

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **CHAUCER TECHNOLOGY SCHOOL**

Canterbury

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118924

Headteacher: Mr F M Mayers

Lead inspector: Mrs S D Morgan

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 259288

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Modern (non-selective)
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1391

School address:	Spring Lane Canterbury Kent CT1 1SU
Postcode:	

Telephone number:	01227 763636
Fax number:	01227 762352

Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M F Fuller

Date of previous inspection:	May 1998
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## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Chaucer is a large technology school. It has 1176 pupils in Years 7 to 11 and 215 students in the sixth form. The school is situated in Kent which has selective schools. In recent years the intake of the school has changed. Over 25 per cent of pupils in the local area are offered places in selective schools. As a result, the school does not recruit its pupils from across the full range of attainment. Although pupils' attainment on entry is below average overall, it has shown some improvement recently. There are more boys than girls in almost all year groups, although the proportion varies between year groups, with significantly more boys in Years 8 and 9 and more girls in Year 10. The school takes its pupils from a wide area. The percentage of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, at just below ten per cent, is broadly average. Just under one quarter of pupils in Years 7 to 11 have been identified as having special educational needs, an above average proportion. These pupils have a range of needs, with most having learning and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is below average. A high proportion of pupils is white British, with small numbers from a range of other ethnic groups. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is low, and a small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English.

Chaucer has Technology College status. The school is popular with parents and is oversubscribed. It has received a number of awards, including the DfES Achievement Award and School Curriculum Award, Sportsmark and has gained Investors in People status.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1355	Mrs S D Morgan	Lead inspector	
19653	Mrs E Dickson	Lay inspector	
24142	Mrs S Argyle	Team inspector	English 11-16, sixth form English
33139	Mr M Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics 11-16, sixth form mathematics
3242	Dr M Newman	Team inspector	Science 11-16, sixth form psychology
20767	Mr J Royle	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT) 11-16 English as an additional language
2501	Ms R Allison-Smith	Team inspector	Art and design 11-16, sixth form art
32590	Mr R Fenwick	Team inspector	Design and technology 11-16, sixth form design and technology
18663	Mr P Burchell	Team inspector	Geography 11-16, sixth form history
10761	Dr P Willan	Team inspector	History 11-16, sixth form sociology
24121	Mr I Bauckham	Team inspector	Modern languages 11-16
8063	Mr D Blease	Team inspector	Music 11-16, sixth form music
30563	Ms J Pentlow	Team inspector	Physical education 11-16, sixth form physical education
14633	Mrs J Bannister	Team inspector	Religious education 11-16
2652	Mr R Lomas	Team inspector	Special educational needs
32777	Mr J McVeigh	Team inspector	Citizenship 11-16, sixth form chemistry
32231	Mr A Lyons	Team inspector	Sixth form information and communication technology

The inspection contractor was:

### **e-Qualitas Limited**

Langshaw  
Pastens Road  
Limpsfield Chart  
Oxted  
Surrey  
RH8 0RE

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Chaucer is a good school.** It is popular and oversubscribed and has an inclusive ethos which encourages pupils to achieve their best. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and attain average standards. Teaching has improved. It is satisfactory overall and good in the sixth form. The leadership and management of the school are good. Staff work well as a team. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils are prepared well for examinations and their achievements are good
- Staff know pupils very well and the quality of care is good
- The very good leadership of the headteacher, well supported by governors, has led to significant improvement in teaching and learning and pupils achieving well
- The current range of academic courses does not fully meet the needs of all pupils in Years 10 to 13. However, good provision has been made for older pupils who have experienced significant difficulties with school
- In a significant number of lessons teachers have to work very hard to manage the behaviour of a small minority of challenging pupils and this slows down the pace of learning
- The erratic attendance of some pupils, throughout the school, has an adverse effect on their learning and achievement
- The school has very good links with other schools and colleges

**Overall, satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection.** More recently under the leadership of the headteacher improvement has been good. Weaknesses that were identified in the previous inspection report have been dealt with systematically. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and pupils' achievements are good. The school is now meeting all statutory requirements and staff are committed to further improvement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Pupils achieve well throughout the school.** However, the erratic attendance of a significant number of pupils and sixth form students limits their achievement.

Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 9, were average when compared with all schools nationally. Pupils' achievements were well above average in relation to their performance in national tests at the end of Year 6. This represents very good achievement, overall. Current standards are broadly similar. They are above average in some subjects, including English. Inspection evidence showed pupils' achievements to be good overall.

GCSE results have fluctuated in recent years due to the school recruiting fewer higher-attaining pupils. In 2003, they were average when compared with all schools nationally. Pupils' achieved very well in relation to their performance in national tests at the end of Year 9. Current standards are similar and pupils achieve well overall. Inspection evidence showed good achievement in a number of subjects, including science and very good achievement in religious education. In the sixth form students achieve well in relation to their previous results. In subjects inspected in depth, students' achievements were good in a number of subjects, including English and information and communication technology (ICT). They were very good in physical education.

**Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are satisfactory.** Most pupils have positive attitudes and behave well. However, a few pupils who do not value education disrupt a minority of lessons. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, overall.** Their punctuality is satisfactory. However, attendance is well below average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school is providing a satisfactory education for its pupils.**

**The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall.** In Years 7 to 11 teaching is satisfactory with a number of strengths and it is good in the sixth form. Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare pupils well for examinations. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all subjects in Years 7 to 11, and good in a number including, English and science. In the sixth form teaching in all the focus subjects was at least satisfactory. It was good in a number, including English, history and ICT and very good in physical education. Teachers use a variety of techniques to engage pupils' interest. Work is planned well and the work to be completed is discussed, so that pupils are clear about what they are going to learn. Support staff make a positive contribution, particularly to the learning of pupils with special educational needs. In some lessons the challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils limits the learning of others. The erratic attendance of some pupils limits their learning. Overall, assessment procedures are good. Teachers' marking provides pupils with helpful guidance on how to improve.

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Good opportunities are provided for enrichment. Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are good and pupils receive satisfactory support, advice and guidance. The school has satisfactory links with parents. However, a number of parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly and this limits the standards they achieve. The school has established good links with the community, and very good links with other schools.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management of the school are good.** The leadership offered by the headteacher is very good and has ensured clear direction for school improvement. The governance of the school is good as is the leadership of other key staff. A very good system for reviewing the performance of teachers together with very good support for continuing professional development, have contributed to the improvements in the standard of teaching.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Those parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, or who attended the meeting prior to the inspection, generally expressed satisfaction with what the school provides. They feel that the school expects their children to work hard, and praised the very good induction arrangements. Pupils said the school expected them to do their best. Sixth form students said they enjoyed being in the sixth form and teaching was challenging. A number of parents and pupils expressed concerns about the behaviour of pupils, which disrupts some lessons. Inspection evidence supports the views of parents and pupils.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Improve the attitudes and behaviour of a small minority of pupils and ensure that they learn effectively and do not disrupt the learning of others
- Improve the attendance of pupils throughout the school
- Review the curriculum offer, as planned, particularly for Years 10 to 13, to ensure that it meets pupils' needs fully

## THE SIXTH FORM

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The sixth form provides a satisfactory quality of education and is cost effective.** Provision for post-16 students has improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection. Numbers have been increasing in recent years. More than half the students from Year 11 continued into the sixth form in 2003 and a small number joined the school at the beginning of Year 12. The school offers a large number of mainly academic courses leading to AS and A-level and this provision is enhanced by the partnership with other local sixth forms. A number of students leave during or at the end of Year 12 which results in some very small classes operating in Year 13. The post-16 examination results have been below average but this reflects the below average attainment of students on entry. Students achieve well in relation to their attainment at GCSE. There is a trend of academic improvement and current standards are broadly average. Teaching is good overall. Students are offered high levels of support and the very good relationships with teachers contribute to good achievement in most subjects. The school provides a positive environment for the personal and social development of students and works hard to build an environment that is conducive to learning. Senior management of the sixth form offers the necessary day-to-day organisation and vision to enable it to develop.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students achieve well in many subjects in relation to their prior attainment
- Teaching is good. Work is structured well, so that students who attend regularly make substantial gains in their learning
- The attendance of too many students is unsatisfactory and this impedes the standards they attain
- Relationships are very good between students and staff; sensitivity is shown to students' individual circumstances so they feel valued and encouraged
- The regular academic tutoring to monitor work and set targets for students is good
- Collaboration with other sixth forms to maintain and extend courses is good
- The current range of academic courses does not fully meet the needs of all students
- Independent learning and wider reading is not promoted sufficiently

### 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 in depth.

Curriculum Area	Evaluation
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English, languages and communication	
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<b>English Literature: Satisfactory.</b> Standards are below average. Most students begin the advanced course from a modest base but their achievement is satisfactory because of the good quality teaching and intensive support.	
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Mathematics	
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<b>Satisfactory.</b> Standards attained are below average. Students are supported by teachers' clear explanations and good planning which assists their achievement, which is satisfactory.	
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Science	
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<b>Chemistry: Satisfactory.</b> Standards are average and teaching is satisfactory. Students have positive attitudes and achieve satisfactorily.	
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Information and communication  
technology

**Good.** Standards are average which represents good achievement. This is due to good teaching with a strong emphasis on examination requirements.

## Curriculum Area Evaluation

Humanities:

**History: Good.** Students' standards are average. Very well informed teaching makes work interesting and demanding and this enables students to achieve very well against prior performance. Few do less well than predicted.

**Sociology: Good.** Experienced teachers ensure well motivated students meet or exceed their potential.

**Psychology: Good.** Standards attained are average and represent good achievement for the students accepted on the course. The students have a positive attitude to the subject and value the support they receive.

Engineering, technology and manufacturing

**Product design: Satisfactory.** Standards are below average but show improvement during the two year course. Good creative design and use of new technologies features in students' portfolios.

Visual and performing arts and media

**Art: Satisfactory.** Standards vary but are currently improving. Students benefit from teaching based on very good subject knowledge and a team approach.

**Music: Good.** Standards attained range from average to above average. Teachers' good subject knowledge is well applied to diagnose students' needs and helps students to maximize their potential.

Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel

**Physical education: Very good.** Very good teaching and high motivation is resulting in very good achievement. Students frequently attain higher grades in physical education than in their other subjects.

Business

**Business studies** was sampled. An AVCE which is an advanced course with a vocational bias has recently been introduced. In the lesson observed, students made good progress and achieved well because of the strong emphasis on assessment.

General education

One **general studies** lesson was sampled. The teacher related well to the students who gained a good understanding of the requirements of the syllabus. Attendance is required of all students but, in practice, lessons are poorly attended. The school is reviewing this requirement.

The school now makes satisfactory provision for all pupils to follow a **religious education** course and has introduced advanced level courses. This is good improvement since the time of the previous inspection.

*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 subjects**, work was sampled. Teaching was generally **good** or **very good**.

### **ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

**Good quality support and sound guidance and advice are provided for students.** They value the good quality support provided throughout the sixth form. Students approach subject teachers to discuss concerns and seek advice. Their progress is monitored well and they are set realistic targets which motivate them. Sound guidance is provided for students when selecting their sixth form courses though many are not fully prepared for the demands of advanced study. Students would appreciate earlier guidance for higher education.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM**

**Leadership and management of the sixth form are good.** Day-to-day administration is effective although much time is spent following up student absence. Students are positive about the sixth form, particularly about the quality of teaching and the level of all round support they receive. The use of academic tutoring to set targets and develop strategies to improve achievement is good. The management of provision shared with other schools is good.

## **STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM**

Students enjoy being in the sixth form and they get on very well together. They like the more adult atmosphere and appreciate the help and support from their subject teachers. They feel the work is demanding and many find this a considerable challenge after GCSE. Their concerns about choosing the right courses have resulted in the school introducing new systems in the current Year 11 which involve students and their parents early in the year. Most students appreciate the range of activities offered beyond their main studies but they would like more. From their study base in the school library, students make very good use of ICT facilities. Appropriate advice is given by key school staff and advisors about future choices and higher education. The inspection supported the students' positive comments as well as their concerns about the demanding nature of the range of academic courses on offer which do not fully meet the needs of all students.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils' attainment on entry has shown some improvement but, overall, is below average. Their achievements throughout the school are **good** and standards are generally **average**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school
- Pupils' achievements are very good in religious education in Years 10 and 11
- In the sixth form, students achieve very well in physical education
- The erratic attendance of too many pupils acts as a barrier to their progress

#### Commentary

1. Results in the 2003 national tests, at the end of Year 9, were average when compared with all schools nationally. Pupils' achievements were above those of similar schools and well above average in relation to their performance in national tests at the end of Year 6. This represents very good achievement, overall. Current standards are broadly similar. However, the irregular attendance of a significant number of pupils limits their achievement. Pupils' achievements were found to be good, overall.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34.1 (32.2 )	33.4 ( 33.3)
mathematics	33.7 (34.1)	35.4 (34.7)
science	33.6 (32.8)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 231 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. GCSE results were average when compared with all schools nationally. The proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSE A\*-C grades, 5 or more A\*-G grades and 1 or more A\*-G grades was average. Pupils' achievements were above those of similar schools. They achieved very well in relation to their performance in national tests at the end of Year 9. Current standards are similar and pupils achieve well overall. However, the erratic attendance of a significant number of pupils acts as a barrier to their progress.

