

INSPECTION REPORT

SPRINGWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

King's Lynn

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121178

Headteacher: Peter Hopkins

Lead inspector: Robin Coulthard

Dates of inspection: 10th – 14th November 2003

Inspection number: 259292

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	1396
School address:	Queensway Gaywood King's Lynn
Postcode:	PE30 4AW
Telephone number:	01553 773393
Fax number:	01553 771405
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Roger Allflatt
Date of previous inspection:	9 th February 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Springwood High School is a comprehensive school in King's Lynn. It became an Arts College in 2000. It was designated an Innovation School in 2002, and Investor in People status was renewed in 2003. It has 1396 pupils on roll, of whom 238 are in the sixth form. Twenty nine pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of admission in 2002/3, and fifty eight left. Pupils' attainment on entry is average. Very few pupils are from other than White British backgrounds. There is deprivation in the backgrounds of some pupils, but overall socio/economic factors are average. The percentage applying for free school meals is 12.2 compared with the national figure of 16.1 in 2002/3. Very few have a home language that is other than English. Two hundred and ninety pupils are identified as having special educational needs, and 33 of these have statements. Their special needs include specific learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural problems and autism.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities	
			Main school	Sixth form
11746	Robin Coulthard	Lead inspector	Music	Music
14066	Gill Hoggart	Lay inspector		
27719	Paul Metcalf	Team inspector		Mathematics
32331	Peter Barnes	Team inspector	English	English
32352	Val Malcolm	Team inspector		
32687	John Conway	Team inspector	Science	Chemistry
17874	Dan Moynihan	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
2501	Raye Allison-Smith	Team inspector	Art	Art
32590	Roger Fenwick	Team inspector	Design and technology	
25073	Stuart Jordan	Team inspector	Geography Citizenship	Leisure and tourism
33002	John Woodhouse	Team inspector	History	
2496	Tony O'Sullivan	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language	French
30800	Betty Colley	Team inspector	Physical education	Sociology
17171	Mary Last	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
1517	David Griffiths	Team inspector	Religious education	
28199	Peter Lawley	Team inspector		Drama
3242	Mike Newman	Team inspector		Biology Psychology

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Limited

Langshaw
 Pastens Road
 Limpsfield Chart
 Oxted
 Surrey
 RH8 0RE

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	11
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	23
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	62

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Springwood High School is an Arts College which provides its pupils with a good education and gives good value for money. Pupils reach average standards in the main school and the sixth form. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in the sixth form. Pupils' achievement is good overall in the main school good in the sixth form. Leadership is good in the main school and management satisfactory. Both are good in the sixth form.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have continued to rise in line with the national picture. Performing Arts College status is providing pupils of all levels of aptitude with very good social and cultural experiences. Collective worship is still not provided daily for all pupils.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Improvement year-on-year in examination results throughout the school.
- Very good provision for the performing arts.
- Very good links with the community and good links with feeder schools.
- Good provision for pupils' whose mother tongue is not English.
- An effective sixth form.
- Some inadequate planning to meet pupils' special educational needs in mainstream lessons.
- The under-use of assessment and National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9 to improve planning.
- The monitoring and development of teaching and learning are not rigorous enough.
- Inconsistencies in the management of literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and citizenship have a negative impact on pupils' progress.
- Legal requirements not met for a collective act of worship, and for ICT in Years 10 and 11 for pupils not taking examination courses.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

For Year 13, comparative grades are not currently available for 2003.

Achievement is good overall in the main school. Pupils join the school with average standards of attainment and they maintain these standards. Results in Year 9 in 2003 were average overall - above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Current standards are average overall. In English, mathematics, music, French and German, standards are above average. Current standards in Year 11 are average. Results in Year 13 fluctuate considerably between subjects and from year to year because the nature of year groups varies, as do the relative abilities of boys and girls. In 2002, girls did considerably better than boys, and the overall level of attainment was average. The school operates an open policy to the sixth form, and some students embark on courses with lower GCSE grades than is usually the case. Current standards are average overall, and students are achieving well.

Pupils' personal qualities are good. Behaviour is good and most pupils are keen to work hard, although some pupils with behavioural difficulties are not well managed and occasionally disrupt learning. Attendance, previously an issue, is now **satisfactory**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Pupils gain very worthwhile experiences from taking part in performing arts activities.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good education.

Teaching and learning are good overall. They are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, good in Years 10 and 11 and very good in the sixth form. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. Where planning is very good, as in French and geography, pupils' learning is very good. Pupils concentrate hard and enjoy their work, when working individually or in groups. Lessons have clear objectives. Relationships are positive and teachers provide good one-to-one guidance in class. Higher-attaining pupils are generally well challenged. Tasks are appropriate and a good range of teaching methods is used. Assessment is inconsistent in quality and usefulness. It is better in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7 to 9, teachers make too little use of National Curriculum levels to make it clear how pupils can improve their work. Tasks are not matched to the needs of pupils with special educational needs in some lessons.

The curriculum provides a broad range of experiences for pupils but not all requirements are met for design and technology and citizenship. Provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is inadequate. Provision for the arts is strong. The curriculum is enriched by a very good programme of extra-curricular activities, including music drama and sport. A very good range of courses is available in the sixth form. Pupils receive good support and guidance. The partnership between parents and the school is effective.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form.

The leadership of the headteacher is good. He has a clear vision for the school's development. Arts College status has been effectively introduced. The governors strongly support the school, but statutory obligations are not fully met for ICT, design and technology, citizenship, religious education and collective worship. Overall, therefore, governance is unsatisfactory. Development planning is not clearly enough focused on raising attainment, and the monitoring of teaching lacks rigour.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is over-subscribed and parents' views are positive. Their children enjoy school and are well taught. They praise the induction procedures, the school's management, the range of extra-curricular activities and the way the school encourages pupils to become responsible. Some are concerned at the adequacy of information received about their children's progress, but the inspection team felt this to be of good quality. Pupils rate the school highly. They think they are taught well and expected to do their best. They consider the school to be well run. Some expressed concerns about poor behaviour of a minority, the level of bullying and the apparent lack of interest by the school in their views. Discussions with pupils indicated that these criticisms were overstated in the questionnaire. The newly-established school council is beginning to provide a useful means of channelling pupils' views to the school's management.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- Improve planning to meet pupils' special educational needs in mainstream lessons.
- Use assessments and national curriculum levels in years 7 to 9 to improve their planning and give more information to pupils about their progress.
- Develop teaching and learning more effectively by monitoring lessons more rigorously.
- Improve development planning so that priorities and initiatives and the funding allocated to them are regularly monitored and evaluated against the standards attained.
- Improve the effectiveness of the management of literacy, numeracy, ICT and citizenship across the curriculum.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Providing a daily collective act of worship, and increasing the provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11.
- Extending the use of computers in Years 10 and 11 by pupils not taking examination courses in ICT.
- Providing opportunities for computer-aided design and manufacture and control in design and technology.

THE SIXTH FORM

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective sixth form that gives good value for money. Students' attitudes are very good and they are very well taught. Examination results have fluctuated in the past, reflecting students' different starting points. The school takes students into the sixth form with lower GCSE grades than in most sixth forms and provides well for them. Results were average in 2002 and below average in 2003, which indicates good achievement by students with a wide range of previous attainment. Retention rates are high.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students' very good achievement in psychology, music, drama, leisure and tourism and sociology.
- Very good teaching overall.
- Students' very good attitudes to work and to school.
- The very good range of subjects that meets students' requirements well.
- Some very good and excellent leadership and management of subjects.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

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

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	Very good in English literature where achievement is enhanced by students' excellent attitudes. Very good in French.
Mathematics	Good .
Science	Good in biology. Satisfactory in chemistry, though some students find the work difficult
Information and communication technology	There was no focus subject in this area.
Humanities	Very good in psychology and sociology.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	There was no focus subject in this area.
Visual and performing arts and media	Satisfactory in art and design, despite some students' lack of previous qualifications. Very good in drama and excellent in music.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Very good in leisure and tourism.

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

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Provision is good. Pastoral staff are strongly committed to the welfare of their students. Students receive good guidance on the choice of courses and the induction programme is effective. The school promotes a policy of open-access to the sixth form. Students over the whole range of ability receive well-targeted support. Through formal and informal means, their progress is effectively monitored.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Good leadership has resulted in a doubling of the size of the sixth since the last inspection. It provides well for the academic and vocational needs of the wide range of abilities represented. Management of subjects, of the curriculum and of pastoral provision is good overall. Effective management by tutors results in students being very committed to the sixth form and having very good attitudes to their studies.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students wholeheartedly enjoy being in the sixth form. They appreciate the teachers' expertise and their encouragement and availability to give assistance. The courses suit their aspirations, and they consider that the school is well run, although about a quarter feel that the school provides insufficient enrichment activities, does not respond enough to their views, and provides insufficient advice about career choices. Inspectors agreed with the positive views. They consider the advice and guidance good and rate highly the range of extra-curricular activities. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for students to convey their views to the school's management.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDING

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AND STUDENTS

Results in national examinations are **average**. Standards in Years 9 and 11 are average and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' competence in language, literacy and mathematics is average. ICT skills are average in Year 9 but below average in Year 11. Pupils' with special educational needs, pupils whose mother tongue is not English and pupils who are gifted and talented achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Above average results in English in Year 9, and well above in comparison with schools with similar prior attainment.
- Above average standards in Year 9 in English, music and modern foreign languages.
- Some underachievement in Year 9 in ICT, design and technology and religious education.
- GCSE results are well above average for schools whose pupils gained similar results at the end of Year 9.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34.6 (31.6)	33.3 (33.3)
mathematics	35.2 (34.3)	35.3 (34.7)
science	33.2 (33.6)	33.7 (33.3)

There were 218 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Commentary

1. Pupils enter the school with standards that are broadly average. The Year 9 test results in English were above national averages and, in mathematics and science, were in line with national averages in 2003. The overall results are in line with national averages and the trend over the last five years has been in line with the national trend. The results were well above average compared with schools in which Year 9 pupils had gained similar results in the 2000 Year 6 tests. The school met its targets for Year 9 results in 2003
2. Overall standards seen in Year 9 were average and pupils are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their capability and previous attainment. Pupils did well in English, modern foreign languages, and music. Teacher assessments indicate that pupils did less well in history, physical education and design and technology, but inspection evidence indicates that standards in history and physical education are now average. Standards in design and technology are currently well below average because of the limited time allocation for some pupils and current staffing and accommodation difficulties. There is currently some underachievement in design and technology, religious education and ICT. Boys do better than girls in many of their subjects, including history, geography, ICT and design and technology.
3. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, but some pupils are struggling to participate in learning where no support staff are available to help and guide them. In lower sets particularly, the ability and emotional range is very wide and some planning is not targeted well enough to enable some pupils to achieve as much as they should.
4. Pupils whose first language is not English make good progress and achieve well in the main school and the sixth form. The few at an early stage of learning English quickly develop the ability to access the curriculum.

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of student gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	58 (53)	50 (50)
Percentage of student gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	92 (83)	90 (91)
Percentage of student gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97 (92)	97 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	35.2 (33.3)	34.3 (34.2)

There were 217 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. GCSE results were average overall in 2003 and the trend over the last five years has been above the national upward trend. In comparison with national performances, pupils did particularly well in French, religious education and sociology but less well in drama and history. In comparison with their performance in other subjects, pupils did best in French, German, ICT, mathematics and religious education. They did least well in science, drama, English language and English literature. The school met its targets for GCSE results in 2003. Results were above average for the percentage of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades, and below average for schools whose pupils achieved similar results at the end of Year 9 in 2001. In comparison with similar schools, the uncapped average points score was well below average.

6. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Standards were average overall in work seen, and above average in mathematics, geography, modern foreign languages, music, examination ICT and examination religious education. Standards are below average for non-examination religious education and in ICT across the curriculum.

7. The achievement of students with special educational needs is good, but achievement in a significant minority of lessons seen was impaired by the imprecise nature of these pupils' individual education plans, and in some lessons by a lack of in-class support. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English achieve well. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory.

Sixth form

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

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	96.6 (96.7)	89.4 (n/a)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	31.4 (31.5)	30.5 (n/a)
Average point score per student	231.5 (234.2)	263.3 (n/a)

There were 222 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

8. Since the last inspection the number of students and range of courses in the sixth form have increased considerably. Results in 2002, were in line with national averages and standards were better in the work seen during the week of the inspection. Unvalidated data indicates that overall standards were below average in 2003. The results in different subjects have fluctuated over the years dependent on students' attainment on entry to the course. A significant feature of the school's provision is the openness of access to sixth form courses which the school allows. Very good work was seen in psychology and sociology. Students' achievement in psychology, sociology, music, drama and leisure and tourism is very good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes to school and activities are generally **good**. Behaviour is usually **good** but marred by a few pupils whose behaviour disrupts the learning of others. Personal development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and very good responses in many lessons such as music, geography, maths and German.
- Good attitudes and behaviour in and around school and at sporting and performing arts activities.
- The poor behaviour of some pupils with special educational needs and behaviour problems seriously interferes with learning.
- Attendance has now improved, though punctuality needs attention.
- Social, moral and cultural development is good, though not consistently planned in lessons. Spiritual provision has improved and is now satisfactory.

Commentary

9. Attendance is now satisfactory at 92 per cent as a result of strenuous efforts made by the school to improve it. Punctuality is just satisfactory but needs improvement. Some lessons begin late because pupils have long distances to walk. The rate of exclusions is about average, though permanent exclusions are very rare. The school's very low exclusion rate is consistent with its inclusive ethos. Its anti-bullying strategies are proving effective. The school is now moving to tackle the minority of poor attenders and pockets of underachievement.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.5	School data	2.1
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

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

10. Pupils show good attitudes in lessons in many cases. They are enthusiastic and interested. A Year 7 German class had a good relationship with their teacher. They tried very hard to listen and respond in the foreign language. Many lessons are characterised by strong motivation, respect for each other and a determination to succeed. This is a school where pupils expect to work hard. However, in a number of cases poor behaviour and a lack of respect for the teacher undermines learning. This happened during the inspection mainly but not exclusively in Year 7. Usually the cause is pupils with behavioural difficulties whose individual behaviour plans do not contain clear strategies for helping them to learn. As a result teachers use different systems and pupils themselves complain of unfair treatment.

