much better accommodation. The recent appointment of additional specialist staff has addressed a shortfall in one area and the appointment of a co-ordinator for Years 7 to 9 is beginning to have an impact on pupils' achievements.

Music

Provision in **music** is **satisfactory**

	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good

Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since the last inspection	Good	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 10 and 11
- A minority of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 9 restricts pupils' achievement
- Challenging behaviour from a few pupils affects the learning of others in Years 7 to 9
- The monitoring of teaching is not rigorous enough
- Many opportunities are given for the students to develop their practical music-making skills and pupils enjoy a good range of extra-curricular activities

Commentary

148. Pupils enter Year 7 with an attainment level which is in line with national averages in music. Results of teacher assessments indicate that levels have been above average by the end of Year 9. GCSE results in music in 2002 were above the national average, with similar results in 2003, and this represents good achievement.
149. An average standard of work was seen in Years 7 to 9, indicating satisfactory achievement, with girls achieving better than boys. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress with good guidance from teachers and learning support staff. In GCSE classes, standards were above average, with pupils able to read music and achieve good standards in music-making using a range of instruments. Their theoretical knowledge is good, appreciating the periods of history with good recall of composers.
150. In lessons observed, the standard of teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. In every lesson, pupils had the opportunity to develop their understanding and skills in listening, appraising, performing and composing, and there is an expectation that they will collaborate sensibly. Learning took place because teachers had good subject knowledge, planned the structure of lessons well, enjoyed good relationships with pupils, made good use of questioning, and completed every lesson with a self-evaluation exercise where pupils were able to display what they had learned and achieved. Teachers gave support to every pupil. However, there were instances when lack of pace allowed challenging behaviour from a small group of pupils to affect the learning process and achievement became unsatisfactory. Teaching in these circumstances was unsatisfactory. When pupils were challenged by demanding and interesting work, behaviour was satisfactory or better.
151. The vision for good academic standards and a very successful department is clear. Teachers' curriculum knowledge is good, and helpful innovations have been made, for example a liaison with local primary schools, including a recent and very successful 'play day' for Year 6 pupils. A forthcoming visit to the South Bank for a Gamelan workshop is planned for another group of Year 6 pupils from primary schools and some Year 7 pupils from St. Ivo. There is an inclusive view of music, giving all pupils the chance to participate and succeed. Monitoring of staff is not rigorous enough to ensure consistent delivery of the curriculum. Staff development does not receive a high priority in the department's development plan. The school team is joined by seven peripatetic staff who successfully teach a range of instruments – this is well managed. The extra-curricular activities provided are a strong feature of the department, appreciated by the pupils involved. Progress has been good since the last inspection. Accommodation and resources have

both improved and the department has a higher profile within the school and community, with more students taking up the subject for GCSE and A level.

Drama

152. A sample of three drama lessons was observed. Standards are well above average by the end of Year 11, building very successfully on average standards on entry into Year 7. The quality of teaching seen was very good, particularly for GCSE. Teacher knowledge was very good which inspired pupils to achieve the highest standards. Very effective use was made of technical terms and behaviour management was very good. The pace of work and expectations for the younger pupils were not as good as in the GCSE classes, although in all lessons all pupils were involved in what was taking place. Drama is not a separate subject in all years and this results in a lack of continuity. The very good teaching, however, more than compensates for this in Years 10 and 11. The close working relationship between English and drama departments is very helpful in achieving curriculum continuity in drama. Leadership and management of the department are very effective.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision in **physical education** is **very good**

	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 - 11
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching overall and especially in Years 7 to 9, results in generally good achievement for all and very good progress for some pupils
- Standards in the core course are likely to be above average by the end of Year 11
- Very good leadership and management are developing a strong ethos and providing a very good range of extra-curricular sport
- Pupils performed less well in their physical education and dance GCSE examinations in 2002 than in their other subjects
- Relationships are very good with pupils and between teachers, who are very good role models
- Pupils have very good attitudes to physical education, responding to high expectations

Commentary

153. Results in the GCSE examinations in 2002 in physical education were below the national average and in dance were average. Pupils performed significantly less well in these examinations than in their other subjects. Results in 2003 were an improvement, with pupils doing better than in some of their other subjects.

154. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations. In gymnastics, pupils understand the meaning of body tension and are able to repeat planned sequences, as well as comment on ways to improve their work. Some pupils, for example in netball and in rugby, perform at above average levels. A smaller proportion of pupils, however, have poor co-ordination in basic actions such as hop and skip and their spatial awareness is low. In Year 11, standards seen during the inspection were at least average and by the end of the year are likely to be above in the core programme. Pupils in the GCSE examination groups showed good examples of independent research into theoretical aspects of the course, as well as above average performances in football. Their achievements are satisfactory. Staff are aware of the relative underachievement in GCSE physical education in recent years and a much greater focus is now being applied to examination requirements. As most pupils are very well motivated in core physical education lessons, they are well taught and have access to very good facilities, achievements are good overall.
155. Lessons are very well planned and move at a brisk pace. Pupil behaviour management is very good. Teachers' high expectations, very good knowledge and use of progressive practices, enable pupils to learn and consolidate skills systematically. Technical language is used very effectively, for example naming muscles in Year 8 during a very effective warm up session. Literacy standards are enhanced in lessons because of the very helpful question and answer sessions where pupils have to explain reasons for their judgements and argue their case. Although teaching and learning are very good overall, expectations and demand were a little higher in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' attitudes to physical education are very good because teacher-pupil relationships are so secure and effective. This is a key factor in their learning and achievement. Teachers are very aware of pupils with special needs and ensure that all have opportunities to achieve success. Teachers make very good use of the excellent facilities for physical education.
156. The strength, organisation and structure of the department are significant factors in establishing the very good ethos that facilitates the pupils' learning. There is a clear vision of planned developments and this is very well articulated in the development plan. Monitoring of the work of the department is rigorous which leads to very helpful staff development. Good evidence was seen during the inspection of the literacy policy working effectively in practice. It was also clear from discussions that video recordings of pupils' work were being used well to assist both pupils and teachers in assessing and improving the work. A very good range of sporting activities is provided outside lessons, with a good fixture list for school teams. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, in particular in monitoring the work of the department and in the use and effectiveness of independent research techniques for examination pupils.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