3. In Years 10 and 11, pupils achieve well in science, geography, ICT, music, physical education and citizenship. In religious education they achieve very well because teaching is very good. Challenging work is set for the higher-attainers whilst good support and guidance is provided for lower-attaining pupils.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	49 ( 45 )	52 (50 )
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	88 ( 89)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97( 98)	96 (96 )
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	33.8 (34.7)	33.0 (34.7 )

*There were 247 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, and make good progress towards the targets set for them in individual education plans.
5. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well, overall. The school has developed a good policy, with logical criteria for their identification, in terms of curricular, artistic and sporting achievement, and personal qualities. The policy is in process of development. It has the appropriate aim of meeting pupils' needs through extension work in subjects and enrichment through extra-curricular activities. There is a potentially effective system for monitoring and celebrating achievement being developed.
6. The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is good, overall. Several pupils, since starting at the school, have progressed well and have moved into higher-attaining sets. All pupils have individual education plans that are used effectively by the learning support assistants to aid their learning. However, the group plans for subject teachers when pupils are not supported by learning support assistants are not sufficiently detailed and lack strategies to promote pupils' development. This was very noticeable when the focus of the lesson was predominantly discussion and pupils were reluctant to contribute.
7. Emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' literacy skills in all subjects. Overall, standards of reading and writing are satisfactory. Pupils' competence in mathematics is satisfactory and supports their learning in other subjects. Some departments have been supported by the mathematics department and agreed a common approach for the development and application of pupils' numeracy skills. However, at present there is no agreed whole-school approach. As pupils progress through the school their competence in the use of ICT is developed systematically. Application of their skills in subjects is satisfactory. At times pupils' progress is limited as demand for the available specialist facilities is too high and some departments do not have their own resources.

### **Sixth form**

8. Since the time of the last inspection, the number of students and range of courses offered have increased. Some students leave during or at the end of Year 12. This is because a number of students enter the sixth form having attained relatively low GCSE grades. This makes it difficult for them to cope with work at advanced level, particularly in Year 13, and at present few vocational courses are offered to help meet their needs.
9. A-level and AS results are below average, overall. However, teachers plan work carefully to meet students' needs and those who attend regularly achieve well in relation to their attainment at GCSE. In all of the subjects inspected in depth students' achievements were satisfactory or better. They were good in history, ICT, music, psychology and sociology and very good in physical education.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	80.4 ( 81.9)	91.5 (90.3)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	21.8 (18.0)	36.1(35.5)
Average point score per pupil	217.1 ( 234.9)	253.1 (254.5)

*There were 84 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attendance is **well below** the national average, but punctuality is **satisfactory**. Attitudes and behaviour, including the incidence of exclusions, are **satisfactory**. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most pupils have positive attitudes and behave well
- Bullying is dealt with well
- Pupils generally form constructive relationships with one another and with staff
- A few pupils, who do not value education, disrupt a minority of lessons
- The number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions has risen since the last inspection and is quite high
- Overall, attendance is well below average

### **Commentary**

10. In most lessons, pupils show good attitudes towards learning. They are interested in the topics set for them, listen attentively and take care over their work. Positive attitudes were seen in the majority of lessons in nearly all subjects, and they were consistently good in most subject areas. In a Year 7 English lesson on the topic of fables, pupils listened well to their teacher's instructions and to each other's answers to questions. They worked productively in pairs and groups, reading and negotiating together, and achieved very well.

11. However, a significant number of pupils throughout the school behave well only when the teacher has a firm control of the class and insists on high standards of behaviour and work. A few lessons are disrupted, usually by boys, and only become productive because teachers' good management of pupils combats noise and challenges immature attitudes. A minority of pupils can be very challenging and difficult to manage. The school has on roll a larger proportion of pupils with identified difficult behaviour than at the time of the previous inspection. Although many teachers are successful in motivating and engaging pupils, poor behaviour is not always managed consistently in lessons. The whole-school approach to behaviour management is being reviewed to ensure greater consistency across all subject departments. Parents' and pupils' questionnaire responses reflect this mixed picture in relation to pupils' behaviour.

12. Around the school, most pupils behave well. Although the narrow corridors become quite congested during lesson changeovers, pupils generally move around sensibly. In assemblies, they sit quietly and listen respectfully when teachers are addressing them. At lunchtimes, they queue up and wait patiently.

13. The overall rate of attendance is well below the national average; unauthorised absence is lower than average. Although the school is working hard to improve the rates of attendance, a number of parents do not ensure their children attend school on a regular basis. The school monitors attendance closely and is continually reviewing ways to improve procedures. The rate of attendance has shown a slight improvement this academic year, with attendance for all year groups currently around or just below 90 per cent. Punctuality is satisfactory overall, although a small minority of pupils can turn up late to some lessons. There is no significant level of internal truancy, due in significant part to the effective practices of computerised registration in each session, and first day of absence response by the school.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	9.6	School data	0.3
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

14. Many pupils enjoy positive and constructive relationships, both with one another and with the staff they have got to know. As a result, the majority of pupils are confident in expressing views and asking questions when they do not understand. In lessons, most work well together in pairs and groups. At times, pupils do not take enough pride in their environment, as shown by the amount of litter around the school premises and grounds.

15. The number of exclusions is high for a school of this size. Last year there were 227 fixed-term and six permanent exclusions. All exclusions were for valid reasons, such as violent behaviour or possession of drugs, and the school uses it as the last stage of a structured process.

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – any other mixed background
Black or Black British – African

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
1299	216	6
19	2	
21	8	
3	1	

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

16. Pupils interviewed by inspectors said that bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. Some identified the way that the school treats bullying as one of its strengths. The anti-bullying club, held each week, is developing into a good source of help and support, and spreading the message that there is no room for bullying in the school. Representatives from the school recently addressed a national conference on bullying, held in Brighton.

17. The school makes sound provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved since the time of the previous inspection. Daily tutor periods focus on a 'thought for the day'; the theme during the week of the inspection was *success*. Almost all tutor groups provide an opportunity for reflection and this broadly meets legal requirements for collective worship. These sessions vary in quality. Some are very good, with much discussion on interpretations, contributing both to pupils' spiritual and moral development, whereas others are more perfunctory. Assemblies, where pupils are always attentive and well behaved, make a positive contribution to their personal development. They do, however, lack music or artefacts, which would create a sense of worship. Subjects are expected to incorporate spiritual aspects into their curriculum, but there has been no systematic monitoring of what is happening within departments. Religious education lessons do, however, promote pupils' spiritual awareness strongly.

18. Overall, pupils' moral and social development are satisfactory. The majority of pupils treat each other and adults with respect. The personal and social education programme (PSHE) gives good emphasis to developing pupils' understanding of right and wrong and the moral issues in society. Pupils raise money for those less fortunate, for example Jeans for Genes and the Children

in Need Appeal. Each year, the school holds a sponsored walk in aid of various charities, such as Macmillan Nurses and a children's hospice. In lessons, pupils work well in pairs and small groups when asked to, for example in physical education, where good co-operation is expected. The school council, comprising of one representative from each tutor group, provides good opportunities for some to exercise responsibility and develop skills and understanding in negotiation and teamwork.

19. Opportunities for cultural development are satisfactory. Pupils support a range of sporting and musical activities, and the school takes part in the annual Canterbury Arts Festival. Regular visits to France and Germany extend the cultural dimension for some pupils. Art, music and religious education consider a range of other cultures and religions, but opportunities for understanding diversity are underdeveloped in some subjects. There is not a strong emphasis on raising pupils' understanding of life in a multi-cultural society.

### **Sixth form**

20. Students in the sixth form have positive attitudes to their work and the school.

21. Most sixth formers are polite and courteous; they engage in conversation and debate with visitors and in lessons. They have very good relationships with staff, their peers and younger pupils. Most are keen to learn, although a few are reticent about contributing in lessons. Attitudes to learning are particularly good in history and physical education. Students support charitable causes well. They have some involvement in supporting and working with younger students, for example about a dozen Year 12 students train to be peer counsellors, and sixth formers sit on the school council. Beyond the school, some students take part in the National Bar Mock Trial competition, and each year around 20 students take part in the Canterbury Cathedral Church Schools Day. Students of art, theatre studies and business studies have opportunities to visit art galleries, theatres and local businesses.

22. Although many students attend regularly, and arrive at school on time, some students show a casual attitude to attending school and lessons; attendance, overall, is therefore unsatisfactory. During the inspection, attendance at general studies and key skills lessons was particularly low.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with a number of strengths.

### Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** with a number of strengths. Assessment procedures are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and prepare pupils well for examinations
- Teaching is good in the sixth form
- Lessons are planned well and learning objectives are shared with pupils
- Teachers use a variety of teaching methods to engage pupils' interest
- Good relationships are fostered through encouragement and praise
- Support staff make a positive contribution to pupils' learning
- In some lessons insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to work independently
- Targets on individual education plans for special educational needs pupils are too general
- In some lessons, the challenging behaviour of a small minority of pupils limits the learning of others
- The erratic attendance of some pupils limits their learning

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 183 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	37 (20%)	71 (39 %)	68 (37%)	6 (3%)	1 (1%)	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.*

23. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. The percentage of satisfactory or better teaching has increased from 88 per cent to 96 per cent. Just under 60 per cent was graded good or better and a fifth very good. In the sixth form, teaching was good, overall. All of the lessons observed were at least satisfactory and almost three-quarters were good or better with a fifth being very good.

24. The best teaching was seen in Years 7, 9, 11, 12 and 13 where all lessons were satisfactory or better. The school has faced staffing difficulties in a number of subject areas. It has made considerable efforts to recruit suitable staff and has worked hard to limit the effect of changes in staff and staffing shortages in subjects such as mathematics. Improvements in the quality of teaching are having a positive effect on pupils' achievement. However, the erratic attendance of some pupils limits their learning.

25. Parents, pupils and sixth form students were positive about the school's high expectations. Questionnaire responses from sixth form students indicated that they found teaching challenging and staff knowledgeable. Overall, teaching was at least satisfactory in all subjects in Years 7 to 11 and good in a number including English and science. In the sixth form teaching in all the focus subjects was at least satisfactory. It was good in English, history, ICT, music, psychology and sociology and very good in physical education.

26. Particular strengths in teaching are teachers' good levels of subject knowledge which enable them to challenge pupils effectively. In many departments strong teamwork is a feature, for example in science, teachers share their expertise when planning schemes of work and this helps them to prepare pupils well for examinations. Work is planned in detail and made interesting. For example, in English tasks are relevant and imaginatively resourced and work is matched well to individual pupils'

needs. In geography, work on the environment related to global warming develops pupils' awareness of issues of citizenship and encourages pupils to develop their own ideas.

27. In the best lessons, teachers used a wide variety of teaching methods which engaged pupils' interest. For example, in a very good religious education lesson the scenario for a Bible story was set in modern times. Work was related to pupils' own experiences and pupils were able to develop a good understanding of the relevance of the story and concepts of repentance and forgiveness. In music, teachers show great enthusiasm and make tasks enjoyable. Pupils are motivated, work hard and achieve well. At the start of lessons, learning objectives are made clear to pupils and the time allocated for particular tasks is discussed. This ensures that time is used effectively and the work completed is reviewed at the end of the lesson, to check what has been learnt.

28. In other successful lessons, teachers use demonstration and discussion effectively to develop pupils' understanding. For example, in the best art lessons teachers demonstrated particular techniques and through skilful questioning prompted pupils to look carefully and exchange ideas and opinions. Good relationships are fostered through encouragement and praise. In physical education, all groups of pupils are included and teachers create a positive learning environment where pupils feel confident and are willing to try out new ideas. Pupils are encouraged to support each other and work in groups and pairs. Teachers work hard to enable all pupils to reach their potential. For example, some senior staff teach a small group of Year 11 pupils, with challenging behaviour, and provide them with good support.

29. Satisfactory lessons had some of the features of good and very good lessons. However, in a number of these lessons pupils are often not given sufficient opportunities to work independently and the work is dominated by the teacher. In some lessons, for example in ICT, non-specialist teachers are less successful as they lack the appropriate subject expertise and are unfamiliar with some pieces of equipment. Some parents expressed concern about the quantity and quality of homework. The inspection team found the setting of homework to be satisfactory. However, the quantity and frequency can be variable, for example in mathematics.

30. In a significant number of lessons, teachers had to work very hard to manage the behaviour of a small minority of challenging pupils and this slowed down the pace of learning for all. Most teachers manage to hold the interest of these potentially difficult pupils, but in a few lessons the poor behaviour of some pupils resulted in too little being learnt and the lessons were unsatisfactory. In some groups, staffing changes have had an adverse effect on pupils' learning, for example in mathematics and history and this has led to pupils not achieving their target grades.

31. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in subject lessons is satisfactory, overall. Effective support is provided by learning support assistants, who know the pupils and their needs very well. There is very good joint planning of lessons between subject teachers and learning support assistants in design technology (it is good in English and mathematics) which promotes pupils' achievement very successfully. The school is developing an innovative assessment system for special educational needs, tailored to the needs of different subject departments. It allows subject teachers to identify pupils who may have special educational needs in terms of progress in their subjects, and supports monitoring of the progress of those who have already been identified. It is particularly well developed in design technology, and good examples of its use were seen in English and physical education. The system has the potential to make a significant contribution to the achievement in subjects of pupils with special educational needs across the school. It is subject-specific rather than general, focusing on individual needs in the context of the fine detail of short-term lesson planning. The well-managed programme of 'Successmaker' is effective in raising the level of basic skills of lower-attaining pupils.

32. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well in withdrawal lessons, where staff demonstrate a good understanding of strategies to teach literacy, and provide good general support for individuals, who are usually anxious about their learning.

33. With the notable exception of English in Years 7 to 9, a weakness in the teaching of pupils with special needs is the nature of targets in individual education plans. These are ineffective in promoting pupils' learning as they are not a practical tool for teachers to use. The targets are too

general, are usually not subject-specific, and progress towards them is difficult to judge. Although pupils often know their targets, they are not composed of small enough steps for pupils to take responsibility for their own progress.

34. Most teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses well. Teachers record the details of attainment of each pupil to check on their progress. They also have access to centrally produced attainment data together with predictions of pupils' future attainment in Years 9 and 11.