11. Pupils whose first language is not English are well integrated in the school community, have positive attitudes and high aspirations and are well motivated.

12. Behaviour in and around the school is generally good. Pupils move between lessons sensibly, play games at lunchtime and treat their form rooms with respect. There is, however, some litter and graffiti and smoking in toilets. Many pupils are involved in sport, music and drama which take place outside the school day. They respond very well to opportunities to take part in performances, or compete with other schools in gymnastics and football.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	1037	148	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	4	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

13. Personal development is mostly well catered for, although spirituality has a lower profile. A good assembly was seen on the topic of 'heroes', but acts of collective worship are do not take place daily. The use of a 'thought for the day' in form time varies. Some tutors develop the theme well, others give it minimal attention. Moral, social and cultural development appears variably in lessons. It is not systematically planned for in the curriculum, although there are many examples of activities which contribute well. Music makes a sterling contribution, as do the other performing arts. For example, in a Year 8 dance lesson, boys and girls worked hard to plot a series of moves demonstrating Olympic sports, and were excited by the results of their collaboration. Moral values were often developed well, for example through work in religious education on conjoined twins and the Holocaust, as well as through extensive fund-raising for charity. Good social development occurs through pair and group work in lessons, competitive team games and dance, and a good range of residential school trips. Cultural development is generally good, particularly fostered by performing arts subjects. The school fosters satisfactorily pupils' awareness of Britain's cultural and ethnic diversity.

Sixth form

Attitudes to learning, behaviour and relationships are all very positive features of the sixth form. Personal development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good attitudes to learning.
- Very good behaviour and relationships.
- Good opportunities for social, moral and cultural development.
- Few planned opportunities for spiritual development and no act of collective worship.

Commentary

14. Behaviour and relationships in the sixth form are very good. Entry procedures are 'open access', meaning that a variety of abilities are catered for. As a result all have made a positive choice to attend and are very enthusiastic about learning. For example, year 12 GNVQ students installing and documenting computer upgrades were mature, articulate and extremely motivated to discuss their project. Relationships between students and with staff are easy and relaxed, despite the lack of adequate social areas in the sixth form. Although there is little focus on spiritual development, other aspects of personal development are good and help to develop students into mature young people. For example, as part of their charity fundraising for a homeless project sixth formers organise a 'sleepout' in the sixth form garden; for added authenticity participants are not allowed to shower or change before coming into lessons the next day. School trips, such as the GNVQ visit to New York, help develop good social bonds and awareness of other people. Music and the other performing arts contribute strongly to personal development. Sixth form groups in music lessons regularly share their enthusiasm and the social and cultural dimension is very strong.

15. Attendance in the sixth form is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the school provides a **good** education.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall in the main school. They are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Assessment is satisfactory but not sufficiently linked to National Curriculum levels in Years 7 to 9

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good understanding of examination requirements.
- Positive relationships between pupils and teachers and amongst pupils.
- Very good teaching in geography and music, and drama in Years 10 and 11.
- There is no whole-school framework for assessment resulting in its inconsistent use to inform planning and pupils' progress.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 115 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (3%)	26 (23%)	41 (36%)	35 (30%)	9 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

16. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9. Teaching was good in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, history, physical education, drama and citizenship, and very good in geography and music. Pupils are generally keen to learn. Not all join the school with well developed learning skills, but these improve. Pupils' efficiency as learners generally matches the quality of teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Lesson planning is generally good. Teachers use the national Key Stage 3 Strategy effectively to structure lessons, making objectives clear and consolidating what has been learned at the end. Tasks are interesting to pupils.

17. The match of work to pupils' needs is satisfactory. Where it is good, pupils work with sustained interest, individually or in groups, as was often the case in drama. Gifted and talented pupils have now been identified, but planning does not always meet the needs of the ablest pupils in each year group by providing them with suitable extension work. The needs of lower-attaining pupils were not always suitable planned for and pupils sometimes struggled to keep pace with what was asked of them.

18. Learning is satisfactory. Some pupils take time to learn how to work independently. Learning was good in modern foreign languages because the assistance provided was carefully matched to individual needs, and this enabled pupils over the whole range of ability to work confidently. Resources are appropriate and used well, although the use of ICT is inconsistent between subjects. Where in-class support is available, it is used well, but this resource is limited.

19. Unsatisfactory teaching in Years 7 to 9 happened for a variety of reasons. In one, the lesson objective was confusing and pupils received too little help. In another, the teacher dominated the lesson, the pace was too slow and pupils were given views rather than having them elicited through questioning. A worksheet was not adapted to range of needs with result that the challenge was inappropriate for some pupils. In some lessons, which were satisfactory overall, teachers experienced some difficulty in managing the behaviour of low-attaining pupils. Engaging the full attention of the class was consequently a difficulty.

20. Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 10 and 11. Teaching is more consistently assured in these years because management of pupils is more consistently good and teachers have a very good knowledge of examination requirements. These qualities lead to effective learning. Teaching is very good in music, drama, geography, German and GCSE religious education. Teachers readily share their enthusiasm for their subjects with pupils. In a sampled Latin lesson, work was very challenging for the Year 11 class in which there was a high proportion of gifted pupils. The pupils responded enthusiastically to the excellent teaching and made excellent gains in the development of sensitive and imaginative language.

21. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall with the greatest strength being the opportunity for pupils with special educational needs to be taught by subject specialists and receive guidance from experienced support staff. All staff enjoy very good relationships with the pupils. The teachers' attention to pupils' educational needs is not fully effective, and in a significant number of lessons planning for these pupils is not specific enough. The broad targets in their individual education plans are not always easy to translate into meaningful tasks in lessons. Teachers do not always plan appropriate learning outcomes which cater for the needs of all the pupils. This reduces the effectiveness of inclusion which the school seeks to implement as a basic principle of its overall provision.

22. Homework is satisfactorily used to extend the work done in class

23. Whilst subject teachers have good knowledge of their subjects they are less well skilled in teaching the range of pupils in their classes and dealing with difficult behaviour. Where teaching is least effective, off task behaviour and problems with reading materials or understanding the tasks set, limit the pupils' learning opportunities and then they do not make sufficient progress. Where teachers match a variety of activities to pupils' needs, achievements are better. This is mainly in history, French, German, physical education and drama. Examples of unsatisfactory achievement were observed in English and mathematics, ICT and design and technology.

24. Overall, assessment is satisfactory. There is wide variation in the amount of assessment and its effectiveness across the curriculum. In Years 7 to 9, some inaccurate assessment was noted in art, history and design technology. In many subjects, pupils are regularly tested and their attainment is recorded. However, these results are not always systematically analysed and used to inform curriculum improvement or teacher planning. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not aware generally of their target levels or how well they are progressing towards them. In modern languages pupils keep a record of their target grade and current performance in their exercise books. This is an example of good practice.

25. In Years 10 and 11, assessment is more consistently applied across the curriculum. Pupils are regularly assessed and some good use is made of this information. In music the assessments have been closely linked to the GCSE requirements and are integrated into all topics. Similarly in science, examination results and coursework provide a sound base to assessment informing pupils of their performance. However, Year 10 and 11 pupils are often unaware of their target grades and their progress towards them.

26. The quality of marking varies. The school policy statement is not followed consistently amongst subjects. In many subjects, work is regularly marked, although at times this is cursory. In geography, pupils' books are well marked with regular comments that give guidance as to how they can improve their work. ICT coursework material is well marked and has good advice that helps the pupils improve their work. Assessment is unsatisfactory in art in Years 7 to 9, and in design and technology in Years 7 to 11. No assessment procedures have yet been implemented in citizenship.

Sixth form

Teaching and learning are **very good**.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	14 (31%)	21 (47%)	9 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

Main strengths

- Teachers have good understanding of examination requirements.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and they challenge and enthuse students well.
- Relationships are very good and stimulate students' learning.

Commentary

27. Teaching is very good in the sixth form. All teachers have very good, and some have excellent, subject knowledge. Learning is very good because students respond very well to the teaching they receive. Planning is good and takes good account of the wide range of abilities represented. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the varied requirements of examination boards. Students learn very well. They are keen to be in the sixth form and enthusiastic about the subjects they study. Lessons present a very good level of challenge to which the students respond very well. Lessons are taught at a brisk pace and time is very well used. Teachers have very good working relationships with students. Lessons are well prepared and use a good range of resources. A good range of teaching styles is used generally, except in art, where, in lessons observed, too much of the teaching comprises talking by the teacher.

28. The school works hard to offer all students an equal opportunity to succeed.

29. Assessment is good, and sometimes very good. Students are regularly set homework that is marked in detail. In science, marking is flexible and appropriate to the style of work being carried out. In ICT the work is regularly marked with useful feedback that helps the students to improve their work. In smaller groups teachers give individual feedback about their performance during lessons. This was seen to work well particularly in music, where strategies to improve work were discussed with each student. Students generally feel that assessment helps them to know how to improve their work, although a small number did not feel this was the case. In general, module results and coursework inform teachers well of students' progress. A whole-school framework for tracking students' progress throughout the sixth form has not been implemented.

The curriculum

Overall, the curriculum is **satisfactory** but the opportunities within the curriculum vary with some legal requirements not met, resulting in an unsatisfactory balance in the curriculum. Enrichment through extra-curricular activities is very good. Resources are satisfactory but accommodation has some deficiencies.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum satisfactorily meets the needs and aptitudes of pupils.
- In Years 7 to 9, all subjects of the National Curriculum are covered, although not all subjects are covered in the breadth and depth they should be.
- Statutory requirements relating to the curriculum, collective worship and some informal disapplication are not met.
- The curriculum provides very effectively for personal, social and health education.
- The curriculum is enhanced and supported by a very good range of activities, particularly within the performing arts and sport.
- The good facilities for the performing arts hall and the refurbished library.
- The school is fully staffed with specialist teachers.
- Some subjects have limited access to modern resources for ICT.

Commentary

30. The breadth of the curriculum is broadly satisfactory. Subjects generally receive a satisfactory allocation of time. However, in Years 7 to 9, timetable organisation leaves physical education and technology with too little time for sufficient breadth and depth of coverage for those pupils who take Latin or a second language. The school has a well-developed policy for gifted and talented pupils in which they are clearly identified. Provision in music is excellent and it is very good in physical education. From Year 8, higher-attaining have the opportunity to learn Latin, which they can pursue to GCSE level. The needs of such pupils are not yet effectively catered for in all other subjects. Very good provision is made for performing arts, although dance is taught as an extra-curricular activity at present.

31. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum is satisfactory. It has good features but also weaknesses that result in inequalities. The school's inclusive ethos is well represented in the structure of the curriculum. Vocational courses have expanded in years 10 and 11. The procedures for disapplying the National Curriculum to allow pupils to take such a programme have not been followed. The school has recognised the problems raised and is planning changes from September 2004. Not all elements of the National Curriculum in design and technology and ICT are covered. The school does not meet fully the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education because too little time is allocated for this in Years 10 and 11. In addition, although there are weekly assemblies, and the school publishes a 'thought for the day', the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, as required.

32. The school uses information from feeder primary schools well to identify the needs of pupils. Arrangements for grouping pupils and planning for pupils to have different curriculum routes is satisfactorily tailored to their capabilities.

33. The curriculum is very strongly enriched through extra-curricular provision. A wide range of activities is offered, including sport and extra-curricular performing arts activities. Educational visits include a variety of exchanges and opportunities for field-work. These play an important part in the school's life. As well as extending pupils' skills and promoting wider interests, such activities help to develop pupils' personal qualities including confidence and self-esteem.
34. Citizenship is at an early stage of development and has only recently been accorded the priority necessary if requirements are to be fulfilled. At present, provision is unsatisfactory. Other subjects make contributions but these have not yet been identified in a scheme of work.
35. PSE is taught to all years, including the sixth form, for one period per week. Careers education is included as are elements of citizenship. Form tutors, who teach the programme, are supported by a very good scheme of work and resources of high quality. A well-organised programme of speakers from outside the school is arranged in order that all pupils have access to important contributions, for example in such topics as drugs, careers, industrial awareness and road safety.
36. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to National Curriculum subjects and to relevant vocational options at Key Stage 4. In some lessons observed, their opportunities to achieve as well as they might were limited, however, because the targets in their IEPs are too general. This weakness contributes particularly to the overall difficulties these pupils experience with literacy throughout the school. Where learning support staff provide relevant guidance and the learning activities are well matched to the pupils' interests and needs, they make steady progress through the curriculum.
37. The visiting specialist teacher for English as an additional language makes a good contribution to the curriculum by providing general guidelines for all staff and specific strategies and materials for pupils identified as needing support with their English.
38. The school has a sufficient number of suitably qualified specialist teachers. The teaching and support personnel are well matched to their roles in the school. There is a lack of technical support in food technology. Other than in English, mathematics and science, pupils with special educational needs do not have sufficient support from learning assistants.
39. The accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. Access for people with disabilities is unsatisfactory, as certain parts of the upper floors are not easily accessible. The school is short of classroom space and specialist accommodation for design and technology. The large sixth form does not have the benefit of a separate library and ICT resources to further their study skills and independent learning.
40. The Arts College status has enabled drama, music and performing arts to benefit from the conversion of a hall to give raked seating, new lighting and sound facilities. Music has benefited from new audio technology and computing software. This has enabled pupils to broaden their skills in the technical features of performance, and has contributed to the very good level of participation in the arts.
41. Resources for learning are satisfactory, although the accessibility of computers limits ICT experiences in a range of subjects. Pupils have slightly better access to computers than the national average, but many of the machines in departments are old, which prevents the modern software working effectively. This is having a negative impact on achievements of pupils and students. The school learning resources centre contains an adequate stock of software, journals, and books. The learning resources manager has helpfully reorganised provision to enable pupils to find materials for learning easily. The centre is supported by the work of school prefects who each take a management responsibility for a section.
42. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory overall but little use of ICT was observed during the inspection or within the sample of pupils' work. Educational targets are not set in ICT for pupils with special educational needs in.