BUSINESS STUDIES

157. Standards in GCSE in 2002 were well above average. Pupils were more successful and achieved higher grades in business studies than in their other subjects at GCSE. Boys were more successful than girls. Two lessons of business studies were sampled in Years 10 and 11. Teachers know their subject well and motivate pupils through challenging questions. Lessons are very well planned with good introductions, revising previous work, and finishing sessions where their knowledge was assessed. A small group of boys were silly in both lessons and achieved less than they could have done, and tended to interrupt the work of the girls. Pupils opt for the subject in Years 10 and 11 with little knowledge of the course because there is no introductory work in Years 7 to 9.

The subject is popular and successful with a number of pupils going onto sixth-form courses in business studies. The lack of a permanent base restricts the impact of the subject, for example through display. Schemes of work are shared as is best practice in teaching and learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in **personal, social and health education** is **satisfactory**

	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 - 11
Standards	n/a	n/a
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of visiting speakers and specialist staff, especially in Year 7, results in good learning
- A wide variation in the quality of teaching, from good to unsatisfactory, affects pupils' learning
- Students perceive the subject as insignificant and 'boring', with the result that some are inattentive and silly in lessons
- A well-structured course of work covering all expected areas and many very good learning resources are in place

Commentary

158. Pupils' achievement is largely in the area of personal development, which is good overall as a result of lessons in a range of subjects as well as PSHE lessons. Achievement is best in Year 7. Overall, pupils mature with a sense of self-worth and community awareness. PSHE contributes to this and prepares pupils for their career choices. In the time available, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, but good where tutors are particularly helpful.
159. Where teachers are well prepared and confident, and use the high quality resources to good effect, good learning takes place. Most teachers relate well to the pupils and try to communicate effectively across the range of sensitive and less contentious areas, although in Years 10 and 11 pupils are much less receptive to the topics taught than the younger pupils. The Year 7 programme helps pupils settle well into St Ivo and understand the ethos of the school. It is much appreciated by the pupils. Where teachers are not as well prepared or knowledgeable about the topics taught (as they would be in their specialist subjects) they are not confident in managing class discussions. Some pupils then take advantage of the situation, opting out of involvement, talking amongst themselves. In Year 11, learning about the pathways for education and training post-16 became difficult to follow where teachers were unable to gain the attention of the whole group.
160. The leadership and management of the course are clear and appropriate. The course is centrally managed, working through the heads of year and class tutors, the class tutors teaching most of the course in specific lessons. The teams of tutors usually remain

together over all five years in the main school, helping to improve continuity and understanding. Not all staff enjoy teaching the course, believing that they lack the knowledge and, in some cases, interest in it. This results in some ineffective lessons and learning. What is provided in Years 7 to 9 is better managed than for the older pupils. Curriculum planning documents are very detailed and helpful; some are excellent. The school provides relevant information on health education for pupils in Years 7 to 9, reviewing relationships and drugs education again in Years 10 and 11. Extra lessons within mainstream subjects contribute to the skills and knowledge pupils need. For example in English, pupils learn about the influence of the media on public opinion. Last summer, a day off normal timetable allowed the Year 9 cohort to benefit from advice on 'Healthy Lifestyles' which was very well received. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Insufficient monitoring of what is taking place results in the current inconsistencies.

Citizenship

The provision in **citizenship** is **satisfactory**

	Years 7 - 9	Years 10 – 11
Standards	n/a	n/a
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Insufficient evidence to judge	Insufficient evidence to judge

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	n/a

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been wide consultation to produce a citizenship programme and the curriculum is based on a clear, comprehensive scheme of work
- Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress against learning objectives for citizenship are not in place
- Not all contributing subjects have clear objectives for citizenship
- The system of year councils provides excellent decision-making opportunities for pupils

Commentary

161. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in the expected areas in this emerging subject. They are gaining a sound understanding of issues concerning law, democracy, human rights and what it means to be a citizen in British society today. Very little written work was in evidence, although in discussion pupils did show satisfactory recall of all the main elements. Pupils from Year 10 were able to recall, in a lively manner, a range of experiences related to citizenship such as videos of crime and its consequences, giving presentations in support of charities, and taking part in hustings. They are aware of citizenship topics in other subject areas, such as human rights when considering slavery in history and global issues when researching fair trade in geography. The well-established year council system helps all pupils explore representation, elections, debating issues and communicating ideas effectively. Assignments seen in geography show a very good level of interest and personal engagement by the pupils.
162. In the few lessons seen, teaching was accurate and activities varied and interesting. For example, in a Year 8 English lesson, pupils enacted a scene of suspects being

questioned by the police and made good progress in understanding the legal system. They understood the process and reflected upon the rights and wrongs of characters' responses. An assembly seen challenged the pupils to play an active part in their community and offered a number of simple ways to "make a difference." The presenter's personal anecdotes brought the topic to life and resulted in very good learning.