Consequently, this allows teachers to identify and support individual learning needs within the class.

35. In all year groups, teachers regularly mark pupils' work with helpful comments and advice on how to improve. Teachers accurately gauge pupils' understanding and knowledge and at what level the pupil is working. In Years 7 to 9 in some subjects, such as English, the teachers share this information on National Curriculum levels with the pupils. They then know what they have to do to improve to reach their target level. However, this is not consistent and the pupils do not always understand the language used. The school has recognised this and it is one of their areas for development. In Years 10 and 11, teachers assess work regularly using examination criteria and provide good feedback to pupils.

### **Sixth form**

36. Teaching in the sixth form is good. In all of the subjects inspected in depth, teaching was at least satisfactory. It was good in English, history, ICT, music, psychology and sociology, and very good in physical education. The learning of students who attend regularly is good. However, the erratic attendance of some students limits their progress.

37. Students commented that they valued the challenging teaching and good level of staff expertise. Strengths noted in teaching were similar to those found in the rest of the school. A relative weakness is that students are not encouraged to work independently. For example, in mathematics, students are not expected to research for topics in advance of lessons or to demonstrate their understanding to the rest of the group.

38. Students in the sixth form are supported well through good assessment procedures. Students' work is marked with clear, constructive comments to assist them to understand what they need to do to improve. They find this support and guidance helpful. Students are aware of their target grades, how well they are doing and what they have to do to reach their target.

### **The curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is **satisfactory**. In Years 10 and 11, it has been organised with some flexibility to help meet the needs of particular groups of pupils. Good opportunities are provided for enrichment. Accommodation is satisfactory and learning resources are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils in Years 7 to 9
- The range of examination courses offered for pupils in Years 10 and 13 is currently narrower than normally seen. However, it is about to be reviewed
- The provision of small groups, together with off-site arrangements, for some pupils in Years 10 and 11 is catering well for their individual needs
- The provision for PSHE is good and contributes positively to pupils' development
- Extra-curricular provision and careers education are good

### **Commentary**

39. The quality and breadth of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 are good. Pupils have the opportunity to study a full range of subjects to include dance, drama and PSHE. Religious education is taught to all pupils following the locally agreed syllabus. To promote the school's specialist technology status, the organisation of design and technology allows pupils in Year 9 to choose an element of the syllabus a year early and continue through to GCSE. This arrangement helps pupils to develop a deeper understanding of their chosen subject and is having a positive effect on their

overall knowledge. Pupils study one foreign language, either French or Spanish. There are no opportunities for a second language and German is to be phased out gradually.

40. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory and offers a choice of subjects to study at GCSE level. Currently, no vocational or work-related courses are offered as options and the curriculum is narrower than normally seen. A review of curriculum provision is about to take place. An alternative curriculum has been provided to help meet the needs of a group of disaffected pupils in Year 11. These pupils follow a similar curriculum to other pupils, but are taught in smaller groups by senior and experienced teachers. This arrangement has been successful in improving pupils' motivation and progress. Provision for a small number of pupils has been made at an off-site centre. This project has been developed in conjunction with other local schools and is for pupils who have experienced difficulties in school or who have a history of attendance problems. Here, pupils can follow relevant work-related courses and receive support to develop self-confidence and personal development. To promote the school's technology status all pupils have regular weekly ICT lessons and this develops their skills effectively.

41. The programme for PSHE is good and fully meets the requirements for drugs, sex and relationships education. The programme is managed well and topics are re-visited in subsequent years. Specialist training has been undertaken by several members of staff and the curriculum is supported by a programme of visiting specialists.

42. The arrangement for careers education is good. Pupils are first introduced to the careers provision in Year 7, continuing in Years 8 and 9 as part of their citizenship studies. A consultant from the Connexions service visits the school on a weekly basis to interview pupils and provide careers advice. Additional interviews take place to support pupils who are in target groups. The community contributes well to the curriculum through work experience. All pupils in Year 10 undertake two weeks of work experience. Pupils are encouraged to seek their own placements.

43. The extra-curricular provision is good. There is a wide variety of clubs and activities to meet the interests of pupils. A particular strength of the extra-curricular provision is music, with a high proportion of pupils contributing to public performances and taking part in the many musical ensembles offered for pupils. Participation in sport is also good with a wide selection of sporting activities to include, dance, trampoline sessions, netball and basketball, skiing trips and competitive fixtures.

44. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There is a mixture of support, both in class and withdrawal. The 'special class' provision for pupils in Year 11 is a good response to the emerging needs of the school whilst still adhering to the schools inclusive philosophy.

45. The school has a good complement of staff, but recruitment has been difficult in mathematics, ICT and design and technology. This has affected the continuity of learning. Large teams of non-specialist teachers are involved in the teaching of citizenship and ICT in Years 7 to 9; this creates extra demands of team management to ensure that these subjects are being taught effectively.

46. The number of learning support assistants to help pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Science has a very good number of support staff, but the support given to food technology has not been well directed and this has led to difficulties in keeping the rooms hygienic.

47. Accommodation is satisfactory. Newer buildings have augmented the teaching of English, drama, expressive arts and mathematics. Some of these rooms now include the use of modern technologies to make teaching more effective. A well-planned rolling programme has started to improve the decoration and refurbishment of classrooms and laboratories. Through a partnership project, a new food hall has been built.

48. The original 1960's building is showing signs of deterioration. The very narrow staircases are cramped at the changeover of lessons. Many of the wooden stair treads are worn, presenting a hazard and a programme of replacement is planned. A start has been made to improving the access to the complex arrangements of buildings on the site. These present many significant challenges for people with physical disabilities, including access to the library on the first floor. The school has considered these issues and has drawn up plans to relocate some teaching to the ground floor, if necessary. The tiny room set aside for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Although the literacy teaching room is adequate, the group work area is insufficient for more than six pupils and is a thoroughfare.

49. Music has benefited in gaining practice rooms, albeit a distance from the main classrooms, making supervision difficult. Since the last report, the condition of the art rooms has not improved sufficiently and this is having a negative impact on standards.

50. Sports facilities are satisfactory and the new perimeter fencing has made very good improvements to the condition of the playing fields. The sports hall, in common with the rest of the school, suffers from poor daily cleaning and routine maintenance. This is having a damaging effect particularly on areas that have been more recently built that are now showing deterioration. Windows and skylights are very dirty and give poor natural lighting. The lack of blinds, and dilapidated curtains, makes the conditions for learning uncomfortable in some classrooms.

51. The additional funding that the school receives for its special technology status is used very well to increase the amount of computer equipment in the school and, overall, resources are good. Art and music stand out as areas that still lack sufficient resources for ICT and the musical instruments are dilapidated. The very good library building has good ICT facilities for electronic learning. The facilities are used well at lunchtimes and before and after school, but the level of borrowing is low.

## **Sixth form**

52. The quality and range of learning opportunities in the sixth form are satisfactory. The school offers a wide range of mainly academic courses leading to AS and A-level. This provision is enhanced by the partnership with other sixth forms. Three vocational courses are offered, two at advanced level. Students also have the opportunity to retake GCSE English and mathematics. Students follow a general studies course and satisfactory provision is made for the teaching of key skills.

53. Before entering the sixth form, students are provided with satisfactory guidance and information when selecting their courses. However, discussions with students indicated that many are not fully prepared for the significant demands of advanced study and find the transition from GCSE courses difficult. Overall, the current range of courses does not fully meet the needs of all students.

54. Teachers are well qualified and experienced to meet the demands of the sixth form curriculum. Overall, accommodation for the sixth form is satisfactory. Through a partnership project, the on-site nursery has provided significant funding to enable the development of a new sixth form common room space and classrooms. Although the sixth form now has its own large area, this is underused except for assemblies and break-times. Students do not have their own dedicated area to spend their independent study periods and they are sent to the main school library. This arrangement inhibits other younger pupils and whole classes from using the library during lessons.

## Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are **good** and pupils receive **satisfactory** support, advice and guidance. **Very good** transfer and induction arrangements are in place. The school involves pupils in the school council.

## Main strengths

- The school takes good care of its pupils
- The staff have a good personal knowledge of pupils
- Transfer arrangements for pupils from primary schools are very good

## Commentary

55. Arrangements for the care of pupils are good. There are no significant issues with the application of the procedures for child protection, first aid and health and safety. However, some health and safety points were raised with the school during the inspections, which were acted upon. The poor state of repair of some parts of the accommodation presents the school with particular problems. However, these are being dealt with systematically through a rolling refurbishment programme. The staff have a very good personal knowledge of the pupils and use this to give good care and protection. Pupils are confident about approaching an adult in school in order to discuss any problems that they may have.

56. Parents are very pleased with the arrangements for settling their children into school. A very good induction programme is in place for pupils transferring to the school in Year 7, with pupils coming from up to 50 feeder schools. Regular visits to the school by the pupils enable them to experience subject areas and the use of Year 8 mentors gives them extra confidence in moving to a large school.

57. The systems of guidance and support of the pupils are satisfactory although, due to a new system being introduced this year, many pupils felt the length of time given to make their option choices in Year 9 was too short. Teachers provide effective support and guidance in their lessons although not all pupils are clear about their expected end-of-Year 9 assessment levels. All Year 11 pupils also have good access to external careers advisers and the careers guidance is good.

58. Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. Assessment procedures are good and the provision required in statements is made. Pupils learning English as an additional language are well supported. Their language competence is reviewed every two weeks by the learning support assistants and a teacher from the language support centre.

59. The school seeks to involve the pupils in decision-making and there is a school council. Pupils said they could identify some improvements made as a result of suggestions put forward to the school council. However, they feel that they had more input when sixth form students led the council.

## Sixth form

60. Support is good. Students value highly the support that they get from their teachers in the sixth form. Their progress is monitored well and the targets they are set motivate them to improve. Sound guidance is provided for students when they select their sixth form courses. However, many are not fully prepared for the considerable demands of advanced level study and find the transition from Year 11 difficult. Students said they would appreciate earlier guidance about higher education.

61. Students feel that the school does listen to their views but have some concerns that their ideas take a long time to be put into practice. In general, they are positive about the school.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **satisfactory** links with parents, **good** links with the community, and **very good** links with other schools.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have generally positive views of the school
- Good relationships with the local community support pupils' learning and their personal development
- Very good links with local schools at primary and secondary level are well developed and extend pupils' learning
- Some reports do not give clear guidance on how pupils can improve
- The school does not have a well-established system for seeking and acting on parents' views

### Commentary

62. The school is popular and oversubscribed. Those parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, or who attended the meeting with the lead inspector, generally expressed satisfaction with what it provides. They feel that the school expects their children to work hard and do their best, and praised the very good induction arrangements. A number have concerns about the behaviour of some pupils, which disrupts a number of lessons.

63. Parents receive appropriate information about the school and their children's progress. They have opportunities throughout the year to talk with tutors and subject teachers about how their children are getting on. The pupils' annual reports are generally satisfactory, but some do not give parents enough information about how their children can improve their work. The school is prompt to contact parents if there are any concerns, and most parents feel they are able to talk to someone quickly if there is a problem or concern regarding their child. The prospectus and governors' annual report are informative and meet legal requirements. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed about future events and celebrate the school's successes.

64. Parental involvement in the school is satisfactory. A good number of parents give support as governors, or through the Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA). The PTFA recently raised money to refurbish the school's medical room. When there are particular issues concerning behaviour, attendance or other educational needs, most parents are prepared to work with the school. However, a number of parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly. Sometimes, parents' views are taken into account, for example over school policies, but parents generally are not extensively consulted as part of school improvement.

65. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop its links with the local community. Links with the local Business Education Partnership are particularly good, and numerous local businesses help by providing work placements for Year 10 pupils, and temporary placements for staff in industry. The school nurse and the community police officer regularly visit and involve themselves in the life of the school. The on-site nursery provides a good facility for staff and the local community. Adult education thrives at the school, with courses in many subjects - from astronomy to wine tasting - taking place most evenings. Local organisations such as a theatre school, church group and football club regularly use the school premises.

66. The school has very good links with a wide range of schools and colleges. Good links are in place with the large number of feeder primary schools, and these ensure that pupils' transfer to the school goes very smoothly and that they settle in well. The school hosts an annual inter-primary schools sports day. The school has very good links because of its work with partnership schools through its specialist technology status. Through these, there is extensive use of the facilities and resources by other schools, and shared use of staff expertise, particularly in science, technology and mathematics. Links with a local secondary school have been developed to strengthen the school's curriculum. Sixth form students attend a day course at the University of Kent, in order to

prepare them for university entry interviews. Ongoing productive links with a local college are in place, to which many students transfer.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are **good** and the leadership offered by the headteacher is **very good**. The governance of the school is good, as is the leadership of other key staff.

### **Main strengths**

- The very good leadership of the headteacher has ensured a clear direction for school improvement
- Most curriculum areas are well led and managed
- The governing body has a clear view of its role and a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- A very good performance review system, and very good support for continuing professional development, have contributed to the improvements in the standard of teaching
- Arrangements for the induction of new staff are very good
- The school manages its resources well and provides good value for money

### **Commentary**

67. Leadership is dedicated to improving standards and achievement in all aspects of the school's work. The headteacher provides a very good role model. He is prominent around the school, and leads from the front, for example sharing in the teaching of some of the more challenging older pupils. He is a prominent figure nationally in education, sharing his vision and strategy with other professional managers of schools, through articles and training sessions. His commitment to improving standards is understood and shared by staff and governors. In responding to the issue of special educational needs highlighted in the last inspection report, he has ensured that inclusion is now a strong feature of Chaucer.

68. In particular, since his appointment the headteacher has ensured clear direction and strategy for the school as it has adjusted to its changing circumstances in recent years. The school's development planning is founded on raising achievement and improving standards. Significant indicators of the effectiveness of the headteacher's stewardship include good academic achievement, increasing popularity as a school of first choice for parents, increased numbers entering the sixth form, good links with the community, and very good partnership arrangements with local schools and colleges.