Sixth form

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of courses meets the wide-ranging needs and aspirations of the students well.
- The very good range of extra-curricular provision includes the community sports leadership award and cultural and educational visits.
- Careers education and advice about higher education courses are good.
- Some opportunities exist for the development of key skills but this is optional for students.

Commentary

43. The sixth form curriculum is good. It suits the needs, attainment and interests of different groups of students. Students have access to a wide range of options including accredited general and vocational courses. This wide range leads to some subject clashes which limits the time available in some subjects for some students. Higher education guidance for Year 13 is good. Vocational courses are provided in the sixth form to meet more fully the needs and aspirations of the wide range of students. The sixth form allows open access so that students can embark on AS level courses with GCSE C grades and, by taking an extra year, can progress from intermediate to advanced vocational courses, which can lead to university entrance. Students appreciate the breadth of courses available.

44. Staffing is good. Accommodation for learning is good, but the sixth form has inadequate space for socialising. Resources are satisfactory, apart from the accessibility of computers, which is sometimes a problem.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a **good** level of support and guidance. Staff are strongly committed to the welfare of all their pupils, and there are many success stories. However, inconsistencies in approach lead to inconsistent treatment of some poorly behaving pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral staff are strongly committed to the welfare of their pupils, and daily routines run smoothly.
- Good induction procedures help pupils settle into Year 7.
- The school is successful in integrating pupils in danger of permanent exclusion.
- Inconsistent use is made of tutor and registration periods.
- Some pupils have little idea of their academic level or how to improve it.

Commentary

45. The school has a strong tradition of pastoral support with an experienced and dedicated team. They have a good knowledge of their pupils and are successful in guiding and motivating them towards good achievement, for example through a clearly-understood reward system, mentoring, and opportunities for work-related learning in Years 10 and 11. Several pupils permanently excluded from other schools have successfully reintegrated at Springwood. The house system generates loyalty and good-natured competition among pupils. Child protection procedures are fine: the relevant staff member has had extensive training despite being newly appointed.

46. Policies on race and discrimination are fully in place. The school makes good provision for helping pupils to settle into Year 7. The quality of support for pupils whose first language is not English is good. The visiting specialist offers English 'surgeries' to pupils having particular difficulties with their work.

47. Daily routines are unobtrusive and efficient, greatly helped by the welcoming nature of reception staff. Significant attention is paid to health and safety in all practical subjects - indeed that in design

technology serves as a model of good practice. The school has good procedures for dealing with poor behaviour. However, the system is variable in its implementation, in that subject teachers, heads of department and then form tutors are involved at different stages for different offences, and the heads of house are put in the position of being reacting to problems rather than heading them off. Some pupils perceive this as leading to unfair treatment, and a significant minority say they have no adult they can talk to. Inspectors found form tutors to be caring and empathetic in general. While some make good use of tutor and registration periods for pastoral support, others do not. Quite a number of pupils interviewed were hazy about the level they were working at or ways they could improve.

48. The newly reconstituted school council is beginning to provide a useful and formal means of communication between pupils and the school's management. Currently the perception of a significant minority of pupils is that the school is not interested in their views. In the pupil questionnaire 35 per cent of those who responded felt this to be the case.

49. The annual report to parents provides a sound description of pupils' progress in relation to their potential. Each subject sets a target for improvement on the report but these are often very general, providing little guidance for the pupil to improve within the subject. Assessment scores for all subjects are given to the form tutor to inform a mentoring session with each pupil. A programme of mentoring sessions once or twice a year for each pupil has been introduced.

50. External agencies are used effectively to enhance the school's guidance for pupils with special educational needs and their parents. Relationships with outside providers are good, particularly the liaison with other child-centred agencies which can help individual pupils improve their learning or behaviour. For example, intensive guidance has been provided by partners for several pupils with significant behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Sixth form

Support and guidance are **good**. Students appreciate the level of support they receive.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral staff are very dedicated and strongly committed to the welfare of their students.
- There are good induction procedures for Year 12.
- The open access means that all students can achieve at their own level.
- High-attaining students feel they get good support and guidance about their courses and higher education, but students following vocational routes do not feel as well served.

Commentary

51. Students feel overwhelmingly that staff are accessible and helpful. They consider that they are carefully guided and supported as they make choices about sixth form courses, and there is a thorough induction procedure including for those coming from other schools. Advice is offered on study skills and a good range of 'self-help' materials is available. Staff are realistic and have high expectations for all their students, and regular meetings both formal and informal ensure students are on the right track. Students on vocational courses respond very well to opportunities offered, for example for work experience with local employers. Students on vocational courses feel they have had good support in choosing suitable university courses, though there is less emphasis on a longer-term view of possible careers. About 30 per cent of students did not feel they had received well informed careers advice. However, inspectors felt the level of advice to be good, and that, because the inspection took place comparatively early in the school year, few pupils were in a position to make an informed judgement on this. The great majority of students feel staff are experts in their subject, helpful and push them to achieve their best, and they find the experience enjoyable. Retention rates in most subjects are good.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **good** as are links with local schools and colleges. Links with the local community are **very good** and a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good links exist with the local community, especially in sports and performing arts.
- The written information provided for parents and carers is generally of very high quality, though some find the annual reports confusing.

Commentary

52. Links with parents are good. Most parents are very positive about the work of the school, which is significantly oversubscribed. Parents are happy about the teaching, behaviour and standards, and feel that good management is leading to high expectations for their children. Most documentation is of a high standard, such as the prospectus which is professionally produced. Some parents, however, feel the annual reports are difficult to interpret because the number system used is confusing. Pupils and parents feel there are some inconsistencies in the deadlines and amounts of homework set. The Parent-Teacher Association does sterling work in raising funds and running social events for the school, and many parents enthusiastically support performances and sporting fixtures.

53. Links with the local community are very good, especially in performing arts, and are a strength of the school. Arts College status has led to significant expansion of activities such as talent shows, music and dance performances. External events, such as The National Festival of Music for Youth take place at Springwood. Good links through business include representation on the governing body. Industrial mentors have been appointed for pupils in Years 10 and 12, and a local supermarket sponsored an exotic fruit tasting as part of the Year 7 multi-cultural week. A huge range of local sporting activities and residential trips also enrich pupils' experiences. Pupils have participated in acrobatics championships, and national geography competitions. They have renovated a farmhouse for charity in France.

54. Links with other schools are good, particularly with primary schools which send pupils to Springwood. Drama and music teachers regularly work in primary schools as part of their performing arts remit, leading to a smoother transition between primary and secondary education. Increasingly, pupils are able to move into work-related learning in Years 10 and 11, which has helped disaffected pupil stay within education.

55. The school encourages parents of pupils from minority ethnic communities to attend meetings, and achieves a good response.

Sixth form

Very good links exist with the local community and **good** links with a range of universities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good links with the local community, especially in sports and performing arts.
- The school maintains good links with a range of universities.
- Vocational courses have established good links with local businesses.

Commentary

56. The school runs the Community Sports Leader Award, as well as participating in numerous competitions in football, cricket and acrobatics.

57. Good links exist with local businesses through the Young Enterprise Scheme. Representatives from the Chamber of Commerce hold mock interviews and provide two days a week of work experience for intermediate GNVQ students.

58. The school has good links with universities, such as a science conference at the University of East Anglia, the link between the psychology department and an Oxford college. These links and the regular conferences held at Cambridge, in conjunction with other local schools are beneficial because they help to give a taste of life in higher education and help raise aspirations.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is **good** and management **satisfactory** overall. Governors are very supportive of the school, but not all statutory duties are met and therefore governance is overall unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Under the good leadership of the headteacher, standards have improved significantly.
- The headteacher and governors are strongly committed to raising standards further.
- The school development plans do not present a clear and coherent plan of action.
- The development and monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning have not had a sufficiently high profile in observations and subject reviews.
- The school has successfully achieved Arts College status.
- Leadership and management in music and the performing arts are very good.
- Financial management is very good.

Commentary

59. The headteacher provides strong leadership for the school and has a very clear vision for its further development. He has successfully guided the school through a period in which examination results have risen year by year. The school achieved Arts College status in 2001. Very good developments have taken place in arts provision since that time which have made an important impact on the lives of the many participants. This period has also seen a significant increase of the school's impact in the community and its work in local primary schools in particular, through for example, sharing resources and expertise and fostering a love for the arts.

60. The headteacher is fully committed to the school's continuing development, particularly raising pupils' attainment further and enabling pupils to enjoy the benefits that accrue to the school as a result of enhanced arts provision. He maintains a high profile around the school. Pupils are encouraged and commended for their achievements. Staff are strongly supported. Overall there is a strong 'feel-good' factor about the school.

61. Governors appreciate the contribution made by the headteacher and other senior staff to recent developments. They are committed to the ambitions and aspirations expressed in school's aims and goals. They strongly supported the headteacher when specialist status was applied for, and are proud of, the benefits it has brought to pupils and the wider community.

62. An effective committee structure creates good links with subject leaders, helps governors monitor progress and informs their decision-making. Governors hold the school to account and set ambitious performance targets. However, while governors share a strong sense of the school's strengths, some are less sure of its weaknesses. Governors have not investigated how the support for pupils with special education needs is working in practice and whether the targeted support is better managed than at the time of the last inspection. Insufficient progress has been made on this since the last inspection.

63. The governing body does not meet all its statutory responsibilities, notably some aspects of the curriculum in design and technology and ICT. The legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils is not met.

64. The way that senior staff are managed and, in turn, the way they manage others is sometimes less effective than it ought to be. These weaknesses stem from the quality of strategic planning. The school has several development plans and several staff charged with the responsibility for

implementing a wide range of priorities. The school's chief priorities for development are not clear enough and the intended effects of initiatives on the quality of provision are vague.

65. The quality of faculty and department development plans varies from good to poor and so their usefulness as a management tool to prioritise spending and meet whole-school targets is diminished. Interventions and on-going monitoring of plans by line managers are not robust enough.

66. Although development plans highlight most of the issues identified during the inspection the analysis and the action that results from these are not always well led and effectively coordinated. In the case of cross curricular developments, like literacy, numeracy, ICT, special educational needs and the introduction of the citizenship curriculum, there are differences in the quality and rigour of follow-up work. These differences have not always been picked up because the monitoring of what has been achieved has not been rigorous enough. For example, in some departments and at times within departments, the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented successfully and reflects current thinking about how teachers can improve pupils writing, spelling and oral responses. Elsewhere teachers' understanding is more limited, spelling mistakes are not corrected and few opportunities are created for pupils to develop and practise using specialist subject language. Similar inconsistencies apply in the way teachers plan for pupils differing learning needs, in the quality of schemes of work and in methods for assessing pupils' achievements in Years 7 to 9.

67. A rolling programme of departmental reviews, led by senior staff, places great emphasis on classroom observation and also contributes to teachers' performance management. However this monitoring has not always made full use of the opportunity to check whether key development priorities have been embedded in the work of the school and demonstrated in pupils' work, and in addition whether investments of time and staff training have proved to be good value for money. A deputy head carries out systematic monitoring of teaching. This monitoring reflects the very supportive approach of the school to the management of staff, but does not lead to rigorous enough development targets for teachers.

68. Leadership of subjects is satisfactory, with particular strengths in music, where it is excellent, and geography and modern foreign languages, where it is very good. The school invests heavily in the professional development and further training of staff. The training is effective in bringing about improvements to the schools' overall examination performance, as staff are encouraged to become examiners. Useful knowledge is passed on to pupils and other members of staff. The school makes good provision for developing the skills of newly qualified teachers and helping them settle into school routines and fulfil their responsibilities. Useful links have been established with higher education organisations for the training of teachers. The school's graduate teacher training is very successful.

69. Provision for pupils whose home language is not English is well managed. The SENCO and visiting specialist teacher work closely together and involve relevant staff in a constructive partnership.

70. Leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory overall with many good features but some issues requiring further attention. The SENCO provides detailed documentation which identifies pupils' general learning needs, but procedures for supporting pupils' learning across the whole school are not fully effective. Teachers rely too much on the composition of the ability-based teaching sets and do not plan a range of varied activities and tasks linked to pupils' needs. This weakness has not been satisfactorily addressed by the school's monitoring procedures. The SENCO has a heavy teaching timetable in addition to management responsibilities which limits her opportunities to monitor the effectiveness of learning support.

Financial information for the year April 2002 March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	4583733
Total expenditure	4300608
Expenditure per pupil	3205

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	205610
Balance carried forward to the next	283125

71. School finances are very well managed. Office procedures are rigorous, and the school has very good arrangements for monitoring its budget. However, the cost effectiveness of the sixth form has not been calculated separately from the main school to check on the financial viability of courses with small numbers of students. Governors and staff understand and implement the principles of best value. Departmental allowances are fair and carefully linked to development priorities.

Sixth Form

Leadership and management of the sixth form are **good**. Governors strongly support the work of the sixth form.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Increasing numbers of students are choosing to stay on into the sixth form.
- The curriculum is well planned and effectively managed to meet students' needs.
- Useful links with universities and other schools are well managed and coordinated.
- There are weaknesses in strategic planning and monitoring.
- Departmental leadership and management are excellent in music and leisure and tourism and very good in psychology, sociology and drama.
- Statutory requirements for collective worship are not met.