163. Citizenship is taught within the PSHE programme as specific units and within subject areas. All subject departments have been involved in preparing the scheme of work and have carried out checks of where and how citizenship is taught. A broad programme of assemblies, events and citizenship lessons has been developed providing a suitable curriculum. A large team of tutors and subject teachers contribute to the teaching of citizenship, which results in a number of inconsistencies at this stage in the course development. To date the course has not been audited in practice and procedures for monitoring the teaching and pupils' work are only just being developed. Assessment is at a rudimentary and unsatisfactory level. Contributing subjects have not identified citizenship learning objectives and so do not assess pupils' progress.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, thirteen 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, the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

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	5	60	90	40	43	30	39
Business Studies	9	89	89	11	32	29	35
English literature	17	100	94	6	38	35	39
Design and Technology	7	86	89	0	32	29	36
Geography	12	100	88	0	36	30	36
History	9	100	92	0	37	32	38
Mathematics	12	92	74	17	34	35	31
Other Social Studies	7	100	83	0	33	34	34
Religious Studies	16	100	91	31	39	40	38

Level 3 GCE A level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	21	95	96	38	49	77	85
Biology	20	90	92	35	36	73	74
Business Studies	22	100	94	27	33	80	77
Chemistry	8	100	94	0	46	73	81
Dance	8	100	95	63	50	98	86
Drama	19	100	98	47	42	84	83
Economics	7	100	96	29	46	71	83
English Literature	60	100	99	18	44	76	84
French	8	100	96	13	46	73	83
Design and Technology	14	100	95	36	36	83	77
Geography	26	100	97	23	41	78	81
History	36	100	97	36	41	82	81
Mathematics	23	100	93	83	52	106	85

Other Social Studies	29	100	97	59	39	97	78
Physics	7	100	93	29	43	71	79
Sports studies	10	80	95	20	30	60	73
Business VCE	16	88	87	13	17	56	60
Health and Social Care VCE	19	100	90	47	16	82	63
Art and Design VCE	16	100	89	63	27	96	69
Travel and Tourism VCE	13	100	88	8	16	74	61

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

In addition to the focus on English and French, one lesson of German was observed. Students were very attentive and the lesson was well structured. A good tutorial approach was used but the pace of work was a little slow at times. An appropriate balance of skills was achieved and grammar was reinforced well. The students were rather quiet but made satisfactory gains in knowledge, making satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching and learning was sound. Few pupils have taken A-level German in recent years.

English

Provision in **English** is **good**

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and very good teaching results in effective learning
 - Teachers have expert subject knowledge
 - Some students' coursework demonstrates a very good level of achievement
 - Oral responses in lessons demonstrate an increasing level of student confidence and achievement
 - Occasionally the pace of lessons was not maintained for the whole time
164. The open access policy for English is a strength, setting challenges for the department to meet the demands of students of wide-ranging abilities. All students reached grades A to E in the 2002 A-level literature exam, demonstrating good achievement for many of these students. Results overall were below average and have been in recent years. In 2003, nearly all of the very large group achieved grades in the range A to E.
165. In lessons and coursework, students attain a level in line with expectations for students at this stage of the course. Discussions, for example of Chaucerian language, showed how detailed and accurate many of the students' knowledge was. All aspects of the syllabus are very effectively covered and students are achieving well considering the great range of their prior learning and capabilities.
166. The department provides good and very good teaching for students. Teachers develop very good relationships with students and value everyone's contribution. Lessons are well planned and are delivered at a good pace, often using a range of teaching approaches and resources to stimulate good learning about complex texts. Students are questioned rigorously and given opportunities to develop in-depth answers. The pace and expectations in middle sessions of lessons sometimes flagged a little when a change in activity could have been helpful. At these times insufficient checks on progress in learning were made. Ends of lessons were very effective with good reviews of what had been learnt and challenges identified for future sessions.
167. Students appreciate teachers' very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm. This stimulates and broadens their study. In lessons, students demonstrated the breadth of their independent study of mediaeval art and language, beyond the English lesson.

Students knew how well they were achieving and the standards they had attained. Their literary interests had been demonstrated and identified in a self-review module at the beginning of the sixth-form course. This helps the students to set appropriate targets for improvement. Detailed marking, and helpful feedback in written and oral work contribute to pupils' self-evaluation, confidence and improved performance.

168. The curriculum is well developed to meet the needs of students. Enrichment activities such as clubs, a residential experience and theatre trips all contribute to good learning for all students. Resources and accommodation are very good, providing a very good environment for teaching and learning. Provision is well managed in the sixth form and the pleasant and purposeful learning environment creates a context for good learning. The subject is well led and very popular with students.

French

The provision in **French** is **good**

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

Leadership	Good
management	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are achieving above average standards
 - Teaching is consistently good
 - Students and teachers work collaboratively with very good relationships
 - Students have positive attitudes and enjoy the course
 - Insufficient use is made of satellite broadcasts in teaching and learning French
169. Although all students achieved a pass grade in the A-level examination in 2002, the overall results were below the national average and lower than those in previous years. Results improved in 2003. Students generally did as well as their GCSE results would suggest. Although boys are under-represented on courses, consistent with the national picture, the small number achieve well. There is a good completion rate on the course with a high proportion of students progressing from AS to A2 level.
170. Students in Year 12 have made the transition from GCSE to AS level very effectively. In the lessons observed, they made good responses on the topics of the media and friendship. Their listening and reading skills developed well as they tackled challenging material, moving from gist understanding to deeper analysis. Year 13 students used their language skills effectively in combination to develop their knowledge and understanding of the issues surrounding nuclear power. In addition to the sophisticated language of texts studied, students looked at the moral and social issues involved. There was good analysis and articulate discussion. The AS results of the Year 13 group show potential for good outcomes.
171. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Lessons are well planned and teachers' expertise and enthusiasm for the subject are key factors in promoting good learning and achievement. In a Year 12 listening task, for example, students were given clear strategies for developing their advanced listening skills, while in a similar activity in Year 13, the teacher drew students' understanding out through good questioning, enabling

them to both consolidate and deepen their knowledge. Students' work is marked in considerable detail, with supportive comment and very good guidance as to how to improve. Students rate the quality of assessment of their work very highly.