69. Overall, the effectiveness of management is good. The school has faced several challenging staffing issues. It has displayed a strong commitment to appointing high calibre staff and the quality of teaching has improved. Very good performance management procedures ensure that staff are supported and have access to training that is relevant to their needs. Workforce remodelling has begun, with successful appointments to support roles ensuring senior managers are free to focus their professional expertise on their management roles rather than administration. Managers are committed to enabling the school achieve its vision and strategic aims and objectives. This has resulted, for example in most departments undertaking successfully, analysis of performance, self-review and target setting, which have contributed to raising achievement. All staff are very clear about their roles, responsibilities and personal objectives. School policies and strategies evolve from discussions with staff and governors. These are given prominence in the school handbook, and robust monitoring procedures are built in to ensure feasibility and accountability.

70. The leadership of special educational needs and inclusion is very good. Policy and practice are embedded firmly within the school's philosophy of inclusion - the needs of individuals come first. As a result effective provision is made for a wide range of needs. The day-to-day management of the complex system of support is well managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator, who has created an effective team. The school complies fully with legislative requirements regarding special educational needs.

71. The governing body provides good governance. It has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, through regular visits and a well-developed system of sub-committees. It plays a significant role in driving forward a shared vision for the school, with the aims of improving standards, promoting its role in the local community and being a truly inclusive school. Governors successfully fulfil the role of critical friend to the headteacher and senior staff and ensure that statutory requirements are met.

72. Financial planning is good and resources are well managed to meet the school's priorities and the educational needs of its pupils. Administrative systems are well managed and there is a clear focus on 'best value' for the school. The school budget is under considerable pressure as the school site is complex to manage and maintain, and the headteacher and senior managers have ambitious plans for future development. Funds, including those from the school's specialist Technology College status, are used prudently and thoughtfully to support improvement plans. The governing body offers good, but constructively critical support to this aspect of the management of the school.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	4,791,508	Balance from previous year	312,983
Total expenditure	4,448,557	Balance carried forward to the next	**342,951
Expenditure per pupil	3228		

*\*\* This figure includes £199,977 of funding that was allocated for use on specific designated projects, such as building programmes and had to be spent by 31.08.03.*

**Sixth form**

73. Leadership and management are good. The academic and pastoral work of the sixth form are well organised and co-ordinated. Administration is effective, although considerable time is spent following up student absence. Form tutors provide good support for students and the use of academic tutoring to set targets and develop students' achievements is good. Leadership and management of subjects are good, overall.

## 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	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	good

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

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, especially up to Year 9
- Good teaching is based on detailed planning and a clear focus on pupils' learning
- Assessment data are used rigorously to raise achievement and analyse results
- Leadership is dedicated to ensuring the highest possible standards
- There are pockets of underachievement, particularly of girls, in Years 10 and 11
- Too little use is made of ICT

##### Commentary

##### Examination results

74. Results in the National Curriculum examinations at the end of Year 9 were above average and well above when compared to similar schools. English results were better than those in mathematics and science. Although girls attained more highly than boys, the difference between them was less than found nationally. Standards have risen since the last inspection and boys in particular have made a significant improvement.

75. GCSE results in English language were below the national average in the proportion of grades A\* to C grades but in line with grades A\*-G. The results represent an improvement over the previous year and satisfactory achievement by pupils since Year 9. Most pupils are also entered for English literature GCSE and results in 2003 were similar to those in English language. Girls outperformed boys in both examinations but by less of a margin than found nationally.

##### Standards and achievement

76. Pupils are entering the school with improving standards in reading and writing but with attainment that is still below average. They achieve well as they move through the school from Year 7 to Year 9 making good progress. The average standards attained by the current Year 11 represent satisfactory achievement of the majority in relation to the standard of attainment at the start of Year 10. However, it reflects some underachievement by a small minority of pupils, particularly girls, in Years 10 and 11 who become disaffected and reluctant to learn. Higher-attaining pupils use spoken and written language with confidence and poise. They can structure an argument and sustain it orally and in writing. Pupils willingly volunteer to read aloud in class and most do this well. All pupils can read well enough to cope with the texts they study and the majority can analyse character, motive and plot as well as offering description. Pupils know the examination requirements and most respond well to the very helpful guidance and structured tasks given in the teaching. By drafting and redrafting their written work, pupils present finished pieces of which they are proud. Pupils with

special needs benefit from receiving well planned extra support in class. A small minority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 reject the greater demands of GCSE. Their resultant disruptive behaviour, absence or low expectation affects the progress of the whole class. Little evidence was seen of reading for pleasure, other than by Year 7 pupils. This is not helped by the library being used primarily as a base by the sixth form for their private study.

## Teaching and learning

77. Teaching is a strength of the department. Detailed planning for each year and every topic offers a programme of work that reinforces and extends pupils' learning. Learning objectives are made clear so that pupils know what they are learning and they can review their progress at the end of each lesson. Imaginatively resourced and interesting tasks are matched to individual pupils' needs. All work is assessed so that pupils know how well they are doing and where they need to improve. The consistency in teaching ensures pupils understand that expectations and routines are of the same high standard in every class. Teachers' insistence on respect and politeness usually results in good behaviour and good concentration. It is to the teachers' credit that they generally manage to hold the interest of pupils, many of them girls, who are potentially difficult and attention seeking. When this breaks down there is a good system of support between the teachers in the department.

## Leadership and management

78. The English department is ambitious and dedicated to raising standards and its leadership is an area of strength. It is reflective and self-critical with clear strategic thinking. Inventiveness in using resources, coupled with recognition and sharing of good practice, amongst the hard working team of teachers and support staff, are particular strengths. The detailed schemes of work, prepared painstakingly by the team, are used effectively to structure pupils' work and map their progress. Assessment data are used very well to monitor and raise both pupils' standards and teachers' performance. Since the last inspection, an area which remains a weakness is the restricted access to ICT. However, overall, the department has made good improvement and has the capacity to continue to improve.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

79. The standard of pupils' reading and writing in subjects other than English is satisfactory. Good opportunities are provided in lessons to learn the meaning and spelling of subject-specific words which are usually displayed on the walls. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are corrected by some teachers, but this is inconsistent. Pupils are encouraged to research and read around a topic and in some subjects they have opportunities to read aloud and make presentations to the class. Access to the library for wider reading and research is restricted during lesson time, but good before and after school and during break and lunchtime. The librarians are welcoming and helpful.

## Modern Foreign Languages

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and Learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Good
Improvement since last inspection	Good

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching, learning and achievement in Years 7 to 9
- Good provision for extra-curricular activities in and beyond school
- Insufficient use of assessment to help pupils understand their own progress
- Insufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently
- Disappointing results at GCSE

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

80. GCSE results in 2003 in German and Spanish were well below the national average, and a little below the national average in French. In 2002 GCSE French results were above national average.

### **Standards and achievement**

81. By the end of Year 9, pupils' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in French, German and Spanish are average. They are able to understand a good range of spoken and written language in a variety of contexts, and higher-attaining pupils are able to produce written work which uses a range of past, present and future tenses correctly. Their spoken language is often good, and many pupils use the foreign language spontaneously in the classroom to communicate with the teacher. Overall, standards are improving from Years 7 to 9 because of more effective teaching. By the end of Year 11, standards are average in all three foreign languages. Pupils are able to adapt written texts using familiar language, for example letters, and are able to use a range of tenses. They have a satisfactory knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. They are able to pick out familiar words and phrases from spoken or written texts. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 7 to 9, and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. The unsatisfactory attendance of a number of pupils has a negative impact on their achievement.

### **Teaching and learning**

82. Teaching and learning are good in all three languages from Years 7 to 9. Teachers generally plan lessons very well, making objectives clear to pupils. The logical sequence of activities in lessons enables pupils to learn well. Some teaching is very good, and is characterised by challenging questioning techniques, very good use of the foreign language in the classroom by the teacher, and lessons which are interesting and varied, enabling pupils to make very good progress. In a small number of lessons, insufficiently challenging or well-planned work and poor behaviour have a negative impact on learning. Assessment does not make pupils sufficiently aware of how to improve their work. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Activities are planned to match pupils' learning needs, although the lessons are less varied than in Years 7 to 9. In most lessons pupils are well behaved, and teachers support individual pupils well. In a small number of lessons pupils are not sufficiently focused on their work, which means they learn less well than they might. Generally pupils are not given enough opportunities to work independently. Teachers have very good knowledge of the languages they teach. Good use is made of ICT in Years 7 to 11 to support pupils' learning of languages. In Years 10 and 11, higher-attaining linguists are well served by extra-curricular classes to support high achievement, and there is a good programme of visits to France, Germany and Spain.

### **Leadership and management**

83. Leadership is satisfactory and management is good. The teachers work well as a team, sharing ideas and materials, and are committed to raising standards in the subject. The head of department is very well supported by another teacher with management responsibility in modern languages. The team has effectively analysed its weaknesses and is taking steps to deal with them. At the time of the last inspection a number of weaknesses were identified and progress since then has been good.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan their lessons well and have a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics
- A specially constructed group in Year 11 provides good support for pupils with challenging behaviour, to promote their achievement
- ICT is used effectively as a teaching resource to assist pupils' achievement
- The discontinuity in staffing in recent years has not provided pupils with the stability they need to reach their potential
- The unsatisfactory behaviour and erratic attendance of a small minority of pupils hinders pupils' learning in some classes
- In all lessons, higher-attaining pupils are insufficiently targeted and challenged to reach their potential

### Commentary

#### Examination results

84. Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were below average in comparison with all schools, though average in comparison with similar schools. Results in the 2003 tests were lower than those attained in 2002. The GCSE results in 2003 were below average and showed a slight decline on those of 2002. This was mainly due to staffing difficulties.

#### Standards and achievement

85. Current standards are similar. In relation to their attainment at the start of Year 7 and Year 9 pupils achieve satisfactorily. Higher-attaining pupils can calculate the interior and exterior angles of regular polygons. The lower-attainers can calculate missing angles both in a triangle and on a straight line. In Year 11, higher-attaining pupils can use trigonometric ratios to find the missing sides of right-angled triangles and use this theory to calculate the elevation of buildings. The lower-attaining pupils can calculate the exchange rate values of different currencies.

#### Teaching and learning

86. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons well and have a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Teachers usually share lesson aims with the pupils, though only in the better lessons are the tasks and time allocated made known to them. Where this happens, pupils understand the relevance of their learning and the progress to be made. A specially constructed group in Year 11 provides very good differentiated support for pupils with challenging behaviour, in order they may reach their potential. The use of the three-part lesson structure gives pupils a variety of activities which assist their learning. However, the finishes to lessons are not as effective as they could be to engage interest and recap learning. In all classes, higher-attaining pupils are insufficiently targeted and challenged to achieve their potential. Pupil self-evaluation of their learning is not a common feature in lessons. Consequently, pupils' understanding is not always known to the teacher and results in misconceptions on the pupils' part. ICT is utilised

effectively in lessons as a teaching resource. In one Year 9 lesson, it was used successfully to explain the notation and theory of probability. Pupils found this engaging and easy to follow. Homework is provided, but the quantity and frequency is variable. This leads to inconsistent expectations of pupils. Helpful, constructive comments are evident in teachers' marking and this supports pupils' learning and raising of standards.

### Leadership and management

87. Leadership is satisfactory with a vision of how to move the department forward. Teachers work hard to raise standards and there is good teamwork with effectively delegated roles. The recruitment and retention of suitably qualified staff has been a constant problem. As a result, pupils' continuity of learning has been interrupted and standards have shown some decline. This situation has now begun to improve with the appointment of new staff. Monitoring of teaching does take place; however, it has not enabled all teachers to manage a minority of pupils' unsatisfactory behaviour effectively. Schemes of work have been re-developed; though still do not challenge higher-attaining pupils sufficiently. The use of performance data is not sufficiently developed to identify the pupils' progress in relation to their prior attainment or substantiate their targets. Extra-curricular activities are good and consist of Fantasy Football, Key Stage 3 Mathematics Club, as well as further support via lunchtime and revision classes. Good links exist with primary feeder schools, whereby a teacher from Chaucer regularly teaches a numeracy lesson to the primary pupils.

### Mathematics across the curriculum

88. The teaching of mathematics as a basic skill in all subjects across the curriculum is satisfactory. The mathematics department has supported some subjects, such as science, on agreeing a commonality of approach to numerical methodology. However, the co-ordination and support given to other subjects is insufficient to establish and develop numeracy across the curriculum.

### SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

### Main strengths

- Very good leadership and management lead to good achievement through very good schemes of work, targeting and analysis
- Very good teamwork leads to good improvement
- Good teaching

### Commentary

#### Examination results

89. In the Year 9 tests in 2003, results met national expectations. They were above average at level 5 compared with similar schools. At level 6 and compared with prior attainment they were well above average. At GCSE, results in 2003 were significantly above average in double award science. They were above average in A\*-G grades and in A\*-B grades. For both single and double award science, pupils' results were significantly above the other subjects they took.

## **Standards and achievement**

90. The school intake is below average, lacking the top end of the attainment range. By GCSE, pupils attain 10 per cent more higher grades than are predicted by their attainment on entry. Achievement is good for both lower-attaining and for above average pupils, in both Years 9 and 11. This marks a considerable improvement since the previous report. Standards seen at the school bear out this picture. Standards in literacy and numeracy meet expectations and there is good use of ICT. Year 9 pupils in lower sets are well supported and well motivated. In most lessons, pupils' attitudes are good and this contributes to the good achievement. However, a small minority of pupils are often absent and show uncooperative attitudes when they are present. Many of these pupils are contained in a special set taught by senior staff in Year 11 and are capable of satisfactory work when they are well managed, for example being skilled at Power Point presentations. In Year 10, a more long-term solution is attempted through the introduction of GCSE at Specification D, a more skills based course, which may help with pupil interest and self-esteem.