Commentary

72. The sixth form is well led and managed. The school decided to increase the size of the sixth form and, since the last inspection, numbers have grown significantly. There is a good record of recruitment and retention of students. The numbers in the current Year 12 have doubled and the sixth form now reflects more accurately the population in the main school. The curriculum is very varied and well matched to students' differing interests and aspirations. However, the increased numbers have put a strain on existing facilities and resources that were not entirely anticipated in the school's forward planning. Some courses run with small numbers of students. The financial implications of this have not been calculated.

73. Links with local schools and universities and the opportunities for joint residential courses are well managed and coordinated. They contribute to the headteacher's vision for the school by promoting learning and helping to raise students' aspirations.

74. The quality of leadership and management of subjects is good overall. There are models of excellence in music and in leisure and tourism and very good practice in psychology, sociology and drama. As in the main school, monitoring of provision does not lead to rigorous enough target setting for individual subjects.

75. The governors play an active part in the school and have established good and useful relationships with subject leaders. Statutory requirements for collective worship in the sixth form are not met.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 are above average.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Teachers challenge higher-attaining pupils well.
- Schemes of work are unsatisfactory.
- Limited opportunities are planned for pupils to use ICT.

Commentary

Examination results

76. Results in Year 9 national tests in 2003 were average for the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 and above and well above average at Level 6 or above. As attainment on entry is average this represents good achievement. At GCSE, English results were average and English literature results slightly above. Value added data indicates this is satisfactory progress.

Standards and achievement

77. In Years 7 to 9, pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. Pupils of all abilities contribute willingly in lessons and are prepared to discuss and argue. Higher-attaining pupils display intellectual curiosity and are willing to question constructively and challenge the teacher. Reading skills are generally well developed but lower-attaining pupils have difficulty reading fluently, or with an awareness of audience. In class, written work is of a good standard but there is a variation in the standard of written work seen in exercise books. Lower-attaining pupils often have difficulty with basic spelling and punctuation.

78. In Years 10 and 11, higher-attaining pupils read with fluency, expression and imagination. Written work shows good analytical skills and the ability to explore complex areas, such as authorial intention and style, for example in demanding coursework assignments on 'Jane Eyre' and 'Lord of the Flies'. The standards of middle and lower-attaining pupils are more variable. Written work is often underdeveloped or unfinished and the choice of assignments sometimes inappropriate. Boys, in particular, are often unchallenged over the poor presentation of written work. At all levels, pupils' speaking and listening skills are good and they speak eagerly and confidently in front of the class.

Teaching and learning

79. In Years 7 to 9, teachers have good subject knowledge and enjoy good relationships with their pupils. Most teachers use a variety of different teaching strategies appropriately to meet pupils' needs, although the national strategy has been inconsistently implemented. In a Year 8 lesson on 'The Badger' by John Clare, the teacher clearly explained the aims of the lesson, carefully structured the activities and enabled all pupils to contribute equally. As a result, pupils made very good progress. Where the teaching lacks pace or work insufficiently caters for the spread of ability within a group, however, pupils are not achieving as well as they might and frequently wander off task.

80. In Years 10 and 11, teachers of higher-attaining pupils are enthusiastic, set challenging assignments and manage the class very well. In a lesson on persuasive speeches in 'Julius Caesar', the teacher's rigorous questioning and regular change of activity enabled very good progress to be made. In middle and lower-ability groups, where teaching lacked a clear focus and information about pupils with special educational needs was not used to inform planning, the poor behaviour of a minority affected the progress of the whole class.

Leadership and management

81. A clear philosophy guides the department's work and the day-to-day running is smooth. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum is broad and balanced and in Years 10 and 11 examination requirements are carefully adhered to. Schemes of work, however, are unsatisfactory. They contain few references to either the National Curriculum or the National Literacy Strategy and no links to other cross-curricular areas, such as drama. In Years 10 and 11, there are no schemes of work. The management team are strong teachers but the monitoring of teaching has not been effective in bringing all staff performance to the level of the strongest teachers. Too much autonomy is given to the individual teacher sometimes at the expense of accountability, with marking, in particular, being highly variable. The development plan is inadequate to take the department forwards; outcomes are insufficiently precise for improvement to be measured. The department has experienced significant recruitment difficulties in the past. Staffing is now satisfactory as are resources and accommodation, although some of the teaching rooms are rather small.

82. Since the last inspection the department has made satisfactory progress. Despite difficulties in recruiting teachers, results have improved and there are better opportunities for independent learning. Spelling and grammar have improved across Years 7 to 9. The quality of teaching is still inconsistent, however, and the provision for ICT inadequate.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

83. Overall, literacy is satisfactorily developed but not managed effectively across the whole school. The school has a clear policy on language development and a well-defined literacy policy that highlights the expectations of all departments with regard to literacy development. The school perceives literacy to be a whole-school issue and a senior manager has responsibility for this. Very good practice exists in science, geography and music where key words, word maps and the opportunities for pupils to practise writing in many different forms are central to each department's work. In modern foreign languages, linguistic development is very good. Good opportunities exist in history for pupils to structure and present their work carefully. Pupils with special educational needs pupils are supported well and show standards of literacy that are above expectation. In other areas, such as art and ICT, provision is unsatisfactory with too limited questioning and no systematic development of literacy skills. There is a lack of consistency across departments and insufficient monitoring to ensure effective implementation. The quality of marking varies considerably and there is no school-wide approach to correcting work. Valuable opportunities to improve literacy through tutor time are currently underdeveloped.

Modern foreign languages

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	French: good German: good	French – good German – very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results are well above average in French and above average in German.
- Consistently good teaching by an enthusiastic and committed team.
- Pupils are well motivated and learn willingly, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils have insufficient access to ICT.
- Library provision is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Examination results

84. Results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in French in 2003 were in line with those reported nationally. In German they were below, as a result of previous staffing difficulties. Although boys did less well than girls in both languages, their performance improved on previous years. GCSE French results in 2003 were well above the national average, continuing a trend of significant improvement. German results were above average, maintaining their level despite the staffing difficulties which have now been overcome.

Standards and achievement

85. Pupils' listening and speaking skills develop well, to the extent that by Year 11 they can give extended spoken presentations with fluency and accuracy in French and engage in animated discussion on healthy eating in German. Their written work develops well – good examples seen included a Year 9 pupil's diary of a past weekend in German and a substantial, accurate and interesting description of her school in French by a Year 10 pupil. Pupils read for information and pleasure, often from French or German magazines. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their capability. Those whose first language is not English also achieve well and those who are gifted in languages reach high standards.

Teaching and learning

86. The quality of teaching is good overall, and sometimes excellent. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' very good personal skills provide excellent models for pupils. Grammar and accuracy are tackled rigorously, but in an encouraging and supportive atmosphere. The needs of pupils of all levels of ability are recognised and work is set to meet them and their key skills of literacy, number work and information technology are appropriately used and developed. Pupils' progress is regularly assessed and the National Curriculum levels are effectively used to set targets for pupils. In response to the good teaching, pupils learn well from the outset. They listen attentively, speak confidently and willingly and show the ability to work well, in pairs or individually, on tasks combining all their language skills. By Years 10 and 11, those who continue language studies have very positive attitudes and make very good progress.

Leadership and management

87. She has built a cohesive team committed to achieving high standards. The curriculum is well planned. Pupils who begin a second language in Year 8 are enabled to make rapid progress to achieve parity with their first language by the end of Year 9. French and German exchanges enrich the curriculum. Resources are well managed – a good example being the priority given to re-equipping the department with new German textbooks. Access to ICT is inadequate and the library collection is largely out of date, and these are limiting factors to overall progress. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved and the quality of teaching is much improved. The faculty has the capacity to maintain this improvement.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved over the past four years and are above average.
- The pupils are generally keen to learn mathematics and they respond well to their teachers.
- The team of staff work well together and are well led.
- Higher-attaining pupils receive too little extension work.
- Marking and assessment are not used consistently to plan for pupils' specific needs.
- Too few opportunities are provided for using ICT.

Commentary

Examination results

88. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 are average and maintaining a rising trend. GCSE results are above average and also rising. In both examinations, girls outperform boys.

Standards and achievement

89. Pupils' mathematical skills on entry to the school are below average and, by the end of Year 9, they have risen to average. Pupils' number skills are average. Higher-attaining pupils do particularly well at mental mathematics. In Year 7, pupils find the pattern in a sequence to the n^{th} term showing good progress in their understanding. Higher-attaining Year 7 pupils predicted the probability of outcomes using two events. In Year 10 and 11, standards rise further. Some Year 11 pupils calculate using fractional powers. Pupils approach algebraic problems with confidence. They identify and manipulate shape well. In Year 11, higher-attaining pupils calculate angles using cosine/sine and tangent rules.

Teaching and learning

90. Good lessons are characterised by high expectations, clear and careful planning, skilful questioning, good relationships. In a number of lessons, the teacher gave pupils clear time limits to the activities to stimulate a good pace of learning. Lack of planning to match tasks to pupils' abilities and needs in some lessons restricts the learning of the higher-attaining pupils. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs, although targets in their individual education plans are not always related to the pupils' academic needs. Pupils are generally confident in their skills and are keen to participate fully in their learning. They are not afraid to ask questions to develop their understanding of mathematics. Homework is used effectively to reinforce learning. It is marked well with some constructive comments. The teachers are well qualified and enthusiastic about their subject. They devote much extra time to providing extra lessons and guidance for their pupils. The quality of assessment is satisfactory. However, assessment inadequately guides the planning of lessons, and some pupils report that they do not feel that they know how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

91. The new head of department has clear vision for the subject and its future improvement. Good liaison between the head of department and his deputy has resulted in increased standards at both key stages. The curriculum is satisfactory and provides pupils with some good opportunities for problem-solving. The teachers work well as a team. The head of department observes his team teaching and monitors their effectiveness regularly. A link governor takes an active and regular interest in the subject. The head of department ensures that teaching and learning strategies are constructively reviewed at departmental meeting. At present, the schemes of work lack the depth to support fully the teaching and learning of pupils over the whole range of ability. Too little extension work is provided to challenge the highest-attaining pupils. Since the last inspection, standards have improved at both key stages. Regular testing has been implemented. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy has been incorporated successfully into the teaching, but too few opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT.

Mathematics across the curriculum

92. The development of competence in mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. An appropriate policy has recently been devised and the management and development of mathematics across the curriculum is at an early stage. An audit across the curriculum was carried out last year, and staff training has now taken place. Some good use is made of mathematics in some subject areas. In science, cooling curves are drawn by lower-attaining pupils and higher-attaining pupils balance chemical equations. In geography, statistical work includes collection of data through fieldwork. In a history lesson, pupils drew a graph showing the increased popularity of National Socialists in 1920s Germany. Coursework in ICT provides good examples of the use of spreadsheets to calculate revenues for businesses. A number of subjects have not identified opportunities for developing mathematical skills in their schemes of work.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Where pupils are setted, work is well matched to their needs.
- The marking of pupils work is inconsistent, especially in Years 7 and 8.
- The use of ICT is inadequate overall and the development of literacy is inconsistent across the subject.

Commentary

Examination results

93. In the 2002 tests at the end of Year 9, results were average and above average in comparison with schools in similar contexts. Results dipped slightly in 2003 but had followed the improving national trend since 2000. GCSE results in 2003 were average. Boys and girls performed similarly.

Standards and achievement

94. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, including the achievement of pupils with special educational needs. Higher-attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 are apply scientific skills to good effect. Achievement is better in Year 9, when pupils are taught by specialists in the individual science disciplines. There is more rigour in the writing of pupils in this year group. In earlier years, the work of middle and lower-attaining pupils, in particular, is too often incomplete. Lower-attaining pupils achieve less well in lessons as tasks are not always suitably used to meet their needs. By Year 11, higher-attaining pupils manipulate scientific formulae, draw graphs accurately and demonstrate a high level of scientific curiosity. They work independently and use investigations to explore scientific concepts. They carry out experimental work safely and present work well. Average-attaining pupils can make links using their scientific knowledge, make sensible observations during practical work and record their observations. Lower-attaining pupils have difficulty in using scientific terminology.

Teaching and learning

95. Pupils enjoy science lessons when a good climate for learning exists. In these lessons, teachers are enthusiastic, and lessons are well prepared, behaviour is well managed, and teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Teaching in Year 9, where groups are setted, was most effective because work is matched more closely to pupils' needs. In Years 10 and 11, teachers' good subject knowledge and planning keeps pupils well challenged, and good relationships between teachers and pupils help to produce a stimulating learning environment. Activities and teaching strategies are geared to the abilities of all pupils with a strong emphasis on investigation and independent thinking, which challenges higher-attaining pupils well. Marking is inconsistent in all years and is rarely tells pupils how they can improve their work. In Years 7 to 9, pupils receive inadequate support in managing their notes and homework. Many opportunities are available for developing numerical skills but the literacy policy is not making a consistent impact in lessons. The use of ICT is inadequate until Years 10 and 11 when pupils use computers for graph work, tabulation and word processing. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs do not always receive sufficient support during lessons.