172. Students are diligent, well motivated and learn well. Their relationships with both their teachers and each other are excellent and there is a learning culture based on communication, collaboration and mutual support. Their work files are well organised and reflect a good balance of language development and topic material. In discussion, they showed enthusiasm for the course and appreciated its value as part of the academic portfolio of today's young Europeans.
173. The subject is well led and managed. A team of teachers, working as a close-knit unit, is committed to improving standards and maintaining the generally buoyant level of recruitment for the subject. The curriculum is well planned, though new technologies such as satellite TV could be more routinely exploited and students should be encouraged to use the Internet more creatively to access, for example, the contemporary French press.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in **mathematics** is **very good**

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Well Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in A-level examinations are well above average and achievement is very good considering the pupils' capabilities
- Careful planning and very good working relationships between teachers and pupils contribute to the standards achieved
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge
- No opportunity is offered for a GCSE resit

Commentary

174. The inspection covered the two A-level courses offered by the school – mathematics and further mathematics.
175. All students obtained grade C or better in A-level mathematics, with almost half obtaining A grades in the 2002 examinations. Results were better in mathematics than in students' other subjects, with similar standards for male and female students. A-level results have been well above average for several years. At AS level, the grades obtained were lower than at A level, but again they were better overall than in students' other subjects. In 2003, results were similarly high.
176. Standards seen in lessons were well above average and in some cases very high. Students' achievements were in some cases excellent. For example, following carefully guided discovery, Year 13 mathematics students reached a very high standard of facility with differentiation and integration of functions involving sines and cosines. The work in

exercise books reflected the standards seen in lessons. Achievements are as good as they are as a result of the quality of teaching, combined with the pupils' very good attitudes to their studies. For example, in a Year 12 further mathematics lesson, productive dialogues resulted in very good achievements in conversions between different vector notations. The progress of all students observed was good or better, both in lessons and in the work seen in their books.

177. The very successful teaching is based upon excellent subject and syllabus knowledge, and awareness of students' misconceptions. Lessons are thoroughly and thoughtfully planned, and lead to very good learning. For example in a carefully structured lesson on completing the square, Year 12 students made very good learning gains as a result of very clear teaching. A high proportion of the students were able to tackle more difficult examples successfully by the end of the lesson because they had a very good understanding of the principles. Working relationships between teachers and students were observed to be very good in all cases. Very good learning support is provided in the form of lunchtime surgeries.
178. Sixth-form mathematics is very well led and managed. Co-ordination is very effective and enthusiastic. There is a clear focus on reaching and maintaining very high standards. The numbers of students examined in mathematics each year is small for a school of this size.
179. Students speak confidently about their mathematics and the quality of the teaching that they receive. They enjoy their studies very much. They are excellent ambassadors for the department – mature, positive, cooperative and reflective. The flourishing, demanding further mathematics course is testament to the success of the department in gaining students' interest in mathematics. The lack of provision of a GCSE resit may affect students who need a grade C for their future studies. At the time of the last inspection, provision was very good as it is today. Maintaining this very good position represents good progress since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

In addition to the focus on biology, one lesson of chemistry was observed. The teaching and learning were very good and students' achievements also very good. Explanations of how to calculate equilibrium constants were very clear and well expressed. Once students had been given appropriate guidance, they worked independently, reinforcing and testing their knowledge. This was very effective practice. Relationships were very good indeed and useful help was provided in how to maximise examination marks. Standards at A level have fluctuated from year to year, from above to below average, as the capabilities of the students have varied. In 2002 results were below average and in 2003 the small number taking A-level attained similar results to those of 2002.

Biology

Provision in **biology** is **good**

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results showed a marked improvement in 2003, compared with 2002
- Teaching results in effective learning and good achievement
- Sustaining the pace of lessons and clearly stating lesson objectives and targets would further improve learning
- Subject management contributes to the progress students make

Commentary

180. The A-level examination results in 2002 were average but have shown a marked improvement in 2003. Female students attain higher grades than male students overall.
181. In Year 13, students are doing well as a result of effective teaching which demands much of them. The lesson structure and activities clearly focused their learning and gave students the opportunity to discuss in pairs the key steps in a highly complex reaction of photosynthesis, following on their textbook-based research. They supported one another and discussed the process seriously. A 'buddy' scheme is used to allow them to rehearse and consolidate their learning by explaining things to each other. The notes they make show a good record of the work they have done, involving planning, data gathering and statistical analysis.
182. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course but are achieving at least as well as expected. In one lesson seen, the objectives were clear and students prepared microscope slides and made drawings at different magnifications. Pace slowed towards the end of the lesson and students were not quite certain of their learning targets. In another lesson, the teacher made very good use of a lottery to select students randomly to draw the shape of various biological molecules on the board, consolidating their prior learning. Students support each other and the atmosphere created feels as if they are willing each other to succeed in the task. Spontaneous applause and teacher encouragement make learning an enjoyable experience and it proceeds at a good pace. Students also collaborate effectively when carrying out their practical work. They are successfully building on their GCSE knowledge in order to move into new areas. Independent learning would be more effectively supported if teachers always shared the learning objectives with students.
183. The principal features of the teaching are detailing the knowledge, understanding and skills students should acquire, effective planning and a range of methods and approaches to bring about learning. Teachers show good subject knowledge in their questioning and explanations and in the tasks they set. They take care to ensure that students use nomenclature correctly and create a good learning environment where students are secure and confident to contribute and ask for help. Students support each other by learning from each other's mistakes and by making valid points, both of which contribute to the learning of the whole group. Some are not always confident in offering ideas but the teachers encourage them to be so. Students are very attentive and work productively.
184. Much of the written work demanded of the students takes the form of notes, often with guidance from the teacher, details of practical work, revision and research, which follow up lessons. Work is regularly submitted for marking and students know how well they are doing as they are given regular opportunities to check their learning in lessons. Independent learning is supported by a good reference library located in the resource centre. To help students to work at home, they are provided with the examination specification and encouraged to use it to guide their learning.
185. The good teaching and learning result from work in the subject being well led and managed. There is a commitment to building on what has already been achieved and to improving standards, and teachers work collaboratively to this end. This is particularly important as the syllabus is divided and students are taught by two teachers, which the

school sees as a strength. Insufficient evidence is available to make a judgement about improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for **ICT** is **good**