## **Teaching and learning**

91. Teaching and learning are good, as might be expected by the good achievement. It is not showy or performance orientated, but relies on consistent teamwork and good knowledge and understanding. The departmental ethos gives good support for new initiatives, such as the Key Stage 3 strategy and the new Specification D GCSE. All of the department's schemes of work have been revamped in the light of best practice, a considerable amount of work, which is one of the contributors to the good learning. A further contribution as a direct result of technology status is the provision of enough textbooks for all to have at home, which directly contributes to the positive role of homework in promoting achievement. The department also makes good use of targets and motivational strategies with rewards for meritorious work. Investigatory work has improved both in the quality of coursework and in the thinking skills course (CASE). Opportunities for data presentation were given to the lower-attaining Year 10 group (although their ICT skills are currently weak). The best teaching is not only knowledgeable in subject content but also in methodology – particularly in the need to give time for pupils to think for themselves.

## **Leadership and management**

92. The department is particularly strong in self-evaluation and monitoring. It has a good improvement plan. Analysis of achievement by particular groups is very good and has directly resulted in some of the improvement since the previous inspection. The special educational needs policy is good and matched by good practice and by good achievement. The performance of higher-attainers has much improved since the previous inspection and they are well challenged. Both curriculum and assessment have improved since the previous inspection. Curriculum is now very good and assessment is good. Technical support is very good. Financial control is good. As befits a technology school, the department makes good use of ICT in both administration and in teaching.

93. Since the previous inspection, all the issues mentioned or implied have been actively dealt with, including gender analysis and the achievement of girls, evaluation and targeted support, and the achievement of higher-attainers. Curriculum and assessment have been refreshed in the light of the Key Stage 3 strategy, resources have been improved and the numbers staying on post -16 have increased. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the previous inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The GCSE results have improved significantly over recent years
- The revised schemes of work are contributing positively to pupils' understanding of the use of ICT in its wider sense
- Pupils use their well-established skills to present information effectively
- The planning of work in Year 7 lacks sufficient challenge and is not building upon pupils' existing knowledge

### Commentary

#### Examination results

94. The teachers' assessments of 14-year-old pupils indicate standards that are slightly above the national average. In 2003, GCSE examination results were well above the national average. These results are a significant improvement on previous years showing a steep upward trend. Boys' and girls' attainment was similar.

#### Standards and achievement

95. Pupils' previous ICT experience is varied, but most enter the school in Year 7 with average knowledge and reach the expected level by the time they are 14-years-old. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have good knowledge about presenting information. They use applications such as word-processing with confidence. Pupils have a good understanding of a multi-media presentation, producing slide shows with moving text and art images. They have sound understanding of control technology and can explain where it might be used in its wider sense. Pupils know that computers are used for modelling. An example of this was seen in a Year 9 class planning the layout of a kitchen and displaying their plans in three-dimensions. Pupils have an understanding of the use of a spreadsheet, but overall their knowledge is not as strong as in the other elements.

96. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. Pupils' have a positive approach to the subject and it is likely that many in the GCSE groups will exceed the expected level by the end of Year 11. Pupils have a well-established knowledge of data handling. They are able to select information and use systems to check that the data that they enter are valid.

#### Teaching and learning

97. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory and good in Years 10 and 11. The reason for this variation in quality is that the majority of the teaching in Years 10 and 11 is delivered by teachers who are subject specialists. They have good subject knowledge and can challenge pupils effectively. A particular strength of the teaching is the way teachers move around class keeping pupils focused on the task and intervening when required. This contributes positively to the pace of learning. Teachers have good discipline, dealing sensitively and promptly with

potential behaviour problems allowing learning to proceed without interruption. The subject has adopted the nationally recommended three part lesson ending with a plenary session which checks upon pupils' learning and understanding. However, a weakness is that these sessions are often too brief and do not allow pupils to show what they know and understand, nor do they provide opportunities for pupils to present and talk about their work. On the occasions when teaching is less successful, teachers lack the appropriate subject expertise and are unfamiliar with the use of equipment such as the digital projector to demonstrate procedures. This results in pupils being unsure of the tasks to be completed and time has to be spent visiting individuals to re-explain the procedures slowing the pace of learning.

### Leadership and management

98. The leadership of the subject is very good. An effective team approach has been developed and a clear vision for the future of the subject and the need to maintain and improve standards. Clear self-evaluation procedures are in place contributing positively to pupils' achievement and recent GCSE results. Overall, the management is good.

99. Assessment procedures are clearly established. Pupils are aware of their progress and ways to improve their work. This is having a positive effect on pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11. The recently revised schemes of work are contributing positively to pupils' understanding of the use of ICT beyond the school. However some of the planning lacks challenge and needs modifying, in particular Year 7 to build effectively on pupils' existing knowledge. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

100. The last inspection stated that not all subjects were using ICT to support pupils' learning. Most subjects have made provision in their schemes of work, but its use is not consistent. However, good use was seen in several subjects, successfully supporting pupils' learning. Effective use was seen in physical education using digital cameras to record and analyse pupils' performances. The use of the interactive whiteboard features well in mathematics to demonstrate three-dimensional images and symmetry. The modern languages department has their own suite of computers using interactive programs successfully to support pupils' language development. Use in other subjects is generally satisfactory. Progress at times is limited because demand for use of the computer suites is too great. This is presenting a problem for some departments that do not have the appropriate resources within their own areas. The learning resource area is equipped with a range of computers that are at the disposal of the English and mathematics departments. Use in history and religious education is unsatisfactory.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Results at the end of Years 9 and 11 are consistently above national averages, as are current standards, and most pupils achieve well
- Teachers' planning is good and pupils respond well to their enthusiasm, knowledge and the wide range of methods used to support their learning
- Relationships are good, and teachers encourage high expectations of behaviour and performance
- Teachers are not always consistent in their practice, and assessment could be used more effectively to help pupils improve their performance

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

101. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average, lacking the top end of the attainment range. The results of Year 9 assessments in 2003 were above those reported nationally, but slightly lower than the previous two years. Pupils' achieve fewer of the highest grades. However, GCSE examination results in 2003 were significantly above the national average, and well above those for similar schools. There has been consistent improvement over the last four years. Boys, in particular, did very well when compared with other schools, although girls gained more of the highest grades.

### **Standards and achievement**

102. In Year 9, standards are just above average, and represent good achievement as pupils enter the school with below average standards. In Year 11, current standards are also above average, and pupils' achievement is good, as they maintain their progress and do well against predicted targets.

### **Teaching and Learning**

103. In all years learning is consistently good, because teachers are knowledgeable, organised and committed to their pupils' progress. In the best lessons, teachers' enthusiasm, pace and expectation lead to very good achievement by pupils. Teachers use a wide range of methods and this supports pupils' different learning styles and leads to enthusiasm for the subject. The work set is relevant and interesting. For example, pupils in Year 9 develop concern for the environment and an awareness of issues of world citizenship through their study of global warming and the greenhouse effect. Teachers help and encourage pupils of all levels of attainment to think for themselves. Assessment is well organised, but teachers make insufficient use of it to ensure that they fully challenge all pupils: most pupils do not know exactly what they can and cannot do, so they lack the independence to take full responsibility for their own learning and improvement.

### **Leadership and management**

104. Leadership is satisfactory. The department has a firm commitment to improvement, but has undergone a number of recent changes, which have impacted on the consistency of its teaching and direction. Some recent national developments have not impacted fully on the department's work, for example the Key Stage 3 Strategy. Management is good, because many systems are very thorough and decisions are based on reflection. However, some systems are inconsistently used, for example not all teachers apply the marking system with the same rigour and department meetings do not focus consistently enough on improving teaching and learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Much work has been done to improve the use of ICT, but issues of access and resources remain to be resolved. General teaching resources are very good.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

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

  

Leadership and management	n/a
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9
- The experienced team of teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise
- Good relationships with pupils contribute to their learning
- There are insufficient opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum, for example, through the use of ICT or visits

## Commentary

### Examination results

105. Teacher assessments in 2003 indicated that pupils reached standards in line with national expectations by the end of Year 9. Results in the GCSE examination for 2003 were broadly in line with national averages.

### Standards and achievement

106. Current standards in Year 9 are similar and pupils achieve well. In Year 9, pupils wrote well about the use of propaganda in the First World War. For example, all pupils in a Year 9 class were able to comment on the use of symbolism to convey messages. Higher-attaining pupils explained clearly that, although biased in its message, such propaganda images were still useful to historians in explaining and understanding major conflict. Standards of pupils seen in Years 10 and 11 were overall in line with expectations and pupils are achieving satisfactorily. For example, all pupils in a group studying the settlement of the homesteaders in the American West showed a strong understanding of this development over time. Higher-attaining pupils were able to draw on their previous learning to make comparisons with the women of the Plains Indians. Pupils seen in a lower-attaining group showed good oral understanding of the reasons for the development of cattle ranching, and the coming of the railway, although many needed much help in translating this into written responses. The achievement of some pupils is limited by their erratic attendance.

### Teaching and learning

107. Teaching seen through the inspection varied from very good to satisfactory. A very good lesson with a Year 7 class looking at castle building, succeeded because the teacher had very clear expectations of the pupils, clear and simply stated lesson outcomes, and challenging activities for all pupils. Teaching that was only satisfactory, for example a Year 8 lesson on the Gunpowder Plot, missed opportunities to ensure clear pupil outcomes, reflect on the day's learning, and provide for higher-attaining pupils. Good teaching was observed in Years 10 and 11, but due to staffing changes, pupils in one challenging group were seen over time not to be reaching their target grades, and so affecting overall standards for the year. Teachers ensure calm working environments and offer regular support through marking and encouragement.

## Leadership and management

108. Following recent staffing changes, a new head of department has been appointed who has been in post less than one term. Consequently, no overall judgement can be made of the effectiveness of leadership and management. Since the last inspection there have been many changes in the school and direct comparisons are not easy. Appropriate targets for development are in place. During the inspection there was little evidence of enrichment of the curriculum through the use of the library, ICT, or out-of-class activities, although there are plans to improve this aspect of provision.

## Religious education

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

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Very good

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in the GCSE short course
- Very good teaching leads to pupils valuing achievement and learning
- A positive atmosphere results from rapid improvement in provision, developing GCSE qualifications, and progression into sixth form learning
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is underdeveloped
- The use of ICT and visits are underdeveloped within the schemes of work

## Commentary

### Examination results

109. In the 2003 short course, results were in line with national expectations and well above the average for similar schools. Two thirds of pupils attained A\*-C grades. Pupils achieved very well.

### Standards and achievement

110. By the end of Year 9 standards are in line with expectations. Higher standards predominate in Years 7 to 8. Expectations in Year 9 are too low at times, especially for those who already understand more abstract religious and philosophical terms. Overall, pupils' achievements are good. They are articulate and generally write with care offering independent views about religions they are taught.

111. Current standards of work in Years 10 and 11 are above average, overall. Well-chosen and appropriate tasks lead to good responses at all levels of attainment. For high-attaining pupils, the challenge of writing a café conversation between two philosophers, such as Paley and Nietzsche led to outstanding work. At all levels, pupils produce their own poetry, and low-attaining pupils put simple definitions and diagrams to good use, for example in arguing for and against the existence of God. Achievement is very good and pupils are trained to respond well to examination questions, learning how to improve their own answers over time. Both boys and girls in Years 10 and 11 are supported well and given every opportunity to achieve their potential.

## Teaching and learning

112. Teaching and learning are very good. Very good teaching is characterised by both very good subject knowledge and an exemplary variety of teaching skills. This draws out individual responses in pupils of all ages and abilities. Lessons are enjoyable and stimulating. In a very good Year 10 lesson about David and Bathsheba, the scene was set by showing some pupils an illustration and expecting them to draw what they saw for others to guess what was happening. Then the scenario was described in modern terms, so that when the group read the bible story they could appreciate David's realisation of the evil he had done, and understand how some of the psalms are expressions of repentance and the need for forgiveness. In another very good lesson, Year 10 pupils were asked to put forward arguments for and against capital punishment and discuss different religious approaches to crime, such as 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' They were able to build up a good set of arguments which provided a plan for extended writing. A weakness is that pupils do not always know how they can improve the standard of their work.

## Leadership and management

113. Leadership is good, supporting team participation and values. The focus on teaching and learning sharing good practice leads to pupils gaining understanding and appreciation. Management is very good; particularly teaching and learning, staff development and the curriculum. Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is underdeveloped. Currently the targeting of gifted and talented pupils is insufficient as is the use of ICT and visits in schemes of work. Very good improvement has taken place since the last inspection particularly the popularity of the provision of the short course for all at GCSE, and the standards achieved.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

(The department offers GCSE courses in product design: electronics, resistant materials, graphics, textiles, and food technology).

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in Years 7 to 9 develops good creative designing and underpins GCSE coursework
- Pupils do not make sufficient use of ICT and homework time
- Very good links with primary schools have been developed through technology partnership work
- Some issues in the last report have not been improved

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

114. The teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate that pupils' attainment is above average and boys are doing better than the girls. This is the reverse of the usual situation. The current work seen in Year 9 is below average. Appropriate changes have been made to the curriculum to improve pupils' achievements by the end of the year.

115. GCSE results were well below the average in 2003. Girls and boys results were similar. Most pupils are entered for the subject, but more than usual obtained an unclassified grade and the subject is doing less well than some others in the school. The best performing subject was textiles and electronics the worst. Recruitment difficulties have had an adverse effect on pupils' performance. However, despite these problems results have shown a slightly improving trend in the last three years.