Leadership and management

96. The head of department is a good role model in the classroom. A well-presented handbook provides a thorough guide to the department and is helpful to staff. Suitable schemes of work are in place. Assessment procedures are currently undergoing further developed with external assistance. Examination results are reviewed annually as part of improving provision. Other than through performance management, teaching and learning are not being monitored by the head of science. Whole-school policies are inconsistent in their application and there is a lack of attention to managing pupils' work. Resources, including textbooks, are adequate and well organised. Technical support is good but stretched, given the inconvenient dispersal of the science laboratories. Since the last inspection, GCSE performance has improved but marking of work remains inconsistent.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below average	GCSE course – above average General ICT – well below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	GCSE course – good General ICT - unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has introduced an innovative and popular vocational ICT course in Years 10 and 11.
- Examination results in Year 11 are good.
- Pupils who do not choose ICT in Years 10 and 11 gain little experience in using computers.
- Many subjects across the curriculum make little use of ICT between Years 7 and 11.
- Leadership and management in National Curriculum ICT are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Results

97. Teacher assessments of pupils' ICT capability in Year 9 were well those reported nationally in 2003. Boys' results were very high. GCSE ICT results have risen quickly in recent years. In 2002, results were above the national average. Girls' results were well above average and boys' were average.

Standards and achievement

98. Standards observed in Year 9 were below the national average rather than well above average, as reported by the school. This is because pupils did not experience much ICT between Years 7 to 9 and teachers' assessments were inaccurate. This is because there is little evidence of ICT work in many different subjects. However, very good use of ICT is made in music. In specialist ICT lessons, standards are average overall. In these lessons some good work was seen. This included creating web pages with digital images with hypertext links to illustrate a story. Standards of work seen in GCSE work were above the national average. For example, one pupil was seen designing a high quality menu-linked set of spreadsheets to hold records for trading cards. Pupils who do not choose ICT as an option experience little use of computers.

Teaching and learning

99. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use this to produce some high-quality teaching materials, particularly for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Teachers have very good expertise in managing coursework and this makes a major contribution to the good examination results. For example pupils were seen producing high quality databases for the management of a video rental shop, and commercial standard marketing materials for a fashion company. Sometimes when teaching lower sets, teachers use language and materials which some pupils with special educational needs find too difficult and this sometimes leads to misbehaviour which goes unchallenged.

Leadership and management

100. The leadership and management of GCSE examination groups in Years 10 and 11 are good. The school has invested heavily in computer resources but it has also introduced a wider range of ICT courses and imaginative schemes of work. This means that many subjects find it difficult to gain access to computers. The computer network provides good Internet protection for pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

101. The development of pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There is no systematic monitoring of the teaching of ICT across the curriculum. This means that the department has no overview of pupils' progress. In Years 7 to 9 the school does not have a complete overview of which parts of the statutory ICT curriculum are being taught, and therefore cannot ensure that the requirements are met. In Years 10 and 11, pupils who do not choose the subject experience little use of computers. In addition, many subjects make little use of ICT because they cannot gain access to computers.

HUMANITIES

One lesson was sampled in Latin. Excellent teaching and pupils' excellent attitudes resulted in very good achievement. The pupils showed very good understanding of the subtle use of language in a poem by Catullus. These very able pupils showed conspicuous development in their appreciation and use of poetic language.

Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

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

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership and management of the department.
- The improvement in GCSE results since the last report.
- The achievement of pupils in Years 9 and 11.
- The high quality of teaching and learning.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to apply and practise their ICT skills.
- The use of comments and targets to inform pupils as to how they might improve.

Commentary

Examination results

102. GCSE results in 2003 were above the national average, over two thirds of pupils achieving grades A* to C. Standards have risen since the last report. The difference between the attainment of girls and boys fluctuates but is less than reported nationally.

Standards and achievement

103. Pupils join the school with knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject which are below average. They make good progress and at the end of Year 9 their attainment is in line with national expectations and achievement is good. They acquire a sound knowledge of the themes and places studied and a particular strength is their competence in subject skills, as seen when Year 9 pupils investigated the impact of earthquakes in less economically developed countries. Pupils respond to questioning with appropriately detailed factual knowledge. Teachers insist that pupils in all years use technical language accurately in both oral and written work.

104. In Year 11, they produce coursework of a good standard as a result of very well developed subject skills. For example, the work on coastal processes and settlement at Hunstanton shows them able to collect and analyse information and illustrate their findings with graphs and a variety of mapping techniques. Year 10 pupils achieved a good understanding of how rivers transport their load. They identify links between people and their environment. In Year 10, pupils gave detailed explanations of how the relationship between political, environmental and socio-economic factors impacted on population growth in less economically developed countries.

Teaching and Learning

105. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and a good understanding of the National Curriculum and GCSE syllabuses. Teaching was good in the small number of lessons taught by non-specialist teachers, in part as a result of the very good support provided by the head of department. The teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and make these very clear. Lessons planned well and had clear objectives. Pupils' understanding was checked by targeted questioning that ensured that all were involved. The emphasis on developing literacy skills, for example the use of key words, was a feature of all lessons. Teachers' mark pupils work regularly, but do not inform them specifically enough how they may raise their standards further. Not all pupils are aware of their progress in relation to National Curriculum levels. Teachers expect high standards of presentation and useful guidelines, together with topic summaries, are included in exercise books. Relationships are very positive, and pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm to the lively and challenging teaching. Many clearly enjoy the subject. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers are aware of their requirements and tailor the work accordingly. Pupils make too little use of computers. Though opportunities are written into the schemes of work access to computers is restricted.

Leadership and management

106. The head of department makes good use of her experience and excellent knowledge of the subject and courses to provide very good leadership and management. She is enthusiastic and committed to improving standards and supported in this by a very good team of teachers. Standards are higher and the quality of teaching is much improved since the last inspection. The department has both the commitment and capacity to achieve further improvement.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

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

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good subject knowledge effectively develops pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- Variety of teaching methods to interest pupil.
- Work is not always matched to the needs of all pupils in a group.
- GCSE results are below average.

Commentary

Examination results

107. At the end of Year 9 in 2003, teacher assessments were in line with the national average. Girls performed slightly better than boys. GCSE results in 2002 and 2003 were below average, and girls did much better than boys.

Standards and achievement

108. Pupils' levels of knowledge, skills and understanding are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 9. In Years 7 to 9, pupils are doing better than expected in relation to their capabilities and achievement is good. Extended writing is being developed well. In Year 7, pupils have gained a very good understanding of why the Roman army was so successful through the use of well-chosen video clips and by acting out military manoeuvres outside the classroom with 'shields' made as a homework task. In Year 8, pupils express opinions of historical events and understand that source material can be biased and subject to propaganda. They analyse evidence in non-written form, such as paintings of Elizabeth 1, to work out evidence of symbolism. By Year 9, they work effectively in groups to debate the decisions made by First World War generals. In Year 11, pupils are doing better than expected in relation to their capabilities and achievement is good. In Year 10, group work is better developed, when pupils evaluate as well as analyse the relative achievements of doctors throughout history. Pupils write more detailed accounts of the causes and effects of historical events. By Year 11, pupils analyse written source material from the Nazi education system of the 1920s and 1930s and learn how pupils were indoctrinated.

Teaching and learning

109. Overall, teaching and learning are good with some very good teaching. Teachers show good subject knowledge. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on the burning of heretics, the teacher skilfully developed pupils' understanding through further questioning resulting in deeper thinking and evaluation of evidence. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives so that pupils can see what they have to learn. Clear and appropriate language is used and some attention is given to the meaning of historical words, although sometimes these require further emphasis. The good attitude and behaviour of the pupils benefit their learning. Teachers use a good variety of teaching methods. Group work and role-play are very effective methods that increase the interest and motivation of the pupils. Work is sometimes designed well to meet the needs of different abilities although this helpful approach is not yet developed fully enough to cater for the whole range of pupils. Generally, pupils are aware of how well they are doing as work is marked regularly with sufficient comments to show how they can improve, although some inconsistencies need to be addressed. Homework is set regularly, and efficiently monitored and recorded. The use of computers is limited in lessons due to pressure on resources.

Leadership and management

110. The department has worthwhile plans for future development. A change to a more appropriate GCSE syllabus and improvements to the Year 9 course have been adopted to improve results. The development plan contains valid means of achieving its objectives, but progress is not yet evaluated on a regular enough basis. Data is used to provide pupils with information on attainment, and coursework is carefully graded according to national and examination requirements. Pupils with special educational needs are making more consistent progress although individual educational plans require subject-specific adaptation.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Below expectation	GCSE – well above average Non-examination – below expectation
Achievement	Satisfactory	GCSE group – very good Non-examination – unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- 2003 GCSE examination results were well above average.
- Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 10 and 11 and very good for those pupils preparing for GCSE.
- Examination pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11 because of the quality teaching.
- Good opportunities are provided for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Non-examination groups attain below-average standards at the end of Year 11.
- Less than the recommended time is available for the majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

Examination results

111. GCSE results in 2003 for the small number of candidates were well above average, adding very good value, and were the best in the school.

Standards and achievement

112. By the end of Year 9, pupils' knowledge of religions, their impact, and their role in a changing world is below the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. They have limited awareness of religious organisations in the wider community and media, and have simplistic views of believers' diverse approaches to moral issues. They have a limited understanding of the changing nature of religious commitment and influence in the adult world. The GCSE group in Year 11 contains a wide range of ability and standards are average overall. However, the majority of pupils are not preparing for GCSE and their knowledge is below average because they do not have time to cover the syllabus in the expected depth. They do not explicitly link choices about human dilemmas to the teachings and principles of religions, or take account of different traditions, possible interpretations, and current debates. Generally, pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. When younger pupils replicate artefacts, the attention to detail is outstanding. Older pupils show a good level of respect for the views of other pupils. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9. In GCSE sets, achievement is very good, but it is unsatisfactory for other pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Teaching and Learning

113. In Years 7 to 9, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although some observed in Year 9 was unsatisfactory. All pupils present work well but do not include enough extended writing to develop arguments. Beliefs are taught as information rather than elicited by pupils from evidence of practices. Pupils do not develop sufficiently the skills of investigating resources, recognising different interpretations, and reflecting on the implications of religious practices for their adherents. Where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, tasks are not matched to pupils' differing needs, and pupils

make too little contribution to lessons. The use of questions to probe pupils' understanding is underdeveloped. A significant number of pupils have negative attitudes towards religious education.

114. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are good overall, and very good in GCSE groups. Topics enable pupils to identify meaningfully with the religious dimension of human dilemmas. Pupils make good use of their previous learning, and have opportunities to express their own views. Good teaching helps pupils build on what they know, providing resources that suitably reflect a multicultural and multi-faith society. Work is marked regularly, and comments for improvement are helpfully based on target grades. Pupils support each other well in group work. The limited allocation of time for non-examination groups lowers standards, and the course does not lead to accreditation. These factors adversely affect pupils' attitudes and consequently their achievement.

Leadership and management

115. Leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory overall. The GCSE course is very well managed. The department supports school policies well, encouraging pupils to use their own ICT skills, with significant strengths in adding value to examination groups, and in the quality of non-examination provision in Years 10 and 11. However, schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 do not challenge abler pupils sufficiently.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

During the inspection, the head of department was on long-term sickness leave. Provision in design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well below average	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results are above the national average, and boys do better than girls, which is unusual.
- Temporary arrangements during refurbishment are preventing pupils from having access to specialist rooms and to the full range of practical activities including the use of ICT.
- The monitoring, assessment and recording of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory.
- Some pupils have reduced opportunity to study the subject in Year 9.

Commentary

Examination results

116. Results of teacher assessments at end of Year 9 in 2003 were well below average. GCSE results in 2003 were above average. Compared to the national average this school has a very low entry.

Standards and achievement

117. Students arrive in the school with varied and often limited previous experiences of design and technology. By the end of Year 9, pupils' standards are well below the national average. There is a reduced time allocation and a lack of experience in food and textiles for pupils who study Latin. Currently, because of refurbishment, many lessons pupils have to be taught in ordinary classrooms and the canteen area. Some areas of the National Curriculum are not able to be taught there. These factors are currently limiting pupils' achievement and standards. In Year 11, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in GCSE food and electronics. Practical work retained from 2002 is above average in standard. The standards of GCSE folder-work are lower than usual because of limited use of ICT. Pupils are currently not able to use computer-aided design and manufacturing in their work, and this is not preparing pupils for the new requirements in GCSE examinations.

Teaching and learning

118. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, as are pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Individual lessons are carefully planned and have clear objectives. Year 7 pupils were achieving well when taught in the canteen, due to forceful teaching that produced a brisk pace of learning. Pupils with special educational needs were helped by the good use of writing frames to focus their thinking. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen one lesson, where the work was insufficiently challenging and lacked interest. Standards and achievement were below expectation where a non-specialist teacher took a resistant materials lesson.

Leadership and management

119. Management is satisfactory on a day-to-day basis in the absence of the head of department. Planning over the longer term is inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall. In Years 7 to 9, lessons do not pay enough attention to the teaching of the design process. The teachers and the technician work well together to support pupils' learning. Current procedures for the assessment of pupils' work are unsatisfactory. The results of assessment are inadequately used to guide planning. This area for improvement is a current focus for development. The department development plan is concerned solely with the refurbishment of the buildings and offers no guidance for the monitoring of teaching and learning. Health and safety monitoring is excellent. GCSE folder-work is still weak and has not improved since the last inspection. Pupils' GCSE work seen was not linked sufficiently to commercial contexts. Standards generally suffer from the low current access to ICT. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, but substantial refurbishment was due to take place immediately after the inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art

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

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

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving in Years 10 and 11.
- Teachers are experienced specialists who have a very good command of the subject.
- GCSE results are below average and some pupils underachieve.
- Management is unsatisfactory because of a general lack of monitoring.
- Teaching and learning lack rigour and this is depressing standards.
- Teachers make insufficient use of National Curriculum levels when planning and assessing pupils' work.
- Homework, the use of sketchbooks and the development of ICT are areas for improvement.

Commentary

Examination results

120. Teacher assessments in 2003 show standards at the end of Year 9 to be average, with significant numbers attaining higher levels. More girls than boys attained the higher levels, as is the case nationally. In recent years, GCSE results have been well below the national average but in 2003 a larger proportion of pupils attained the higher grades than was the case previously. However, a significant number of pupils did less well in art than their other subjects.