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and leading to improved standards
- Students are well motivated
- Students with high attainment in ICT are not always challenged sufficiently

Commentary

186. The results in 2002 in the advanced vocational (AVCE) and GNVQ courses were broadly average and just below those expected for the school. In the 2003 AVCE course, results were lower than in 2002. Most of the large number taking the subject passed, some with top grades.
187. Current standards are average, and rising. Analysis of marks indicates that pupils have been less successful in their externally assessed tasks compared with examination results. Coursework issues are being reviewed to ensure that remedial action is taken this year. Students' achievements are good overall and better in the GNVQ course than in AVCE. Students enjoy applying their skills to real contexts. They are very confident in selecting and using complex computer software to advantage for applications in the real world. Lower-attaining students are learning a broad range of key skills including study skills. The highest attainers are not always achieving as well as they might and plans are in hand to provide more challenging tasks through an after-school club.
188. The quality of teaching in both courses is good, and is resulting in improving standards and well-motivated students. Particular strengths in the quality of teaching and learning are the good questioning of students and the pace of work, which help to develop concentration and application. Teachers have good knowledge of their subject which gives students confidence in their learning. Examination criteria are highlighted and discussed, helping students to maximise their marks. Work is reinforced and consolidated very effectively. Teachers are aware of students' learning styles and adapt their techniques accordingly. The good quality teaching supports the few students with special educational needs. At times, students are not fully on task and more could be expected of them, particularly during the mid-sections of lessons. The modern equipment available for teaching, such as digital projectors and interactive whiteboards, aids learning because they provide more efficient and effective ways of presenting information.
189. In the past year, staffing problems have affected students' achievements, but these have now been resolved and significant improvements are taking place. The curriculum is well planned and resources are very good. Records of assessments are good and provide a clear indication of what students' standards are. The students have positive views about

the course, the quality of teaching and their likely outcomes. The courses and resources are very effectively managed and all aspects are improving.

HUMANITIES

In addition to the focus on geography, history, law and politics, one lesson of AS religious studies was observed. This was effectively taught, resulting in good learning and achievement. The large group appreciated how the course examinations were very different from their GCSE experiences – students had to develop the skills to respond to essay questions and examiners' comments on the previous years' papers were shared with them. The lesson was well structured and planned with good use of video clips. Students consolidated their knowledge of creation and were keen to share their ideas. They developed their understanding of the conflict between myth and truth.

Geography

Provision in **geography** is **good**

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising; this year's results were much higher than in 2002
- Students learn well and have positive attitudes towards the subject because teaching is effective
- Leadership and management are very good and are resulting in many improvements
- The curriculum is very good, providing a broad range of opportunities and experiences in the study of A-level geography. Excellent use is made of ICT to help students learn
- The very good accommodation and range of resources promote effective learning
- Extra-curricular activities provide a very good range of opportunities for students to extend their learning
- Sometimes quieter students are insufficiently involved in class discussions

Commentary

190. The proportion of students attaining higher grades increased substantially in 2003. Most grades in 2003 were at A or B and all were at grade D or above. In 2002, results were broadly average.
191. All students who study geography achieve well. They are highly motivated, interested and want to succeed, taking pride in their work. They have high expectations of themselves. They have very good knowledge of important concepts and use tables and carry out data analysis skilfully. Their recall of earlier work is good and they apply their knowledge well to examination questions, such as the information they gained on a school visit to Kenya. Technical language is used well and photographs of geographical phenomena are identified accurately.
192. Teaching and learning in Years 12 and 13 are good, and at times very good. Lessons have a clear purpose, they are well planned, and activities challenge students of all

capabilities. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding of examination requirements, so questions and subsequent learning are highly focused. They develop students' understanding well. ICT makes an excellent contribution to their learning, for example, in a lesson where an interactive whiteboard and digital projector were used to remind students of a field trip and helped them to describe the physical features of a glaciated landscape. For a very small number of students who had not attended the field trip, the presentation acted as a virtual field trip. In a few instances, students are not all involved in class discussion, as more confident students tend to dominate. Occasionally, students' learning is limited by the lack of an opportunity to hear a summary of ideas.

193. The leadership and management of the subject are very good, providing clear vision and opportunities for all members of the team to contribute to the development of the subject. All aspects of the department's work are carefully monitored and identified. Strengths and weaknesses are discussed openly as a way of bringing about improvements. The curriculum is well planned with many visits to enable students to experience and enjoy geography. Opportunities to use ICT and assessment points are planned and understood. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Students' standards, teaching, leadership and management have all improved.

History

Provision in **history** is **very good**

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Excellent
Management	Very good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at A level have varied but are now above national averages
- Students achieve very well in relation to their capabilities
- Teaching and learning are very good
- Leadership of the subject is excellent
- Students have very good attitudes towards the study of history and the large number who wish to study the subject at AS/A2 is still growing

Commentary

194. Since the last inspection A-level results have been similar to, above, or well above national averages. In 2002, results were close to national averages and in 2003 results are similar. Boys achieve particularly well in history. A-level entries have also remained consistently high and history has one of the largest A-level cohorts in the school, recruiting from a wide range of ability. Interest in the subject continues to grow. In 2003, 65 students entered at AS level and about three-quarters of them have continued to Year 13.
195. The students' very good achievement was evident in the ability of Year 12 students, at the start of their AS course, to use their skills in evaluating historical sources to a high level, in a lesson on Kaiser Wilhelm II. Year 13 students have a very good knowledge and

understanding of the complexities of British politics in the age of Pitt and Lord Liverpool as well as an understanding of the impact of the First World War on twentieth century history. Essay writing is of a good standard. It is well structured with evidence to support individual judgements in written questions such as “Was there any great change in the Tory Party between 1815-1830?” Their study of documents relating to Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia has honed their evidence study skills and they can analyse historical sources critically and evaluate a wide range of evidence effectively.