### **Standards and achievement**

116. Many pupils of Year 7 have weaknesses in their skills and are below average, with boys having more difficulty in designing and in making notes, than girls. In Year 8, the design work shows improvement and pupils use technical systems to illustrate ideas. By the end of Year 9, pupils express pleasure in their achievements of creative drawing; however, they have not used computers sufficiently to improve the presentation of their work. In textiles pupils with special educational needs do well because of the good range of short activities that are built up in each lesson. Current standards are below average. However, pupils' achievements are satisfactory in relation to their varying starting points in Year 7.

117. The good creative drawing is continued in the GCSE course and augmented by the use of computer-aided design. Poor attendance by some pupils is hindering their progress. Attitudes and behaviour are good when there is firm teaching. Current standards are below average. However, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, overall.

### **Teaching and learning**

118. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The new arrangements in Year 9, allow pupils to follow their chosen GCSE course early. This is improving folder work and overall monitoring of pupils' progress. In the best lessons, very good classroom organisation results in time being used effectively and the teachers pick up on any challenging behaviour very quickly. The teaching uses examples that are relevant to young people and they demonstrate techniques confidently. Weaknesses were seen in teaching when the strategies for behaviour management were inadequate and expectations were not high enough.

119. The pupils' design work is not being driven by a tight specification at the start of projects; therefore evaluative thinking is not linked sufficiently to the design requirements. This issue follows through into the GCSE years. During the inspection, no GCSE classes were seen engaging in practical work. In theory and design lessons the pace was satisfactory, but some teaching did not allow pupils to express their ideas through paired discussion or give sufficient time to develop independent work. Higher grades are not being attained because homework time and ICT are used insufficiently.

### **Leadership and management**

120. The leadership of the department is committed to raising standards and has promoted good team working. Steps have been taken to improve examination results and promote high standards, for example by displaying excellent work and setting more challenging work to Year 9 pupils. The department has very good documentation that supports teachers well.

121. Despite facing some major difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in the last few years, teachers have worked together to improve the resources and accommodation. However, the problems associated with accommodation and the curriculum for food technology identified in the last report still remain. Progress since the last inspection is therefore unsatisfactory, overall.

122. The department has well-established links with primary schools that enable younger pupils to experience a series of practical lessons in food technology. Year 5 pupils were seen making very good achievement and gaining awards sponsored by the retail food industry.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are improving, particularly in Years 9 and 10
- Monitoring of pupils' work, teaching and learning is not rigorous enough
- The poor attendance of significant numbers of pupils hampers their progress
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and a secure understanding of examination requirements
- The use and quality of sketchbooks is variable across the department
- A significant proportion of boys achieve less well than the girls

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

123. Teacher assessments in 2003 show standards at the end of Year 9 to be below expected levels and lower than at the time of the last inspection. In 2003, the GCSE examination results were below the national average. Performance by girls was much better than boys. Boys did significantly less well than boys nationally and achieved less well in art than in their other examinations.

#### **Standards and achievement**

124. Overall, standards seen in the inspection were average and improving, particularly in Years 9 and 10, and achievement was satisfactory. In younger age classes, some pupils achieve better than others. In Years 7 and 8, this is reflected in the variable quality of work in sketchbooks and portfolios and where there is less clarity and understanding about National Curriculum levels. In Year 9 classes, a significant number of pupils are keen to improve and are on track to achieve above average standards. In Years 10 and 11, where there is a growing understanding of the assessment criteria, pupils are becoming more resourceful and less reliant on the teacher to tell them what to do next or to supply secondary source materials. This independence enables them to take greater responsibility for their learning outside lessons. Standards of critical analysis are improving. Where sketchbooks are well organised, work is thoughtfully presented and the skills of recording ideas, experimenting and annotating work have been well taught and pupils make good progress. In other

classes, presentation is poor, annotations lack depth and marking gives few pointers for improvement. Factors that have a negative effect on achievement include: -

- A poor record of attendance
- Attitudes of a small minority of pupils, mainly boys, whose disruptive behaviour hampers their own progress and the achievement of others
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory
- Too few resources to ensure all pupils have sketchbooks and ready access to computers

## Teaching and Learning

125. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In lessons, the majority of pupils had positive attitudes to learning. They benefit from teachers' specialist skills and their good command of the subject. Teaching resulted in good learning when teachers demonstrated particular techniques and skills, rather than simply described them, or their use of question and answer prompted pupils to look closely, raise questions and exchange ideas and opinions. Examples of work on display were also used well to help build confidence and raise expectations. The school generates a lot of information about pupils' prior attainment and potential performance and the introduction of a pro forma to record National Curriculum levels and assessments of pupils' progress is a promising development. However, not enough use is made of this information when teachers plan work, particularly for extending higher-attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9. Some pupils are therefore not set tasks that enable them to demonstrate fully the higher levels of which they are capable.

## Leadership and Management

126. The subject is soundly led and managed. There is very good teamwork and a shared desire and determination to ensure standards continue to rise. Newly-qualified teachers have been well supported and make a good contribution to the department. A long-term absence has been well managed by the team of staff, but the monitoring of teaching and pupils' work and the analysis of performance data has not been sufficiently rigorous to tackle the variability in standards and the underachievement of boys.

127. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Teaching and learning are no longer unsatisfactory. The quality of assessment, the accommodation, computer-based work and the achievement of boys are all still in need of improvement.

## Music

Provision in music is **good**.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and well-applied specialist skills
- Effective working relationships, good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning
- Confident performance and imaginative, well-structured compositions
- Good listening and sensitive appraisal skills
- Effective departmental leadership and management
- Unsatisfactory resources and accommodation limit pupil progress

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

128. GCSE results, in 2003, were above average and compared favourably with national expectations. Music is a very popular subject with a particularly high and increasing level of take-up. A significant proportion of pupils achieves higher grades. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.

### **Standards and achievement**

129. In Years 7 to 9, current standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Pupils respond well to practical music making and achieve well in relation to their previous experience and attainment. Achievement by pupils with special educational needs and gifted-and-talented pupils is good. Achievement by those benefiting from instrumental tuition is often very good. At the end of Year 9, pupils are able to demonstrate good listening and sensitive, insightful appraisal skills. They are able to perform with confidence and compose imaginative, well-structured compositions in a range of styles. The keyboard skills of a minority of pupils are weak and limit learning.

130. By the end of Year 11, pupils are fluent in the use of music technology and achieve good standards in composition and performance. Pupils demonstrate stylistic sensitivity in their music making and many have achieved good standards of instrumental performance. Overall, current standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good.

### **Teaching and learning**

131. The quality of teaching and learning is good and at times very good. Staff have high standards of specialist skills and knowledge which are used well to diagnose the learning needs of pupils, inspire and maximise progress and achievement. They are highly committed, talented, hard working and have contagious enthusiasm. Very good working relationships exist, resulting in effective learning atmospheres and positive attitudes to music. Careful lesson planning and preparation contribute significantly to successful learning and a true sense of achievement amongst pupils which effectively enhances motivation, enjoyment and commitment. High behavioural and musical expectations are well established and contribute well to pupil progress. Positive feedback and ample encouragement engender confidence and inspire pupils to strive to achieve their full potential in all aspects of music. Pupils value the music curriculum, extra-curricular and instrumental provision. This is amply reflected in the high take-up rates at GCSE.

### **Leadership and management**

132. Leadership and management are good, with a clear sense of vision and good team spirit in which all staff are encouraged to use their particular skills and enthusiasms whilst adhering to the well-planned and agreed curriculum.

133. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and almost all of the main issues identified have been dealt with. In particular, the quality of teaching has improved and consequently, pupil attainment and achievement have also improved. Monitoring strategies and self-evaluation have improved consistency within the department. Although accommodation has improved, there remains inadequate provision of small group rooms for curriculum activities. The lack of adequate sound insulation prevents sensitive listening responses for a significant percentage of curriculum time. Music technology provision for Years 7 to 9 is inadequate and many resources are worn and require replacement. These deficiencies prevent pupils from achieving their full potential.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11 Core	Year 11 GCSE	Year 11 GCSE Dance
Standards	Above average	Above average	Average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good attitudes of the pupils combined with the very good teacher pupil relationships set up a pleasant environment in which good learning takes place
- All groups of pupils are well catered for
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curricular experience of pupils
- Data are not yet used to identify and target areas of improvement and the current assessments are not yet fully shared with pupils

### Commentary

#### Examination results

134. In 2003, pupils taking the GCSE course had results below the national average and pupils did slightly worse in physical education than in their other subjects. However, these figures include two groups, those taking the normal option where pupils obtained results close to the national average and a group of pupils taking the full course in half the amount of time where pupils' results were well below the national average. Over the last three years results have been in line with the national average. Dance is also offered as a GCSE subject but pupil numbers are too small for a valid national comparison.

#### Standards and achievement

135. Standards of Year 9, as seen in lessons, are above average when compared with national standards. Teacher assessments in 2003 were even higher than this partially due to a generous application of the criteria. Pupils take part in a wide variety of activities and although girls and boys have strengths in different areas, overall there is no significant difference. Pupils are able to give advice to their peers on ways of improving their work, and this is used more frequently than at the time of the last inspection. Standards in the core course at the end of Year 11 are above average compared to the standards expected at this level. Standards of the current GCSE physical education group show work in line with the national average and standards in GCSE dance below average in the theory element, but average in practical skills.

136. Pupils enter the school with physical skills broadly in line with the national expectations, but show a great variation, often dependent on the feeder school provision, and by the end of Year 9 show work that is above the national expectation. This improvement represents good achievement. By the end of Year 11 pupils have physical skills in a wider range of activities and show a greater degree of tactical awareness. A number are developing the roles of coaches and umpires. Achievement is good. Pupils following the GCSE courses show a greater confidence in leading activities and have higher levels of practical skill.

## Teaching and learning

137. The teaching of physical education is good. The very good relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves combined with the very good attitudes and encouragement provides a positive environment in which good learning can take place and in which the pupils feel confident in trying out new ideas. All groups of pupils are included and the work provided gives a good challenge to them all. In lessons, pupils work well in pairs and in groups, supporting each other in their work. Good use is made of ICT, numerical skills are developed whenever possible and technical terminology is well used. Since the last inspection far more opportunities for peer evaluation and pupil planning activities have been introduced. The wide breadth of activities provided and the very good extra-curricular activities available gives good support to the learning. The poor facilities for examination dance classes impacts on the standards of work.

## Leadership and management

138. Leadership and management of the department are very good. There is a clear vision for improvement; the staff are good role models and work as an effective team sharing good practice. The department does not yet analyse data to identify and focus on areas of improvement.

139. The current assessment scheme is new and developing. Although the department has a careful tracking system, pupils are not always aware of their levels and what is needed to raise their work to the next level. Improvement since the last inspection has been good; there have been a number of new developments and all issues identified in the last report have improved.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

PSHE and citizenship are well integrated into a single course that also includes careers education. The programme is really well structured and supporting materials are very well organised. Pupils have good opportunities to understand how to live healthily and how to deal with the sorts of issues they will face as they grow up. The good teaching covers the topics of sex, relationships and drugs well at several points in the course. Pupils achieve well and maintain expected standards.

### Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and Learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is generally good so pupils learn well
- Overall, pupils have very good attitudes to their studies so they complete assignments well
- Pupils' work is assessed regularly and thoroughly
- Pupils have too few opportunities to take part responsibly in both school and community-based activities

## **Commentary**

### **Standards and achievement**

140. Pupils achieve well and have average standards by Year 9. They have a sound knowledge and comprehension of how local government and the criminal justice system work and, in general, are making satisfactory progress in developing the skills of communication through speaking and writing. By Year 11, standards are in line with expectations and pupils are also achieving well. Pupils are aware of the rights, responsibilities and duties of a citizen and appreciate the role of the media in influencing people's opinions.

### **Teaching and learning**

141. The teaching team uses a wide range of activities to stimulate pupils' interest and maintain their concentration. For example, the "real game," a simulation of living with a particular occupation is used in Year 8 to promote effective learning in many areas of citizenship, PSHE and careers. "Circle time" is used well in Years 7 and 8 to improve pupils' self confidence, their skills in discussion and their ability to influence other people's views. Teachers are encouraged to make good use of their individual skills. For example, drama was used most effectively in a Year 11 lesson on parenting. All the activities provide good opportunities for pupils to think, write and discuss. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is well supported by suitable and accessible textbooks, whilst the department has produced its own adequate booklets for older pupils. The school council is a good opportunity for all pupils to take part in a democratic process during the election of form representatives. The council, although well managed by teachers, does not allow pupils enough scope to make decisions and take responsible action in their own way.

142. Assessment of pupils' work is thorough and regular and pupils are tested annually on their knowledge and understanding of citizenship and PSHE. As a consequence, pupils value citizenship as highly as other subjects. Some teachers also record pupils' contributions in lessons briefly but this is not well assessed.