Standards and achievement

121. In the work seen, standards in Years 9 were in line with expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Examples of very good quality work showed sensitive and skilful drawing and colour work. The recently-devised scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 has the basic structure to improve progression but some vital ingredients are missing. There is insufficient use of National Curriculum levels to plan and assess work, and ICT is not used, despite the good resources now available. In addition, sketchbooks are undervalued and homework is poor in quality. In Years 10 and 11, standards are higher than in previous years and show continuing improvement. In these classes, better use has been made of the assessment criteria than in the past, by staff to monitor achievement and set work, and by pupils to chart their own progress. In Year 10, pupils have to make up for the deficiencies of the curriculum in Years 7 to 9, and this depresses standards.

Teaching and learning

122. Pupils' learning is satisfactory overall, but strongest in Years 10 and 11, where pupils' knowledge of the marking criteria helps them work efficiently in lessons and in their own time. Teachers have a very good command of the subject, make learning enjoyable and manage pupils' behaviour well. Some opportunities were provided for discussion and pupils gained a deeper understanding of their own and others' work. Teachers generally do not make enough use of information about pupils' prior attainment when they plan work. This is unsatisfactory, because it results in some underachievement. In Years 7 to 9 expectations are not clearly communicated and pupils are uncertain what to do to improve.

Leadership and management

123. Under the leadership of the head of department, GCSE standards are beginning to rise. There is still much to do in Years 7 to 9. Management is unsatisfactory. Monitoring of standards, pupils' performance and teaching and learning are weak. Standards of learning are not subject to sufficiently critical scrutiny.

124. Exhibitions of pupils' work promote the subject well within the school community and contribute positively to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The weaknesses in curriculum planning still exist.

Drama

Provision in drama is **good**.

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

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

Main strengths

- Very good leadership enables staff to work together well and to develop teaching to tackle perceived weaknesses.
- Improving standards of work in Key Stage 4 in lessons result from better teaching.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities provided very good scope for cultural and social development.

Commentary

Examination results

125. GCSE results in 2002 were below the national average, and the proportion of those reaching higher grades was well below that found nationally. The 2003 results were similar.

Standards and achievement

126. In Year 9, standards are average, with girls working to a higher standard than boys. Overall, well-focused teaching develops pupils' practical and evaluative skills well, especially in Year 9. In Year 11, standards are now higher than those indicated by last year's examination results. In Year 11, pupils achieve well because they are taught the skills needed to work well independently. They effectively demonstrate character and relationships using body language, facial expression, mime and space. This was clear in a lesson where they created still-life representations of dramatic situations before going on to devise scenes in which the conflict was developed and explored in depth.

Teaching and learning

127. The quality of teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are well planned to engage pupils' interest and ensure that they reflect constructively on their own and each other's learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils. Effective questioning and prompting stimulates pupils well, for example, in improvised drama. Pupils with special educational needs, as well as those who are gifted and talented, respond very well to teachers' encouragement.

Leadership and management

128. The subject is very well led and managed. Staff work well together, sharing ideas and resources. Teaching has improved as a result of careful analysis of pupils' achievement and a focus on what needs to be done to improve it. Drama has grown significantly since the award of Arts College status in 2000. An extensive programme of extra-curricular activities engages the interest of many pupils, whether or not they are following the GCSE course. Pupils over the whole range of ability are keen to participate, and standards are enhanced.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Well above average	Average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

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

Main strengths

- Standards are well above average at the end of Year 9; GCSE results are above average.
- Pupils use ICT confidently for composing and performing.
- Teaching is very good and teachers strongly motivate pupils by communicating their own enthusiasm.

Commentary

Examination results

129. Results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are well above those reported nationally. This reflects the good standards attained in class and the very good standards attained by a significant number of pupils from their participation in instrumental and extra-curricular music. GCSE music is open to all pupils and their attainment at the beginning of the course encompasses the full range of ability. However, carefully targeted teaching and courses that reflect the aptitudes and interests of the pupils lead to above-average results.

Standards and achievement

130. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average. Pupils have a good grounding in basic musical theory, which they have consolidated gradually through a wide range of practical topics. They gain a precise knowledge of musical technicalities. They understand musical structure and they use computers to compose songs that incorporate original lyrics, backing track and some imaginative layering. Pupils have good background knowledge of the recording industry and music in the media. Achievement is very good because careful planning allows pupils of all levels of starting point to proceed with confidence and understanding. By Year 11, pupils use ICT confidently for composing and performing. They follow individual programmes of development in composing and performance, developing their strengths and interests well. In a lesson seen, pupils were composing in a good range of styles, including blues and jazz, and devising stylish accompaniments with the use a computer program. Most showed considerable assurance, but, in general, melodies were limited in range and did not fully exploit the possibilities of the chosen instruments. Achievement amongst this group with widely differing skills and experience was very good. Overall, standards were in line with national expectation.

Teaching and learning

131. Teachers have very good technical knowledge and their explanations are very clear. All technicalities are carefully related to genuine musical experiences. Evaluation of work in progress is constructive and very supportive. Teachers communicate their musical enthusiasm very well and this strongly motivates the pupils. This enables all pupils, from the very talented to the inexperienced, to learn very effectively in relation to their abilities. Deadlines are used well to maintain an efficient pace of work.

Leadership and management

132. The head of department is an excellent role model as a teacher. Planning is excellent and provides very specific guidance on each topic to enable teachers to provide pupils with a consistently high standard of assistance. The curriculum is supplemented by outstanding extra-curricular provision in line with the school's targets as an Arts College. School policies, including those for citizenship and provision for gifted and talented pupils, are suitably reflected in the departmental handbook and their relevance to music made clear. A substantial proportion of pupils receive instrumental tuition from visiting tutors. This provision is very well organised and makes an important contribution to the social and cultural development of pupils.

133. Very good schemes of work, constructive assessment procedures and the use of ICT are amongst the very good developments since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	GCSE – Good Non-examination – satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils learn well.
- Leadership is good and management is improving.
- Excellent extra-curricular activities give extensive opportunities to pupils to develop their interests.
- Insufficient use is made of data and previous performance to guide planning and improvement.

Commentary

Examination results

134. GCSE results in 2002 were broadly average, with girls performing better than boys. Results in 2003 were higher.

Standards and achievement

135. Pupils develop skills and techniques well. For example, in a Year 9 gymnastics lesson, pupils used diagrams provided by the teacher to assist them in balance and counter-balance. More able pupils adapted these well to extend and explore further possibilities. In Year 11, standards in the examination course are average; pupils on this course and the core curriculum course are affected by timetabling constraints in Years 8 and 9 which affect progress and achievement and have their impact in Years 10 and 11. Pupils on the GCSE course are learning and achieving well when this is taken into account. Boys achieved better than girls in a Year 11 GCSE theory lesson because they had better attitudes and focused well on improvement. Standards in the core curriculum are average, and the achievement of pupils of all abilities is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

136. Teachers demonstrate skills well and give clear explanations that help all pupils understand. Questioning is effective, and teachers review learning well to check understanding and consolidate knowledge before moving on to new work. Objectives are not shared with pupils consistently so pupils are unsure about the focus of the lesson. Teachers challenge pupils to achieve and pupils' good attitudes help them learn well. Opportunities to extend their learning come through a good balance of individual and group work, especially in gymnastics and dance. Talented pupils are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular work and are encouraged to join clubs where they will be suitably challenged and catered for. Assessment, closely related to examination criteria, is used well to help pupils to check their progress. However, pupils outside the examination course are not as clear understanding of their progress. Analysis and improvement of practical performance are enhanced by use of a video camera, and heart monitors are used in fitness lessons but the use of ICT is limited to GCSE classes. Safety expectations are rigorously adhered to. Non-participants, although few, are not always effectively engaged during lessons.

137. The excellent range of extra-curricular activities and team games enhances opportunities for learning. Teachers from the school generally support the programme well and best use of all resources and facilities is made. Well-organised and sponsored coaching programmes are included in the programme. The school is working towards a Sportsmark Award in recognition of the range of sports activities available to pupils.

Leadership and management

138. Good leadership has focused attention strongly on the curriculum which meets the needs of different groups of pupils well under the constraints imposed. There are a variety of activities available. For example, dance and aerobics are well liked by pupils and the course is designed to motivate pupils well. Stability has been created through teacher continuity with year groups to provide a secure environment for pupils with special educational needs.

BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business Studies

This two-year vocational course leads to a certificate equal to two GCSE passes. The thirteen pupils on this course in Year 11 are achieving standards well above those expected of them based on prior learning. Achievement is very good. In the lesson observed good teaching resulted in all pupils making good progress in their understanding of business finance. Teaching and learning are enriched by the teacher's recent experience in business and commerce.

GNVQ ICT

Provision in GNVQ ICT is **good**.

	Year 11
Standards	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results in GNVQ Intermediate ICT are above average.
- The course makes a good contribution to developing practical ICT skills for adult life.
- Teachers do not tailor lessons closely enough to the needs of lower-attaining pupils.
- Insufficient support is available to assist the learning of the lowest-attaining pupils.

Commentary

Examination results

139. Results in 2002 were above the national average.

Standards and achievement

140. In the work seen, pupils chose the correct software applications for real-world problems and used these to provide realistic business solutions. For example, they created good quality linked spreadsheets to show cost, revenue and profit calculations for real businesses, including restaurants and fashion shops. Pupils used a variety of spreadsheet functions to achieve this. They then used ICT to create graphs and explain their final calculations. Overall, pupils' achievement is good. The course is growing in popularity.

Teaching and learning

141. Work is planned in detail and teachers have a very good understanding of examination board requirements. Pupils are provided with clear criteria for each grade and assignments are carefully written to match these. This understanding has played a major part in the good results gained. In lessons, teachers provide detailed support sheets and give good explanations of the features of commercial software packages. This leads to good pupil understanding of how different software applications are used by businesses to solve problems. Although teaching is good overall, some materials are not well enough adapted to meet the needs of all lower-attaining pupils. Insufficient adult support is available in some lessons to offset this difficulty.

Leadership and management

142. Day-to-day organisation is good. There is no systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching to maintain and improve the upward trend in examination results. Resources are satisfactory. Students have access to a full range of commercial software and are well protected in their Internet use by school monitoring systems.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Achievement	Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have increasing opportunities to participate and share responsibility within the school through the school council.
- Incidental contributions observed in lessons across a range of subjects contribute well to pupils' understanding of citizenship.
- Some progress has been made in developing elements of citizenship within PSE.
- The audit of contributions by other subject areas to citizenship has not been completed.
- Arrangements for the management of the development, implementation and monitoring of the course are not clear or effective.
- Procedures whereby pupils recognise and collect evidence to record their progress are not yet in place.

Commentary

Examination results

143. No assessment of attainment is to be reported to parents until July 2004 and there are no examinations in this subject

Standards and achievement

144. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards and achievement. In lessons where aspects of citizenship were included, pupils showed a good understanding of a range of issues that advanced their knowledge and understanding of becoming informed citizens. For example, in a history lesson on Nazi Germany, Year 11 pupils achieved a good understanding of prejudice and racial discrimination and the dangers of undemocratic government. In a Year 7 religious education lesson, pupils learned of the respect for all life that underpinned the passive resistance practised by Ghandi and, thereby, the impact faith may have on people's behaviour. Pupils have frequent opportunities to develop skills of enquiry and communication. In geography, Year 8 pupils played the role of citizens of other European Union countries in achieving an appreciation and understanding of the wider community in which they live.

145. Discussions with pupils showed that they are, as yet, largely unaware of citizenship. However, they are interested in the topics included and have positive attitudes. Older pupils recognised the value of studying money matters and the responsibilities of a citizen in a democratic country. These topics were recently introduced to the PSE course in order to fulfil in part the statutory requirements for citizenship.

Teaching and learning

146. It was possible during the inspection to observe teaching and learning that will be incorporated into the course when the scheme of work is compiled. Overall, the teaching and learning was good. Much was very good and none was unsatisfactory. Lessons across a range of subjects were well-prepared and involved a good variety of learning methods including paired-work, role-play and class discussions. The discussion of controversial and sensitive issues was balanced and sympathetic, for example when teachers and pupils reflected on warfare and remembered those killed on November 11th. Items in the news are studied to good effect, as when a Year 9 pupil raised the issue of gun crime in a lesson given by the local policeman, one of a number of visitors who contribute to such lessons. The school has very good links with the community. Recently, Year 9 pupils carried out a litter survey of the school grounds, petitioned the head-teacher and agreed on the action to be taken. Another group considered the implications of building wind turbines at Swaffam, contacting local councils and power companies in order to draw their conclusions.

147. There are frequent opportunities for all pupils to take responsibility and gain from social and cultural experiences through visits, trips and exchanges. Pupils' awareness of the impact of change on the natural environment and wildlife is raised through their involvement in a range of charities, for example a recent sponsored walk in aid of the World Wildlife Fund and the attempt to save polar

bear. There are excellent displays around the school, notably 'Everest 50 Years', and others on 'The Holocaust'. In their day-to-day lives, pupils are trusted, they are allowed to use rooms without supervision and are aware that with privileges come responsibilities. Teachers ensure that they develop respect for others. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, the behaviour of pupils who jeered the efforts of another was roundly condemned. In the teaching and learning, the school is already achieving a substantial amount in preparing pupils for citizenship.

Leadership and management

148. Arrangements for the management of citizenship are not sufficiently clear. This has resulted in delay and variable progress. The very good work of the PSE department has not been supported in other areas. At present the school does not comply with statutory requirements. The headteacher is aware of these shortcomings and a strategy for full implementation is included in the school improvement plan.