196. The quality of teaching students receive is very good and it leads to very good learning. Very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for history is used to motivate and inform students. Lessons are planned to provide good opportunities for students to think critically for themselves and they are encouraged to develop debating skills. They are provided with a wide range of support materials but sometimes the teaching is over-directive. Students do not do enough independent reading around the subject or use the Internet sufficiently and are mostly content to rely upon the very good texts with which they are provided. Assessment is regular and teachers’ marking is thorough with detailed comments designed to improve attainment and maximise potential.
197. Leadership is inspirational and promotes enthusiasm for the subject. The team of hard working teachers have high expectations of their students and are always available to support them when needed. Students, whilst appreciative of this, stated that they would welcome a regular one-to-one meeting to discuss their individual progress. The curriculum is very well planned with a strong focus on examination board requirements.

Law

Provision in **law** is **good**

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results have shown a marked improvement over the last two years
- Teachers’ good subject knowledge and enthusiasm help students learn
- Lessons are too teacher directed with few opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning, including self-assessment
- Relationships between students and staff are good, but in some classes a minority of students dominate discussion at the expense of others
- A good range of contemporary material enhances the curriculum and students’ learning

198. In 2002, GCE A-level examination results were well above average with the percentage of A-C grades also well above average. Male and female students did equally well. The 2003 results were not quite as high as those of 2002. All students who took the examination achieved a pass grade. Achievement has been good in examinations and there is a trend of improvement.
199. The standard of work of current students is broadly average. Students have good knowledge and understanding of the basic issues relating to law and are able to undertake research from a variety of sources. They recognise and distil the relevance

and importance of issues and use legal terminology confidently and accurately. In one lesson on strict liability, students drew connections between different areas of law whilst effectively relating this to contemporary events. They are weaker at making informed, personal judgements and offering balanced arguments in favour of their chosen viewpoint. Higher-attaining students are not always sufficiently perceptive in applying legal principles to new cases or in discussing the merit of conflicting legal precedents.

200. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good subject knowledge and a noticeable enthusiasm for the subject helped students to learn. Lessons are well planned with a good range of contemporary resources. Teaching is often too closely directed with students being told conclusions or the outcome of cases before having the opportunity to debate the issues themselves. There are few opportunities for collaborative and independent working and too much reliance on dictation by the teacher. This style of teaching is supportive to some students who acquire detailed notes for learning and revision. However, it does not sufficiently challenge the highest-attaining students who are not given the opportunity to engage in sustained debate and discussion. In a lesson on fault, the teacher only dealt with questions raised by the most vociferous students, usually boys, which disadvantaged some of the quieter, less demanding, female students. Useful opportunities are given for students to engage in independent research outside of lessons and they are encouraged to read widely and compile newspaper reports on contemporary legal issues.
201. Students show a good attitude to their work. They are positive about the study of law and enjoy good relationships with the teacher. Personal development is good with students encouraged to consider the wider application of the law in society. Students keep notes conscientiously and thoroughly, although female students display better levels of personal organisation than male.
202. During the week of the inspection, the teacher in charge of law was on maternity leave. Results over recent years and the standards of work seen in lessons suggest the leadership and management of the subject are good over time. Schemes of work are detailed and carefully organised with a wide range of supporting material. Accommodation is satisfactory but the range of law reference books is very limited and many are out of date.

Politics

Provision in **politics** is **good**

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good at AS and A level allowing all to achieve their potential, with grades ranging from A to E
- Good expertise and enthusiasm is shown by staff, with a range of teaching styles that promotes effective learning
- Good emphasis is put on developing independent learning, aided by the choice of coursework components and very good use of resources

- Too little attention is paid to monitoring students' skills so they can further improve their attainment

Commentary

203. At A level, A to D grades were attained by those completing the course and results were above average. Female and male students achieve similarly high grades. 2003 results were lower than in 2002. Value added data for 2002 kept in the department shows that students with a range of GCSE points were able to achieve grades A to C at AS level.
204. Achievement is mostly good. All students are encouraged to achieve their potential. Standards of work seen in Year 13 classes are above average. Factual information is known well and supported by opinion, analysis and a capacity to communicate responses orally and in writing. Coursework shows good research and presentation skills among students. They use a wide variety of media as resources, including setting up lectures and interviews with professional politicians. In Year 12, students are willingly absorbing the large amount of information on elections and politics in Britain as they commence their AS studies. Standards of work are average and achievement satisfactory at this early stage in Year 12.
205. Teaching is good overall, with examples of very good practice. In a lesson seen, Year 13 students responded well to the challenge of assessing Clinton and G. W. Bush in terms of presidential power, and powers, giving very good examples from their reading and personal experience to support the factors contributing to the comparison. Their recall of knowledge and written work seen show they can improve and develop answers to meet personal targets set with their teachers. Students are very well prepared for AS and A level examinations, and teachers plan carefully to cover the courses without undue overlap. Not enough monitoring takes place, however, of how students' skills for the subject are developing. In a Year 12 lesson, students showed good developing political awareness and interest. Two students reported on a lecture they had heard the previous evening on Britain's attitude to joining the European currency, arranged by a Year 13 politics student as part of her coursework component for A-level. The Year 12 group discussed opinions and facts about Euro entry with enthusiasm and a spirit of enquiry. The teacher managed this sensitively, giving information when asked and drawing all students into the discussion.
206. Students in politics are extremely positive about the subject and are confident in their teachers' knowledge, commitment and 'passion' for the subject. They understand how to study for themselves, with very good access to print, electronic and live resources including lectures in Cambridge and London and a visit to Parliament. The subject is very well led and well managed. Teachers welcome self-evaluation opportunities. They promote political awareness not only for politics students but across the sixth form and whole school. Students of politics are at the forefront of the 'pupil voice' in St Ivo. They are involved in a Youth Town Council, Youth Parliament and managing and developing the school council and the sixth-form committee. Since the last inspection there has been continuous development of the course and good improvement.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Technology