### **Leadership and management**

143. The introduction of the citizenship course has been very well led. The learning objectives are clear and the National Curriculum citizenship content is adequately covered. A large team of teachers is involved in the provision of citizenship and PSHE and they are well supported by a detailed scheme of work. Monitoring of teaching and assessment, through regular lesson observations and moderation of marking, ensures this broad curriculum can be taught effectively within the time allocated to it. Regular department meetings, with a focus on sharing good practice and supported by detailed minutes, help the team work efficiently. The department has several teachers who have received specialist training and this is shared effectively with the rest of the team. Contributions from other subjects are not yet well integrated into the course.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

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

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

### *Level 3 GCE AS level courses*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Biology	8	75.0	81.6	0	33.2	22.5	33.2
Other social studies	8	75.0	83.2	0	32.5	18.8	33.6

### *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	13	92.3	96.1	30.8	48.7	75.4	85.1
Biology	18	66.7	91.6	5.6	36.3	37.8	74.1
Business studies	14	64.3	96.4	7.1	32.8	34.3	76.5
Drama	9	100	98.1	44.4	41.5	84.4	82.9
English/ English language	7	85.7	98.3	14.3	36.5	65.7	80.1
English literature	13	100	98.5	23.1	43.7	76.9	84.3
General studies	64	59.4	90.1	3.1	29.1	32.8	69.3
Geography	6	100	97.1	33.3	40.5	73.3	80.9
History	12	100	97.1	0.0	41.1	53.3	81.2
Information technology	13	100	89.1	38.5	22.4	81.5	64.1
Mathematics	13	84.6	93.3	30.8	52.2	72.3	84.7
Music	7	100	97.7	14.3	41.8	71.4	82.2
Other social studies	17	82.4	94.3	5.9	38.9	54.1	77.7
Physics	8	100	92.8	62.5	42.8	92.5	78.6
Sociology	12	100	95.4	83.3	39.6	98.3	79.1
Sports/ PE studies	12	100	95.4	25.0	29.5	73.3	73.2
Travel and tourism	4	100	87.4	25.0	18.5	68.0	62.1

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

### English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Standards	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of English in the sixth form is dedicated to improving standards
- Teachers plan and structure work carefully so that students are clear about examination requirements
- Assessment data are used rigorously to raise achievement and analyse results
- Students value their teachers' guidance which they believe is making a difference to their personal development
- The erratic attendance of some students has a negative impact on progress
- Students do not read widely enough

### Commentary

#### Examination results

144. Many students start their advanced study of English literature in Year 12 with average or below average attainment at GCSE. Some choose it as an extra subject to study for one year to AS level and their results have been generally below average and not as good as results gained in their other subjects. Results at A-level were below average in 2002 and well below in the combined English language/ literature course which the school no longer offers. Results improved in 2003 when almost half of the fifteen students entered for A-level English literature gained grades A, B or C and only one student was ungraded.

#### Standards and achievement

145. Standards seen vary. In Year 12, two groups of students have started the course with slightly higher than previous years' attainment on entry. In a small group continuing into Year 13, students are working at grades ranging from A to E. This reflects the wide range of previous attainment. Higher- attaining students achieve very well in extended, critical writing and make effective use of the language of literary criticism. They contribute well in debate, analysis and explanation. By the second year, these students have established a critical and personal voice in their writing. Lower- attaining students, by contrast, find the demands of wider reading and intellectual independence very difficult and they rely heavily on the good structure and support given by their teachers. Students of all abilities respect the quality of teaching and appreciate the accessibility of their teachers when seeking guidance. They place a high value on their teachers' support as a contributory factor to their personal development. The erratic attendance of a significant proportion of students has a negative impact on standards. Overall, students' achievements are satisfactory.

#### Teaching and learning

146. Teaching of advanced studies English literature is good. Teachers know their subject and texts well. Planning is meticulous, in particular the carefully structured stages in lessons. Tasks are imaginatively presented by teachers to create an interesting approach to a character or an idea. Good questioning techniques reinforce learning and occasionally stimulate debate. All work is

assessed so that students know how well they are doing against examination criteria and where they need to improve.

### **Leadership and management**

147. The leadership and management are very good. The detailed schemes of work, prepared so well by the teachers for the main school, are now extended into A-level work. The study of texts is well timed and resourced with an emphasis on examination technique and requirements. Assessment data are very well used to monitor and raise both students' standards and teachers' performance. A different intake of students and a revised syllabus make comparison with the last inspection unreliable. However, teaching is now more interactive and less didactic than it was, the range of teaching styles has improved and, given the numbers in Year 12, the subject is increasing in popularity.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

148. The standard of students' reading and writing in subjects other than English is satisfactory. Students are encouraged to research and read around a topic and in most subjects they are expected to debate, discuss and make presentations to the class. Access to the library for wider reading and research is readily available to sixth form students who use the library as their study base.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

GCSE Mathematics was also sampled. Students were retaking the examination in an attempt to raise their grade. Students were following a linear or modular course depending on previous attainment. Standards seen were below average and achievement satisfactory.

Standards	Below average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good level of teachers' knowledge leads to clear explanations of concepts and assists students to make clear learning gains
- Opportunities are missed for students to develop their independent study skills
- Helpful, detailed marking and out-of-lesson support by teachers guides students on how to raise their achievement
- Students find the transition from GCSE to AS level difficult to make as a result of the complexity of the work encountered

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

149. In 2002, the results at A-level were below average. In 2003, the results were similarly below average.

#### **Standards and achievement**

150. Current standards are below average. However, students' achievements are satisfactory in relation to their varying starting points. Students have a clear understanding of mathematics and make effective use of previous work when introduced to a new topic. In Year 12 at AS level, students

can explain the difference between arithmetic and geometric series and are able to find the different terms of a geometric series. In Year 13, students can integrate trig functions using the reverse idea of the chain rule as well as use partial fractions in integration.

### Teaching and learning

151. Teaching and learning over time has been satisfactory. However, at present different teachers deliver the course and the quality of teaching seen in the three lessons observed was good, overall. The good level of teachers' knowledge means students benefit from clear explanations. This allows the students to improve their understanding and make satisfactory achievement. Students respond well to questions and they can volunteer suggestions articulately. They freely participate in discussions, as seen in one Year 12 lesson on geometric series where they could explain how to find the different terms. The lessons proceed at an appropriate pace and are planned well allowing students to build on each stage of new learning before progressing to the next. Homework is set regularly to consolidate and extend new work introduced in the lesson. However, the students are not fully encouraged to research independently for topics in advance of their lessons or to demonstrate their understanding to the rest of the group. Higher-attaining students are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons and lower-attaining students do not receive enough clear targeted support in order to achieve their potential.

### Leadership and management

152. Leadership and management are satisfactory and a clear vision is in place to raise standards within the department. Teachers work hard and give students good support through detailed marking and by providing extra tuition out of lessons. This is much appreciated by the students. Although there is a post-16 programme of study, the schemes of work lack guidance on teaching methods and resources that would further enhance teaching. Good procedures are in place for assessing students' performance as they progress through Years 12 and 13. However, the use of data to track such student performance is undeveloped, especially in terms of monitoring value-added achievement. Students find the transition from GCSE to AS level difficult to make as a result of the complexity of the work encountered. Consequently, learning suffers in the initial months.

### Mathematics across the curriculum

153. Satisfactory use is made of mathematics across the curriculum, the standard of which is average. In A-level chemistry, students can use and apply formulae satisfactorily as seen in their calculation of molarity and relative atomic / molecular mass. They construct graphs from experimentally obtained data for reaction rates and draw lines of best fit.

## SCIENCE

The focus was on chemistry but biology and physics were also sampled. Results in biology were very low. A Year 13 class was observed in which most students had failed to achieve a grade at AS level in Year 12. Their learning was satisfactory on skeletal muscles, helped by most having also covered the topic in physical education.

In physics, examination results were well above average. The lesson observed was satisfactory. Clear teaching led to students achieving a sound knowledge of the main fundamental particles and their interactive forces.

### Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **satisfactory**.

Standards	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Overall, students have good attitudes to their studies so they are attentive in lessons and work hard
- Teachers assess students' progress regularly, but students do not keep track of their own performance
- Well-qualified and experienced technicians support teaching and learning very well

### **Commentary**

#### **Examination results**

154. In 2002, the A-level results were broadly average, although this comparison is based on a very small sample. In 2003, the results were similar.

#### **Standards and achievement**

155. Standards seen during the inspection were broadly average. By Year 13, students are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their GCSE performance and their experimental skills, such as carrying out titrations, are well developed.

#### **Teaching and learning**

156. Teachers provide good opportunities for students to practise and develop their experimental skills through well-organised practical activities. Teachers assess students' progress regularly through frequent tests. Tests are marked thoroughly, but comments made do not always show students how to improve nor are the scores often translated into A-level grades. Teachers provide good opportunities for self-assessment via a series of multiple-choice tests available on the school's intranet that students can access from school or home. Tutorial style lessons are regularly used so that students can discuss their most recent test performance. However, students do not always record their own performance well and so lack an overview of their own progress.

157. Students stick to their tasks well and complete the assignments they are set. ICT is used well to help improve their mathematical skills. For example, students carry out quantitative exercises in simulated experiments to determine the water of crystallization.

#### **Leadership and management**

158. Day to day, the department runs efficiently. The small team of teachers works closely and, through formal and informal monitoring, coordinate their work well to support students' learning. A syllabus has been selected that builds on earlier GCSE work well and a suitable scheme of work, well supported by a text specific to the examination, is in place. However, students find the subject more difficult than anticipated and a significant number do not continue the course beyond AS level. A target-setting programme for students is being developed, but the lack of sufficient subject-specific targets and infrequent mentoring reduce its effectiveness considerably. By offering students the choice of sitting a practical examination or completing coursework, the department is responding well to individual strengths.

159. The department has developed strong links with a local pharmaceutical company. Students have the opportunity to use the latest analytical machines to test chemical samples produced in school and to appreciate the industrial application of the chemistry they are studying.

160. Since the last inspection results have improved, the numbers taking up the subject have risen and include a greater proportion of girls.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

### Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The focus was on A and AS-level ICT but A-level computing was also sampled. In computing, results have varied over time and there were insufficient entries in 2002 for comparisons with national data to be made. In the lesson observed standards were below those seen nationally, but students achieved well in relation to their prior attainment. Good teaching maintained student interest. Students learned well through a combination of brisk whole-class teaching with well-supported opportunities for students to apply their learning in their independent coursework.

### ICT

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Not applicable

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong focus on preparing students well for the examination
- Students achieve well in relation to their GCSE results
- Relationships are very productive
- Students need a better understanding of examination requirements before embarking on the course
- Irregular attendance limits the achievement of some students

### Commentary

#### Examination results

161. In 2002, too few students took the subject to make valid comparisons. In 2003, everyone entered passed the GCE A-level examination and 30 per cent of the group gained a grade B. Standards of the current Year 12 are better than those in Year 13.

#### Standards and achievement

162. Students begin Year 12 with GCSE scores that are below the average for A-level students and students who complete the course achieve well in relation to their abilities and their starting points. The achievement of some students is limited by their infrequent attendance and reluctance to take advantage of all the learning opportunities offered.

#### Teaching and learning

163. In all the lessons seen there was a clear focus on giving students individual and personalised feedback on how to improve. The range of teaching and learning opportunities was limited as in all classes students were working on personal projects. However, where whole-class teaching took place it was clear, fast and well delivered. For example, in a Year 12 lesson, students were introduced to methods of testing the databases they had created to prove that they work as intended. The class teacher was able to extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the textbook by giving clear examples of validation rules and how to make them work. Students were then well supported as they tried to apply this information in their own projects, and there was a palpable sense of achievement and celebration from student and teacher when the task was implemented successfully, reflecting the very good relationships that pervade the department. Teachers offer a lot of out-of-class support for students, but too few of them take advantage of this opportunity.

## Leadership and management

164. The leadership of the department has a clear vision. The changes introduced in the main school schemes of work and the significant improvements in standards are having a positive impact in the sixth form. Accommodation is good and resources are very good. The subject is staffed by a team of specialists and less experienced staff are well supported. There exists a clear rationale for the provision of A-level courses in both information technology and computing and students understand the difference between the focus of the two. However, students receive too little support in selecting the course that is most appropriate to their aptitudes and too many students are unsuccessful during Year 12.

## ICT across the sixth form

165. A course in ICT key skills is offered to all students in Year 12, but is poorly attended. Overall, students are competent in the use of ICT to support their learning. They use it as a tool for research in many subjects such as psychology and business studies. In physical education, a full range of word processing skills was demonstrated and graphs were integrated into students' work. Students use video clips for analysing body movements. Teachers feel secure in using ICT to enhance their teaching, but are less confident in incorporating its use by students. For example, good use was made of interactive whiteboards in mathematics, but use by students in lessons was rarely seen.

## HUMANITIES

The focus was on history, psychology and sociology but geography, law and religious studies were also sampled. Standards are average in geography. Students achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because teaching is stimulating and well organised.

One Year 12 law lesson was sampled in which the quality of teaching and learning was very good. Challenging teaching resulted in very good achievement.

One very good religious studies lesson was observed. This is a new subject for the school. One third of the class was absent but those present were considering various ethical viewpoints of euthanasia. Students were involved in explaining their well-researched views.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	n/a
Management	n/a
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject
- Teachers' planning is good so that teaching supports, but also challenges, students to take responsibility for their own learning
- Relationships between teachers and students are very good
- Most students achieve well for their ability, but standards vary from average to well below national norms

## Commentary

### Examination results

166. A-level results in 2002 were well below average, with all students gaining a 'pass grade' but none gained an A or B grade. Boys did slightly better than girls. However, students achieved well in relation to their varying starting points. The 2003 results show improvement and students again performed well in relation to their predicted grades.

### Standards and achievement

167. Current standards at AS level are above average and students are achieving well in relation to their ability, because teaching both challenges and supports them very well. At A-level, current standards are average overall, with some students working at the highest levels and some well below average. This represents good achievement given students' prior attainment. All students feel very well supported by their teachers and speak well of their different, but complementary teaching styles and methods.

### Teaching and learning

168. Teachers are knowledgeable and skilled in preparing students with a wide range of needs for these levels of work. Much teaching features expert knowledge of both the subject and of suitable resources and styles of presentation. Teachers' enthusiasm and love of their subject is clear to students and is a strong factor in their good motivation. Work is planned well to be interesting and challenging, but is well structured to enable all to participate and to achieve their potential. As a result students' learning is based on a clear and logical sequence, which results in high levels of knowledge retention. This achievement is also well supported by very good resources, which include comprehensive notes. Written work is related to exam requirements, but this approach could be used more effectively across the department to enable students to understand even more clearly what they need to do to improve and how to guarantee their best achievement.