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
Art and Design	23	56.5	90.0	21.7	42.7	23.0	39.0
Biology	6	33.3	81.6	0.0	33.2	8.3	33.2
Communication Studies	7	57.1	94.2	0.0	36.1	15.7	38.5
French	6	83.3	85.4	16.7	35.2	30.0	34.9
Information Technology	5	100.0	78.2	0.0	20.6	36.0	28.5
Mathematics	7	71.4	74.2	0.0	34.3	20.0	31.3
Sociology	8	37.5	83.7	25.0	33.6	17.5	33.8

Level 3 GCE A-Level and VCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	12	100.0	96.1	41.7	48.7	85.0	85.1
Biology	9	100.0	96.1	11.1	36.3	68.9	74.1
Drama	12	100.0	98.1	41.7	41.5	80.0	82.9
Economics	8	100.0	96.2	12.5	45.8	70.0	83.1
English Literature	13	100.0	98.5	30.8	43.7	80.0	84.3
French	5	100.0	96.2	0.0	46.1	76.0	83.0
Information Technology	14	100.0	89.1	14.3	22.4	68.6	64.1
Mathematics	7	100.0	93.3	14.3	52.2	60.0	84.7
Music	6	100.0	97.7	33.1	41.8	83.3	83.2
Other Social Studies	24	100.0	94.3	33.3	38.9	80.8	77.7
Sociology	22	100.0	95.4	59.1	39.6	93.6	79.1
Information Technology VQ	5	100.0	86.4	72.7	28.8	96.4	68.3

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

English

Provision in English literature is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results are above average and there is a trend of improvement.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- The very good relationships between teachers and students enhance students' achievement.
- Attitudes and behaviour are excellent.
- Students progressively take responsibility for their learning.
- Students play too little part in evaluating their own work.

Year 13			
Standards	Above average	Leadership	Good
Achievement	Good	Management	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Progress since the last inspection	Good

Commentary

Examination results

149. A-Level results are above average. The number achieving the highest grades is above average, and very few do not gain a pass grade. Given the starting points of the students, this is good achievement. There is no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys.

Standards and achievement

150. In discussion and in their writing, students show a sophisticated understanding of literary terminology, can explore authorial intention and meaning and successfully compare, contrast and synthesise different viewpoints. Discussion is lively and informed and the very good teaching ensures that students support their comments with appropriate textual evidence. Written coursework is of high quality, well-presented, technically accurate and carefully focused on examination requirements. Very good opportunities are provided for students to write comparative essays and to reflect on their ideas. Students achieve well in relation to their abilities and starting point on the course.

Teaching and learning

151. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They have high expectations of students and enjoy very positive working relationships with them. There is a good balance between informality and rigour, and students rapidly acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding. These strengths in teaching and learning were very well exemplified in a very good lesson on 'imagination and reality' in the poetry of Keats, where the teacher effortlessly facilitated discussion, explored assessment criteria and encouraged students to act as examiners. Attitudes and behaviour are consistently excellent and students work equally well on their own or collaboratively. In a very successful lesson on 'The Whitsun Weddings', students worked productively in pairs to explore the meaning of the poem and then fed back ideas to the class. All contributions were valued and a detailed picture of Larkin's themes and images emerged. Teachers show a good understanding of individual students' strengths and weaknesses and work is conscientiously marked. Opportunities for students to assess their own work are limited, however.

Leadership and management

152. The department is well organised. The course is well structured and teachers work well as a team. Planning is suitably detailed and a range of useful handbooks supports learning. Since the last inspection standards have remained high, speaking and listening skills are no longer underdeveloped, and better opportunities are provided for independent learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

153. Very good opportunities for discussion, debate and the critical exploration of issues are provided in English, history, modern foreign languages, geography and sociology. Students' reading skills are well developed and there is a generally high level of linguistic expression across the sixth form. Students write accurately, thoughtfully, and in appropriate forms for a wide variety of audiences. Emphasis on wider reading and the opportunities in English and sociology for students to take increased responsibility for their own learning has benefited literacy development, as has the use of technical vocabulary in chemistry and biology.

Modern foreign languages

The focus was on French but German was sampled. Examination results in German were above average in 2002 and improved further in 2003. In the lesson observed, well-structured and skilful teaching promoted very good learning and students achieved very well on a social and moral topic. Scrutiny of students' work showed they make very good progress over time.

French

Overall, the quality of provision is **very good**.

Year 13			
Standards	Above average	Leadership	Good
Achievement	Satisfactory	Management	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in response to very good teaching.
- Detailed, individual assessment enables students to progress well towards their targets.
- The well-planned curriculum appeals to students with its good range of social, moral and cultural themes.
- Library provision is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Examination results

154. A-Level results in 2002 were below the national average, though all candidates achieved pass grades. Results improved in 2003. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls, and with the exception of 2002, students have done as well as expected in relation to their GCSE results. The number of students in the current Years 12 and 13 is higher than in recent years.

Standards and achievement

155. Current standards are above average overall. Year 12 students have successfully made the transition to advanced study and, in both the lessons seen and work sampled, are achieving above expectations for this stage of the course. They gave good spoken presentations on their education and a group of three sang a short original composition on education, in the style of an operetta. This was an excellent, spontaneous effort. In another lesson, they combined all their languages skills in

developing their knowledge of the comic book in French culture from the popular 'Astérix' and 'Tintin' as well as studying more serious material. Year 13 students showed well-developed speaking skills in very good presentations based on their research into French political parties. Their written work showed evidence of proficient Internet research and was of high quality, tackling themes such as animal experimentation, and social issues, such as drug abuse and racism.

Teaching and learning

156. Teaching is very good and students learn very well as a result. Lessons are well prepared and resourced and teachers deploy their very good personal skills in teaching entirely in French. The subject is taught by an effective team of teachers and students enjoy the variety of work and different teaching styles. They find the topics studied interesting and motivating and work very willingly as a class, in smaller groups or individually. Their relationships with teachers and each other are notably good. Their work is marked in considerable detail and they appreciate the individual feedback which accompanies the return of key pieces of work. Students have very positive attitudes to language study and are clear as to their examination targets.

Leadership and management

157. The subject is well managed. The curriculum is thoroughly planned and students are given good support. Appropriate key priorities for development are improving the overall level of recruitment of students and updating and extending library provision to give students access to a better range of contemporary French material.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Year 13			
Standards	Average	Leadership	Good
Achievement	Good	Management	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are improving.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and working relationships with students are positive and productive.
- Good leadership provides a clear educational direction for the subject.
- Marking is inconsistent and does not always make clear to students what they must do to improve.
- Use of ICT and development of literacy within mathematics are inconsistent.

Commentary

Examination results

158. A-Level results in 2002 were well below the national average. However, all students achieved a pass grade and one sixth achieved A and B grades. The unconfirmed results in 2003 show an improvement at both because of improved teaching, a greater focus on revision and the effective use of past papers.

Standards and achievement

159. Students simplify surds, factorise quadratic equations, identify statistical representations and calculate the force, making good use of vectors and trigonometry. However, their thinking skills are not always challenged in the classroom and they are weak at interpreting questions, so that they are not always clear what they must do. In relation to their GCSE attainment, achievement in the sixth form is good and very good for lower-attaining students.

Teaching and learning

160. Lessons start promptly and build well on previous work with useful links to other areas of the mathematics curriculum. Teachers have good subject knowledge, explain topics clearly and use a good range of teaching methods. They have high expectations of their students and enjoy positive and good humoured relationships with them. Teachers give their time freely outside lessons to provide additional assistance. Homework is regular and marking is supportive, but its frequency varies across the department. Teachers make good use of past examination papers to familiarise students with examination requirements but errors are not always followed through and students are not always clear what they must do to improve.

Leadership and management

161. The head of department ensures a clear educational direction for mathematics and recent curricular improvements are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. However, schemes of work are too brief and the departmental development plan is not sufficiently focused on improvement. The head of department has a good awareness of the strengths of the department as a result of his monitoring, but this has not led to sufficient action towards remedying weaknesses and prioritising developments. The provision for ICT in the sixth form is satisfactory and lessons make good use of graphical calculators and motion detectors but insufficient use is made of other forms of ICT including the Internet. The development literacy is satisfactory overall but some students' difficulty in understanding words such as 'instantaneous' are not always appreciated and acted upon. The department recognises the contribution which mathematics can make to students' understanding of citizenship and to their spiritual development, but opportunities for these are not sufficiently planned in the schemes of work. Standards are improving and there is the capacity for further improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

162. The development of skills in mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory overall but the recently introduced numeracy policy does not give sufficient consideration to numeracy across the sixth form. Algebraic skills are used in science and to rearrange formulae in physics and to solve equations in chemistry. Graphicacy skills are practised in biology. Students make good use of the collection and representation of data for illustrating coursework in travel and tourism. They make good use of block graphs and pie charts in sociology coursework and employ correlation in psychology to test the strength of the relationship between two variables. Number work is evident in many lessons but numeracy skills are not strong or sufficiently developed in all areas of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

One lesson was sampled in physics. In the lesson observed, teaching and learning were good. Students, including the lower attaining, achieved well and were effectively developing independent research skills, communications skills and the use of ICT. Students' attitudes were very good.

Biology

Provision in biology is **good**.

Year 13			
Standards	Average	Leadership	Good
Achievement	Good	Management	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Progress since the last inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have good attitudes both to the subject and to work.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding.
- Examination results met A-Level expectations and students' achievement is good.
- The range of learning styles in schemes of work is too narrow.

Commentary

EXAMINATION RESULTS

163. In 2002, A-Level results were below average. In 2003, they were higher and all students passed. National comparators are not yet available, but results were similar to the national average for 2002. Lower-attaining students did particularly well in relation to their starting points. In contrast with national figures, boys performed as well as girls.

Standards and achievement

164. Standards observed met A-Level expectations. Achievement over the two years is better than was observed in individual lessons. Because the department accepts students who would not be accepted in the average sixth form, students enter the course with below-average attainment. This affects their achievement in the early stages of the course. For example, their knowledge of genetics was below average. Current standards at AS level are slightly above average. This indicates good achievement over the two years.

Teaching and learning

165. Teaching was good in all lessons seen. Teachers' subject knowledge and their understanding of examination board requirements are strengths. Despite some students' limited background knowledge, Year 12 pupils achieved good standards of learning about the stages of cell division. Students who have studied only for the foundation paper at GCSE learn well overall during the two-year course. In Year 13, students showed good laboratory skills and gave precise accounts of what they had learned about the Hill reaction in photosynthesis. Independent learning, communication skills, and information research are developed well through coursework.

Leadership and management

166. Teamwork is good, teachers are well qualified and the head of department has a thorough knowledge of all students and their progress. Biology is a successful and popular subject. The department makes a good contribution to in-service training in the local area. The previous report did not make special mention of biology, but the underlying trend has been one of improvement in numbers and in examination results and therefore improvement since the last inspection is good.

Chemistry

Provision in chemistry is **satisfactory**.

Year 13			
Standards	Below average	Leadership	Satisfactory
Achievement	Satisfactory	Management	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students' achievements in coursework are in line with expectations.
- Students have very good attitudes to their work, but do not perform as well as they should in tested modules.
- Students are experiencing difficulty in bridging the gap in intellectual rigour between GCSE and A-Level.

Commentary

Examination results

167. The 2002 A-Level chemistry results were below national averages, as they have been for the last three years. A trend of underachievement in relation to prior attainment is apparent in the very small groups that have taken chemistry. This pattern was repeated in 2003.

Standards and achievement

168. Standards in lessons, investigative practical work and coursework are in line with expectations. Students use apparatus accurately and safely and understand the aims of their experiments. Higher-attaining students develop independent learning and study skills well, but are hesitant when applying numerical skills to more complex chemical problems. Some students permitted to take chemistry achieved comparatively low GCSE grades in double science and do not acquire the numerical skills to meet the demands of the course successfully. Examination results are low, with almost half of Year 12 candidates failing to gain module test pass grades in 2003 at the first attempt, although coursework marks boosted grades overall. ICT is used well for presentation purposes but insufficiently as a tool to assist practical work. Students access the recently networked science revision programmes during study time, and this is having a beneficial effect on their achievement. Students' achievement is satisfactory overall.

Teaching and learning

169. Trusting relationships between teachers and students and teachers' enthusiasm create a good learning environment. Students' attitudes are very good and this benefits their learning. The activities prepared for students are imaginative and challenging. Teachers support students in managing their notes effectively and homework is regularly marked. However, there is an over-reliance on independent learning through practical work. Insufficient consolidation of theoretical concepts takes place, and this adversely affects examination performance. Past papers are not used with sufficient regularity to ensure that students are familiar with the demands of the module tests.

Leadership and management

170. The head of science chooses resources well, such as the revision software now installed on the school network. A valuable revision of strategies for improving AS and A-Level results has taken place. Coursework is managed well. Resources are adequate and deployed appropriately, including reference material in the school library. An issue for the management of chemistry in the sixth form is the problem of helping 'would-be' A-Level students bridge the gap in intellectual rigour between

GCSE double science and A-Level chemistry. Few extra-curricular opportunities have been made available to chemistry students, and uptake on chemistry-based university courses is rare. A-Level chemistry was not reported on at the time of the last inspection and so no evidence is available on which to base a judgement on progress since then.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Information and communication technology

171. The advanced GNVQ course was sampled. The course is offered as a double and as a single A-Level course. Results in 2002 were above the national average and students make good progress in these courses. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and students are highly motivated by their studies.

ICT across the curriculum

172. Standards in ICT across the sixth form are sound. Students use computers to support their studies in a range of subjects. However, ICT is mainly used by students in their private study time, rather than as a taught component of their courses. Lack of access to computers is an issue for sixth form students as it is for the whole school.