Provision in **technology** is **good**

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- AS and A-level results were above average in 2002
- Very good standard of practical work but some weaknesses in the commercial and industrial aspects of the subject and in the use of computers
- Accommodation and resources are good
- Good student monitoring, review and recording systems contribute to achievement
- Leadership and management are good

Commentary

207. The GCE A/AS level examinations results in 2002 were above the national average. This is a significant improvement after some weaker years of below average grades. The pass rate in the A-B range of grades in A-level was above the national average. All students who were entered gained a pass. The students' practical work in 2002 was of a well above average standard. The range of work influenced by different genres of design, successfully tied the students' products to a historical and cultural context. The work on display showed a very good range of resistant materials combined into creative designs. Standards in 2003 were similar to those of 2002.
208. The standard of work of current students in Year 13 is above average. In the lessons seen students were in the early stages of their product development, but had made good progress due to the tight target setting and review structure that has been developed for this course. Research and analysis work is developing rapidly, due to the students organising their own clients. This link enables them to successfully identify the needs of the user(s) of the product and to provide critical feedback. The product design briefs are challenging, and provide a suitable starting point for students. Investigative work included ergonomics, materials and analysis of the issues affecting the chosen design area. These were all of a good standard.
209. Students in Year 12 are only a short way into their course. The very good coursework guide provided enables students to move rapidly forward in developing their own product designs. Students are given opportunities to research independently using computers and library resources. Some resources for investigating the physical and social consequences of design are not as good as they might be at this early stage of the course.
210. Teaching observed was satisfactory overall, but evidence of achievement over time shows teaching to be good overall. In a good lesson, the very good subject knowledge and relationships of the students with the teacher helped with well-timed interventions and effective communication. The teaching skilfully supported the building of new concepts and understanding. Some Year 13 students spent too little time on the use of computer-aided manufacturing when in Year 12 and this aspect is insufficiently developed in the course. Few students opt to take food technology although those that do are self-organised in their work. Teaching of food technology lacks sufficient opportunities for the students to gain experience of industrial practices through links in the community.

211. Leadership and management are good. The teaching team have a clear direction and structure. The student monitoring and reviewing system that has been developed is very good. The accommodation is very good in purpose-built rooms. The use of industrial practice needs improvement to meet the shift in emphasis of the new examination courses. Good use is made of the local Rotary organisation to give feedback to students from industry experts. The school has developed a good range of post-16 courses in this area of the curriculum that enables good 14 -19 progression routes for students.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

The subjects of art and theatre studies were focused on and one A-level music lesson sampled. The quality of teaching and learning observed in music was excellent. Various teaching methods, including audio, writing/reading, and visual were combined within the lesson, taking account of the learning strategies of students. The standard of questioning, which consolidated and deepened understanding, was exceptional and unified the different strands of musical experiences.

Art

Provision in **art** is **very good**

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Well above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work are very high on the vocational course
- All students show a high level of interest in their work and talk about it with considerable knowledge and understanding
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and experience in the world of art and design which they use in their teaching
- Opportunities are sometimes missed for students to discuss opinions and ideas with each other
- ICT is used very effectively to support learning

Commentary

212. Results in A2 and AS level examinations in 2003 were an improvement on those of 2002, when standards were below the national average overall. A strength of the department is attainment by students on the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) course, where standards were very high in 2002 compared with national averages (in the top five percent of all school results nationally). Male and female students do equally well on the sixth-form art courses.

213. Students on both courses make very good progress over time and the students' achievements, relative to their prior attainment, are very good. They are well motivated, work with enthusiasm and commitment and enjoy lessons. Independent study skills are acquired and the students make good progress in using a broad range of materials, including oil and acrylic paints. Current standards in art courses are well above average.

214. Teaching and learning observed across both courses were very good. All students show a high level of interest in their work and talk about it with considerable knowledge and understanding using appropriate specialist vocabulary. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and experience in the world of art and design. This enables students to receive realistic and effective advice, both on their work and in terms of career and further education pathways. Students' work is discussed with them on an individual tutorial basis during and after lesson times. Teachers have clear learning objectives shared with students and linked to assessment criteria. Students have insufficient opportunities, however, to share their ideas and opinions in group discussions.
215. The department is well led. A clear direction has been established and is shared in the department, with a clear and successful focus on raising standards in the A-level course. Everybody knows their responsibilities and works well together. Personal initiative is encouraged. Regular meetings ensure continuity of planning. The department is supportive of new staff and has good induction procedures. Students work in very good accommodation. They have a well-resourced specialist sixth-form room, which gives them a sense of identity within the department and enhances opportunities to work in depth over longer periods of time. Provision for ICT is good and computers are used well to enhance learning. As well as specialist equipment in the art department, students make good use of the Internet and Intranet. Contacts with the community are very good and students have the opportunity to work with artists in residence, the most recent being a stone carver. There is a very good range of visits to museums, galleries and other locations. This year they have been to the Tate Modern in London and the Curwen Press in Cambridge.
216. Progress has been good since the last inspection. Students now work in very good accommodation. High standards have been maintained in the vocational course and A-level standards are increasing.

Theatre studies

Provision in **theatre studies** is **very good**.

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

Leadership	Excellent
Management	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Gains in learning are very good, as students build on their experiences under sensitive and expert teaching
 - Enriching extra-curricular activity enhances the school's place in the community of St. Ives
 - Leadership of the department is excellent
 - The impact on students' personal and spiritual development is good
217. Standards were well above average at A level in 2002, which continued a trend of high standards. There has been a dip in the results in 2003. The department's own analysis of these results shows, generally, that students achieved as high or higher grades in theatre studies as in their other subjects, showing good achievement for their capabilities.