### Leadership and management

169. Leadership and management in the department have changed recently and it is not possible to make a judgement on their effectiveness. Nevertheless, a constructive working relationship is clear and systems are being well maintained so that the continuity of support for students has been unaffected. Staff are well aware of students' potential and needs, and use information well to help them do their best. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and progress under the new staffing arrangements has been good and rationally planned.

### Sociology

Provision in sociology is **good**.

Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good subject knowledge and support from enthusiastic teachers
- Good results in public examinations
- Good relationships with well-motivated students
- Insufficient opportunities to extend students' learning experiences outside of the classroom

## Commentary

### Examination results

170. Results in the A-level examination for 2002 were above the national average. In 2003, they showed a slight decline. Students make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

### Standards and achievement

171. Standards at the time of the inspection showed that students in Year 13 were working in line with national expectations. Discussion with students, together with scrutiny of work confirmed that they had a grasp of significant theory and showed a familiarity with key areas of their course. Overall, they achieve well in relation to their varying starting points.

### Teaching and learning

172. Overall, evidence seen through the inspection indicated that teaching and learning are good. It was possible only to see one Year 12 class being taught due to teachers being indisposed through illness. In the one lesson seen, which was very good, the teacher showed an imaginative approach to introducing evaluative methods to the Year 12 students. The active problem-solving tasks they faced in small groups provided challenge, food for thought, and the opportunity to apply and develop independent learning skills. Teachers are knowledgeable, lessons were appropriately planned, and a strong emphasis is placed on the outcomes expected from their GCE examiners. Teachers' concern for their students' work was seen in the detailed marking of examination style essays.

### Leadership and management

173. The department is well led and managed. Students' progress is carefully monitored, results thoughtfully analysed, and good support provided. However, too little use is made of ICT, the library, contemporary subject journals, or contact with the world outside of the school to extend students' experiences.

### Psychology

Provision in psychology is **good**.

Standards	Average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Not applicable

### Main strengths

- Psychology is a popular subject and students achieve well
- The teacher is hardworking and prepares good teaching materials
- Students are positive about the subject and do a lot of independent work

## Commentary

### Results

174. Results were low in 2002, but students achieved satisfactorily in relation to their varying starting points and in 2003 results improved. In most years there has been a 100 per cent pass rate.

## Standards and achievement

175. Standards observed indicate that students are achieving well. Students entered the course with well below average attainment, but made progress equivalent to an A-level grade over the course. Students' attitudes to work were good and they processed information better than might be expected from their GCSE results. They worked independently to produce good folders of work with essays and coursework that broadly matched A- level expectations.

## Teaching and learning

176. The strongest aspect of the teaching was the use of very good teaching materials, summarising the course information in a way that revealed good knowledge and understanding of assessment methods. Students valued the information they were provided with and the fact that the teacher was prepared to go over material until it was understood. They also valued the applied aspect of the teaching, the reinforcement with other subjects (Sports and Health psychology has particular benefit for students of physical education and of biology). A weakness of the teaching was in a somewhat ad hoc presentational style, but this was overcome by student willingness to persevere and to use the good written materials.

## Leadership and management

177. Many of the departmental criteria do not apply with a department of one. On the credit side much hard work has been done on the curriculum. On the other hand, achievement data is incomplete and possible underachievement is not always followed up. The psychology department is being hampered at the moment by the lack of a settled base, which reduces student access to ICT and to resources. Psychology was not on offer at the time of the previous inspection.

## ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

### Product design: graphic products and resistant materials

*(The department offers product design courses with the option to specialise in either graphic design or in the use of resistant materials. These students are taught as a combined group).*

Provision in product design is **satisfactory**.

Standards	Below average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that students have opportunities to develop own design interests
- Standards are improving and students with low prior achievements are welcomed onto the course
- Insufficient use is made of visits and links to the commercial world
- Students are not using ICT sufficiently to improve the presentation of their work and use time more effectively

## **Commentary**

### **Examination results**

178. Examination results have fluctuated from below the average to very low, over the last five years. In 2002 and 2003, too few students took the A-level examination to make comparison with other schools.

### **Standards and achievement**

179. Overall, standards are below average. However, students achieve well in relation to their varying starting points. Students are accepted onto the course with lower than usual GCSE grades in a relevant technological subject. Many of these students go on to make good progress in the first year of the course. There are indications that standards have continued to improve. Students are developing good computer-aided design skills, but lack a wider appreciation of manufacturing.

180. The folder-work in Year12 shows a wide range of topics that often lack an initial tight starting point. This leads to students making weak links to the product specification when evaluating their ideas. Influences by the study of design movements can clearly be seen in the design work of students who use good freehand concept sketches to explain their ideas. The final presentation of many folders lacks a professional finish. Students do not use ICT sufficiently to improve presentation and save time in processes that could be done more effectively using computers. The patchy attendance of a few students limits their progress.

181. In Year 13, the standard of the current work shows improvement, particularly students' folder work. However, some students have not gained sufficient feedback from their client because they have been left to their own devices to set up these arrangements.

### **Teaching and learning**

182. Teachers have good subject knowledge and in Year 12 they show students how to improve their designing and practical skills. The firm and thoughtful teaching allows students who have gained competence in using design software to develop their skills independently, whilst others are tutored to advance their understanding. Not all students are aware of the examination marking and assessment requirements; however, in Year 13 students evaluate each other's work to become familiar with what needs to be done to improve.

### **Leadership and management**

183. The leadership and management of the course are good. It has adapted to the new requirements for the course and introduced new technologies to ensure that computer-aided design and manufacturing are taught well. Examples of portfolios and practical work showed that standards have been improved since the introduction of the new course, and some of the signs made for local public service buildings were particularly impressive. The course has become more popular in the last two years and many students have aspirations to follow further design courses in higher education because of their enjoyment of taking this course.

184. The department has not as yet arranged visits to industry for students and their links with clients are not monitored sufficiently to ensure that they are meeting all of the examination requirements. The lack of industrial experiences is affecting units that are examined through written papers.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

The focus was on art and music. Dance and drama were also sampled. In dance, one good lesson was observed in which students were preparing their practical dance presentation for examination. Students' practical work is strong but their theory is below average. A drama lesson in Year 12 showed students with a range of ability achieving very well in response to rigorous and enjoyable teaching.

Media Studies was not sampled during the inspection, but it is a subject increasing in popularity and results are amongst the students' best.

## Art and design

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

Standards	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some students do not achieve their predicted grades
- Teachers' command of the subject and their team work are very good
- Students enjoy the subject and increasing numbers are being recruited
- The range of teaching and learning styles is too narrowly focused on one-to-one discussions
- A significant number of students have an unsatisfactory record of attendance that contributes to their underachievement

## Commentary

### Examination results

185. Results in 2003 show students' average point score to be below the average. A significant number of students joined the course with below average qualifications, both in art and design and in their other subjects. From their various starting points, some students achieved very well but a significant number did not achieve the grades they were predicted and a few did not complete the course.

### Standards and achievement

186. In the lessons seen, standards were broadly average and students' achievement was sound. There are signs of improving standards in Year 12, with some high achieving students sustaining the high standards they attained prior to joining the sixth form. The work by current Year 13 students shows variable achievement and, like previous years, progress is erratic and dependent on a number of factors. For example, each year a few students join the course with low qualifications, a limited understanding of the subject and lack commitment to advanced study. As a result, while some struggle to maintain the pace and level of intellectual enquiry that the examination demands others develop a poor record of attendance. Both written and practical work by the highest-attaining students shows good standards of critical thinking, imagination and creativity. However whilst most students speak confidently and authoritatively - to teachers - about the art, artists' and designers' work they are studying, they have too few opportunities created to challenge, compare and contrast ideas with one another.

### Teaching and learning

187. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers' command of the subject is very good. Students benefit from the very good teamwork and the combined skills and expertise that crosses several disciplines. However, the range of teaching and learning styles is narrowly focused on on-to-one discussions with few planned opportunities for group work, presentations or student-led critiques. Computers are used mainly for research purposes and their creative potential is currently not exploited to the full.

## Leadership and management

188. The subject is soundly led and managed. Numbers enrolling onto the sixth form course have increased, but some students are accepted with only a limited chance of completing the course and gaining a qualification. Their needs are managed with varying success, within the school's open-door philosophy. Nevertheless students have an accurate picture of their likely examination grade and most choose to continue their studies. A high proportion of students goes on to courses in higher education and they receive good advice on putting together their applications and portfolios.

189. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the previous inspection. The numbers of students opting for the advanced course have increased and the quality of teaching and learning improved.

## Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Standards	Above average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- High standards of specialist teaching skills result in students making good progress
- Good standards of instrumental, choral, ICT and compositional skills
- Good standards of analytical and aural skills
- Departmental leadership and management are insightful, sensitive and highly effective
- Improving standards and take-up rate
- Inadequate accommodation and poor resources prevent students from achieving their full potential

## Commentary

### Examination results

190. Due to the small numbers of students taking A-level over recent years, statistical analysis is of limited reliability. However, students have achieved well in relation to their starting points.

### Standards and achievement

191. Current standards are above average and students achieve well. Over time, students make good progress in the acquisition of instrumental, choral and composing skills. Carefully planned teaching results in the development of impressive analytical skills and aural awareness. The standard of historical and contextual awareness is good.

192. A culture of mutual respect, support and co-operation ensures that high standards of individual and ensemble performances are achieved. Students demonstrate confident, accurate performance skills alongside stylistic sensitivity and a real sense of enjoyment and commitment. Skilled use is made of music technology where appropriate.

### Teaching and learning

193. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers demonstrate high standards of specialist knowledge, skills and understanding and provide a stimulating and challenging learning

environment to which pupils respond very positively. Lessons are well prepared and structured, include a good range of teaching strategies and are delivered with contagious enthusiasm and energy. Teachers frequently use skilful questioning to stimulate thought and learning and plan careful sequences of small but significant learning steps in order to maximise pupil potential and accelerate progress. High behavioural and musical expectations are well established, effectively enhancing attainment. As a result of the very effective teaching approaches adopted, students are highly motivated, confident and sustain interest and concentration very well. Students value the music curriculum, extra-curricular and instrumental provision. Their voluntary participation in some lessons in Years 7 to 11 and high level of involvement in the work of the department reflects their enthusiasm and commitment.

### Leadership and management

194. The music department benefits from very strong, sensitive leadership. A clear, shared sense of direction is in place and high aspirations for music in all aspects of provision. The students' work shows that they have very good opportunities to develop their solo and ensemble performing skills, composing and improvisation skills, aural awareness and historical understanding within and beyond the curriculum. Extra-curricular activities and instrumental lessons are well organised and good opportunities exist for public performance across a range of styles.

195. There has been good improvement since the last report. In particular, student attainment and achievement have improved due to greater consistency in the quality of teaching and enhanced monitoring strategies. However, accommodation and resources remain inadequate and prevent students from achieving their full potential.

## HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

### Physical education

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

The focus was on physical education. All three students studying Leisure and Tourism were absent and it was not possible to sample the teaching.

Standards	Average
Achievement	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching is leading to very good learning
- Excellent relationships between students and the staff
- The staff provide very good individual student support
- The use of self-evaluation monitoring sheets provide effective support
- Examination type questions are not frequently used to consolidate learning

### Commentary

#### Examination results

196. In 2002, twelve students completed the A-level examination obtaining results in line with the national average, the boys obtaining grades well above the national average. In 2003, results were lower but students obtained results above those predicted by their previous qualifications.

## **Standards and achievement**

197. Students start the course with a range of GCSE qualifications. The standard of work seen during the inspection shows the current Year 12 students have made a good start to their courses, and taking into account the starting qualifications of the students, achievement is very good. The Year 13 A-level students are working at a level that is in line with the national average and are working at a level higher than that predicted by their previous examination results and also show very good achievement.

## **Teaching and learning**

198. Teaching and learning are very good. Teaching involves the students in active methods, the range of methods provided by different teachers covering the various modules. Other strengths in teaching include excellent teacher-student relationships by which good individual support is given to the students. The use of a theory base, new since the last inspection, assists learning by allowing easy access to resources and displayed examples of good practice. Also, it has given the subject a focus area. Students are appreciative of the support that they receive, the overall monitoring and mentoring of students being very good. A greater use of examination type questions would help to consolidate the very good learning.

## **Leadership and management**

199. Leadership and management of the department are very good. The staff provide good role models and have a commitment to building on what has already been achieved and clear ways of raising the quality of teaching have been introduced, resulting in the very good teaching seen. Students have a variety of opportunities to participate in enrichment activities, some of which also offer a leadership role. Timetabled physical education is available to students not taking an examination course, but the current uptake is low. Very little was said about A-level physical education in the last report, but levels of attainment have risen even with a changing intake of students, a subject base has been established and this represents very good progress.

## **BUSINESS**

Business studies was sampled. An AVCE which is an advanced course with a vocational bias has recently been introduced. In the lesson observed, students made good progress and achieved well because of the strong emphasis on assessment.

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GENERAL PROGRAMMES**

One general studies lesson was sampled. The teacher related well to the students who gained a good understanding of the requirements of the syllabus. Attendance is required of all students but, in practice, lessons are poorly attended. The school is reviewing this requirement.

The school now makes satisfactory provision for all pupils to follow a religious education course and has introduced advanced level courses. This is good improvement since the time of the previous inspection.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Sixth form grade</i>	<i>School grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is		3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4	4
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	4	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>4</b>
Attendance	5	6
Attitudes	4	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		4
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	3	4
How well pupils learn	3	4
The quality of assessment	3	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety		3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3	3
The leadership of the headteacher		2
The leadership of other key staff	3	3
The effectiveness of management	3	3

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