HUMANITIES

In addition to the focus subjects, religious education, geography and history were sampled. In a Year 13 religious education lesson, standards were average. Students' attitudes were good, with good achievement in research, and well-organised notes for easy recall. In a Year 12 geography lesson, the students showed good attitudes and achievement in their analysis of the impact of dam construction along the River Yangtze in China. Teaching was good and students' understanding was aided by some well-focused questioning. The standard of work was above course expectations. In a year 13 history lesson, standards were above averaged. Teaching was good. The teacher's carefully targeted questioning led to good achievement by students of varying abilities. Students' attitudes were very good.

Psychology

Provision in psychology is **very good**.

Year 13			
Standards	Above average	Leadership	Very good
Achievement	Very good	Management	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths

- Examination results are above average and students' achievement is very good.
- Students have excellent attitudes both to work and the subject.
- The teacher has excellent subject knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

Examination results

173. In 2002, A-Level results were above average. In 2003, they were still higher, with nearly two-thirds of students gaining grades A or B. Students did well in relation to their starting points over the whole attainment range and, in contrast with national figures, boys performed as well as girls.

Standards and achievement

174. Year 12 students used information gained in other contexts to provide a good basis for work on statistical methods. They fully met A-Level expectations, in spite of the wide range of GCSE results that included a sizeable number of D and E grades. The Year 13 students gained above-average results in their AS modules. Essays and research coursework were original and of very good standard. Overall, therefore, standards are above average and achievement is very good. Students' attitude to the subject and independence of work make a good contribution to this achievement.

Teaching and learning

175. Teaching and learning were at least good in all lessons seen in both year groups. Overall, taking into account the teacher's expert knowledge and high standard of planning, teaching and learning are very good, with strengths in the independent work carried out by the students. Effective assessment is clearly and explicitly communicated to the students, particularly in the coursework component. Students valued this and the greater depth of the A-Level topics.

Leadership and management

176. Leadership is very good. The sole teacher is a very good role model and contributes to the development of psychology teaching in the locality and nationally. The curriculum is good, well tailored to examination board requirements. Schemes of work are set out very clearly. Psychology was not mentioned in the previous report, but has developed substantially since that time in numbers and resources, so that improvement is therefore very good.

Sociology

Provision in sociology is **very good**.

Year 13			
Standards	Well above average	Leadership	Very good
Achievement	Very good	Management	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Progress since the last inspection	Not inspected previously

Main strengths

- Standards are high and students learn and achieve very well.
- Teaching is very good.
- Students' attitudes are very good.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

Examination results

178. A-Level results were well above average in 2002. Students did significantly better than in their other subjects. Results were lower in 2003 but the number of students was small and results were in line with the school's expectations. In relation to their prior attainment, these students did very well.

Standards and achievement

179. Standards are well above average and students achieve very well. Early in Year 12, students identify differences between facts and hypotheses. For example, they understand the manipulation of news events to embellish a story and influence opinion. They related this well to the Stephen Lawrence case and gained a good understanding of the causes of racial tension and the associated conflict of power and interest this engenders. Students' achievement benefits from the challenging

teaching of the well-planned course. Year 13 students apply their good understanding of theorists and different perspectives to a variety of topics. This leads to well-informed discussions. They are competent at organising essays and understand the value of planning and research. They answer questions very well and choose appropriate examples to support their answers. Coursework is very good and sometimes outstanding. Students skilfully interpret statistics, analyse graphs, collect data and confirm hypotheses. Good feedback from marking keeps all students aware of possible grades and helps them to raise their achievement.

Teaching and learning

180. Teachers' very good understanding of the subject enables them to challenge students' values and beliefs and develop their critical thinking skills. For example, in a Year 13 lesson, students' understanding of scientific and religious principles was strongly challenged in a topic on evolution and the Virgin birth. As a result, they developed an understanding of the sociological pressures brought to bear on different societies. Teaching challenges well through effective questioning and discussion, although the rigour of these activities does not always adequately extend the high-attaining students. Students' attitudes to the subject are very good. They further their very good learning with Internet and document-based research. Students feel that they have a good understanding of how society functions. They enjoy learning about the impact of different interest groups on society, and see this as a useful contribution to future careers.

Leadership and management

181. Regular attendance on courses helps to keep the department and students up to date and fully acquainted with requirements. Teachers identify students' strengths and weaknesses through good systems of monitoring. This guides teaching and enables teachers to advise students very well. The popularity and success of the sociology course is attracting students in increasing numbers.

ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

Product design

A Year 12 product design lesson was sampled. Students' work showed a good range of suitable product design topics. One student had considered good links to a commercial manufacturing company. All students were making good progress due to clear guidance and knowledgeable teaching. Students were using ICT to research and to enhance the presentation of their work. The connection between the product specification and the students' evaluative thinking were not clearly identified in the folder-work.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

ART AND DESIGN

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

Year 13			
Standards	Average	Leadership	Satisfactory
Achievement	Good	Management	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Progress since the last inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very good command of the subject is evident in student tutorials.
- Teachers rely on a fairly narrow range of teaching and learning styles.
- Development of students' practical work is better planned than oral and written research work.
- Photography is a strength and enriches the art and design curriculum.

Commentary

Examination results

182. Art and design is offered at A-level and photography at AS level. A-level results were average in 2002. Results in 2003 were similar. Some students join courses with no previous qualifications in art and design. Most achieve well from their different starting points and in-line with their other subjects.

Standards and achievement

183. Standards in current groups are average. In the AS photography course students quickly acquire the skills to develop and print images, transfer images from a digital camera to a computer and carry out some basic manipulation. They demonstrate good technical skills and an ability to evaluate their work critically. A-level students are able to apply these skills in different aspects of their art and design work. Photography adds breadth and offers students additional ways of working. Visits to galleries and the development of drawing play an important part in students' development. Practical art and design work is generally better developed and a higher standard than the skills of analysis and criticism. Students achieve well because they are committed, work purposefully on their own and develop good levels of confidence.

Teaching and learning

184. Teachers have a good command of the subject and examination requirements. Positive relationships exist between students and teachers, born out in one-to-one tutorials. However in too many lessons the teachers talked a lot and students contributed very little. Written and oral presentations were lacking the depth and insight expected at this level and not enough was done to develop these skills. Teachers generally adopted a fairly narrow range of teaching and learning styles.

Leadership and management

185. Results and examination predictions are suitably analysed but the action that results from this is less well managed. Recruitment has improved but remains a priority for the department. Progress after the last inspection was slow to begin but more recently there has been satisfactory improvement.

Drama

Overall, provision in drama is **very good**.

Year 13			
Standards	Above average	Leadership	Very good
Achievement	Very good	Management	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Progress since the last inspection	n/a

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very good planning and methods lead to very good achievement.
- Student show skill and initiative in analysing each other's work and collaborating in teams as a result of teachers' high expectations.
- Advice to students on how to improve written work is not sufficiently specific.
- Student use of voice at advanced level is under-developed.

Commentary

Examination results

186. Results in 2002 were average, and were better in 2003. In 2002 and 2003, boys did better than girls, with boys performing above the national trend for their gender and girls below.

Standards and achievement

187. Standards of work seen in the inspection were very good. In Year 12, students read and understand new dramatic texts rapidly, controlling and using vocal effects evocatively, and generating good ensemble work. In Year 13, students acquire a very good working knowledge of theatrical forms. Their use of space to give a sense of audience expectation and conflict is good, but their use of speech is limited in range and assurance because teachers have missed opportunities to emphasise its importance.

Teaching and learning

188. Lessons are very well planned. Teachers' expectations are demanding but conveyed sensitively, so that students expect a lot of themselves, while building the self-assurance to concentrate and developing their own ideas in depth. Teaching quietly puts the onus on students to analyse and reflect on their own and each other's work. Teachers have high expectations of students, encouraging them to develop a good level of teamwork, and sustain their concentration. As a result, practical acting projects are both energetic and thoughtful. Very good planning of sequences of lessons encourages very good achievement in both years. A very good example was a project exploring 'disability', based on serious research of the topic and an intensive exploration of the conventions of forum theatre. In all lessons, students acquire well the skills of working as a team. They analyse each other's work constructively and supportively. Written assignments are marked well so that students understand their strengths although advice is not always specific enough about what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

189. Teachers effectively share ideas and resources. Lesson content and teaching are carefully targeted to enable students to overcome specific weaknesses, for example in their approach to analytical tasks. The effect of this is to improve standards, because the quality of teaching is better focused and more productive.

Music

Provision in music and music technology is **excellent**.

Year 13			
Standards	Above average	Leadership	Excellent
Achievement	Very good	Management	Excellent
Teaching and learning	Very good	Progress since the last inspection	Very good

Main strengths

- Standards of work are above average and examination results regularly contain a good proportion of A and B grades.
- Teachers are versatile, have excellent subject knowledge and skills and communicate very effectively.
- Music caters excellently for students with widely differing aptitudes and levels of ability.
- Extra-curricular music is outstanding and the school makes a very good musical impact on the community.

Commentary

Examination results

190. Numbers taking AS and A-Level music are small, and results reflect the nature of the group from year to year. Results cannot be meaningfully compared with those gained nationally, but they regularly contain a good proportion of A and B grades.

Standards and achievement

191. Very well-targeted individual assistance leads to very good, and sometimes excellent, achievement. Performance standards are high because students receive very good tuition and gain confidence from the many opportunities for public performance. Composing is good and students show very good understanding of instrumental and vocal characteristics. The use of ICT is very widespread and students use computers confidently for composing and performing.

Teaching and learning

192. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and practical musical skills. The versatility of the teachers results in excellent provision for the wide range of abilities represented in the groups. During the inspection teachers taught with authority and in depth, topics ranging from Berg's 'Violin Concerto' to the songs of Sting. Relationships are very productive. Teachers are very good communicators who readily share their enthusiasm and expertise with students who are, in the main, already very committed musicians. This results in very good learning. Students show a good level of initiative in their composing and performing and maintain high levels of sustained, independent work. Procedures for assessment are very effective. Occasionally, in music technology lessons, however, too few opportunities are offered for students to demonstrate through discussion what they have absorbed.

Leadership and management

193. Day-to-day management is excellent, as is longer-term planning. The teachers are involved in national projects related to the courses and are fully aware of current developments and examination requirements. Very good liaison amongst the teachers results in the sharing of good practice and informal but effective monitoring and development of teaching. Excellent accommodation and resources enhance the impact of teaching.

194. The scope and impact of extra-curricular music are outstanding. As part of the Arts College provision, music makes an important impact in the school, often linked with drama. Many students of all levels of ability benefit from excellent opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provided through the substantial programme of annual performances. Students are involved in national competitive events, workshops with composers and performers, visits to concerts and regular tours within and outside the United Kingdom. Musical outreach work benefits local feeder schools and is part of a significant contribution by the school to arts in the community.

195. The introduction of ICT and a music technology course, the receipt of Arts College status, improved assessment procedures and higher standards generally are important aspects of the development in provision since the last inspection.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

The focus was on the advanced vocational course, leisure and tourism. The vocational GCSE course, leisure and tourism, was sampled. Two lessons were observed and work of current students scrutinised. GCSE results in 2003 were broadly in line with the national average. However, students achieved very well and exceeded their expected grades based on prior attainment. Good teaching resulted in good achievement. Students joined the course with GCSE qualifications very much lower than is usual for sixth forms but are working close to the level expected at this point in the course.

Leisure and Tourism

Provision in leisure and tourism is **very good**.

Year 13			
Standards	Below average	Leadership	Excellent
Achievement	Very good	Management	Excellent
Teaching and learning	Very good	Progress since the last inspection	Not applicable

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve very well because of very good and enthusiastic teaching.
- Students have very positive attitudes and relationships are excellent.
- The course matches the needs of students very well.
- Teachers do not have opportunities to spend time in work placements.

Commentary

Examination results

196. AVCE travel and tourism has been introduced since the previous inspection when results in vocational courses were described as good. In 2002, the proportion of students passing the examination was lower than the national average. However, when students' prior attainment is taken into account, this represents very good achievement. Unconfirmed results for 2003 reflect similarly very good achievement as most entered the course with GCSE scores well below the average usually required for entry to sixth forms.

Standards and achievement

197. Current Year 13 students have a good knowledge and understanding of the work covered. They use technical terms appropriately and effectively apply their knowledge and understanding. Their written work confirms their very good achievement over the past four terms. The development of literacy skills is a priority in the teaching. Students are well prepared in all three key skill areas. They make good progress with numerical skills. They can interpret data and present their findings accurately using graphs and other diagrams, and they competently use ICT. The standards attained, evident in the previously completed work and during lessons observed, are below the national average. Students in Year 12 have achieved very well in the short time they have followed the course as teachers provide good support in easing the transition from GCSE.

Teaching and Learning

198. All teaching observed was good or better. The teachers' enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge were evident in lessons and contributed to the very positive response of students, as when Year 13 students reviewed the possible impact of tourism on the environment. Teachers are fully aware of course requirements and provide very good support for students. Teachers have high expectations and students rise to this challenge. Teachers exploit students' interests and encourage them to show individuality and independence as they compile their portfolios. Teachers clearly explain lesson objectives, and students' understanding is checked at the end of lessons so that they are aware of their progress. Very good assessment provides students with specific advice on how to raise their standards. Very good records are maintained to inform teachers of students' individual needs. Students' attitudes to learning are very positive. They enjoy the learning experiences provided. They appreciate being treated as adults and respond accordingly. Relationships between teachers and students and within groups are excellent.

Leadership and management

199. The curriculum is very well organised and the planning of topics and individual lessons is of a high standard. The teachers work very well together, are enthusiastic and committed to improvement. Drawn from a number of faculties, they contribute a good range of experience and ideas that enrich the teaching. However, teachers do not have the benefit of attendance on work placements.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

One lesson was sampled in health and social care. **Good** teaching enabled the small group of students to achieve well in their understanding of the development, since its inception, of the National Health Service. **Good** development of subject-specific language took place.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