218. Current standards seen in performance during the inspection indicate that students are on track to secure well above average results. Students attain very high standards of movement and voice in creating highly successful, innovative, non-naturalistic drama. Achievement by all students in Years 12 and 13 is very good, because of their high level of commitment and the high quality of peer interaction. Their studies make a significant contribution to their spiritual and personal development. Students continuously improve their own and each other's performance through articulate reflection.
219. Teaching and learning are very good, sometimes excellent with inspiring features. Teachers' specialist expertise enables them to introduce a wide range of dramatic interpretation. Interventions by the teacher are sensitive and well judged. Students value their teachers highly. Students are encouraged to articulate links with other studies, for example referring to Chaucer, or Russian history. Spontaneous evaluation of performance is very good indeed, but recording assessment and using it to set targets accurately is not as strong.
220. Leadership is excellent, inspiring passion for drama and providing ambitious vision of what every student can achieve. Management is good. The curriculum is very effectively planned and implemented. The development plan is clear and relevant and resources have improved since the last inspection. There is strong evidence of excellent productions, such as the video recording of *"The Changeling"* and of rich extra-curricular activity.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

In addition to the focus subjects of physical education and dance, a Year 12 lesson of leisure and tourism was observed. The quality of teaching and learning seen was very good. The theme of the lesson was St Ives as a local tourist centre. A very effective discussion about the distinction between leisure and tourism led to very good learning and achievement. Students co-operated very well together during a purposeful and well-structured lesson, showing very good knowledge of the local area. The students were very well organised and relationships with the teacher were excellent. The school offers leisure and tourism and travel and tourism courses in the sixth form and students are guided carefully in their choice of course, depending upon their prior learning and capability. The AVCE travel and tourism results were above average in 2002 and similar results were attained in 2003.

Physical education and Dance

Provision in **physical education and dance** is **very good**

	Years 12 and 13
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching overall is very good and enables students to achieve very well
- Students' attainment in dance is above average
- Students perform less well in their physical education examinations than in most of their other subjects

- Leadership is very good and provides a clear focus for the subjects

Commentary

221. Results in the A-level dance examinations in 2002 were above the national average and in 2003 similarly high. In physical education, they were well below the national average in 2002. The results in A-level physical education over the last three years show a rising trend and in 2003 a greater percentage of students achieved the higher grades than in previous years.
222. Standards of practical work in dance in Year 13 are above average. Students are able to interpret Laban notation accurately and quickly grasp new principles. They work with concentration and enjoyment to improve their performance and because of this their achievement in relation to their previous experience is very good. Standards in the present Year 13 in physical education are average. They have a satisfactory knowledge of drug use in relation to sport and can relate and refer to examples in current sports very well. They are very enthusiastic, concentrate and work hard, which leads to them making very good progress throughout their course.
223. Teaching is very good overall in both physical education and dance. Lessons are very well prepared and are taught within an ethos of high expectations, which encourages students to achieve very well. Lessons are well structured with learning intentions clearly explained to the students. Relationships are very good. Students concentrate well, co-operating very effectively together in lessons – they have developed very good learning skills. Teachers are very good at leading students logically and systematically which enables them to expand their knowledge and understanding. Work is demonstrated and exemplified well, with very good use of technical language. Students are very well prepared for examinations in dance, but this is less thorough in physical education.
224. Leadership of the department is very good and management is good. A very significant feature of the department is its very positive ethos for learning which leads to consistently high expectations of the students. Assessment and recording are appropriate and curriculum planning is detailed and helpful. Further work is in hand in improving standards in physical education, in order to match standards and achievements in dance. The current focus on examination preparation is a key element in this drive for improvement.

BUSINESS

One lesson of economics was observed being taught to Year 12, and one lesson to a Year 13 business studies group. Both lessons were very well taught, enabling students to make rapid and successful progress and to achieve very well. The students were highly motivated and enjoyed the sessions as well as learning effectively.

The business studies session, where students were discussing the locations of businesses, using a case study, started with a very good review of the last lesson, with detailed and rigorous questioning of the students. The teacher's very good subject knowledge was apparent in his confident questioning and the detail provided in response to the students' own questions. Local businesses were used as examples to help retain interest and relevance; this was very successful. The teaching was very successful in building on students' understanding of important concepts and their analysis skills. The economics lesson was equally effective. Students were engaged in their learning from the outset about the factors that influence demand. The teaching was carried out very confidently, based on very good subject knowledge. Students learnt in a step-by-step manner and applied their knowledge.

The AVCE business results in 2002 were similar to the national average and A-level results were above average. Historically, A-level business studies results were below average. In 2003, A-level

and AVCE results were similar, with all students passing, gaining a spread of grades. A-level economics results were below average in 2002, but higher in 2003. Historically, A-level economics grades have often been well above average.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

One lesson of Year 12 AVCE health and social care was sampled. The lesson was very well taught resulting in very good learning and achievement. The focus of the session was on how the body works and its development. The lesson was well prepared with very good use of video clips to focus discussions on relevant knowledge. The teacher's expert knowledge was very helpful to the students who respected what was being said and learnt from it. The final session of the lesson was used well, to review what had been learnt and to identify learning objectives for the next session. Students left the lesson confident in their increased knowledge and understanding. Students attained well above average standards in the 2002 AVCE examinations. Results in 2003 were a little lower, with most students attaining grades in the range A to E.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES

One lesson of the Year 12 general education course was sampled, where the teaching, learning and achievement were good. The discussion about 'what I am proud of' and 'what I have achieved' successfully involved the whole class. Initial low level, off-task chatter soon disappeared as students became involved in the discussions. A calm and courteous teaching approach paid dividends in terms of the students' responses. The session gave students opportunities to improve their speaking and listening skills, which they used well. Students moved onto an assembly immediately following the lesson, where the focus on student partnership followed on directly from what had been taught.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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